

Studies in
**INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS**

This book offers a thought-provoking analysis of the controversial Camp David II peace negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis in July 2000 and the ensuing political events. The author's understanding of Middle Eastern politics is fresh and unconventional. Oded Balaban argues that the true political positions in the conflict do not coincide with traditional divisions between left and right, East and West, Israeli and Palestinian. Although his insights are surprising his reasoning is always rigorous and logical. This book is recommended to all those interested in new approaches to political analysis.



Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, **Oded Balaban** is Professor of Political Philosophy and Epistemology at the University of Haifa, Israel, and has been a visiting scholar at the University of Florida. He has served as Head of the Department of Philosophy and of the Honor Students Program at the University of Haifa. He earned a doctorate from the University of Tel Aviv on Hegel's theory of judgment. Dr. Balaban is the author of *Plato and Protagoras* (1999), *The Bounds of Freedom* (with A. Erev, Peter Lang, 1995), *Politics and Ideology* (1995), and *Subject and Consciousness* (1995). He edited *Impunity and Human Rights in Latin America* (with A. Megged, 2003), and he has published many papers in academic journals.

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Interpreting Conflict

Balaban



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Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations
at Camp David II and Beyond

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Michael Graham Fry
General Editor

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PETER LANG

New York • Washington, D.C./Baltimore • Bern
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...How is a history a priori possible? —Answer: if the diviner himself makes and contrives the events which he announces in advance.

It was all very well for the Jewish prophets to prophesy that sooner or later not simply decadence but complete dissolution awaited their state, for they themselves were the authors of this fate. As national leaders they had loaded their constitution with so much ecclesiastical freight, and civil freight tied to it, that their state became utterly unfit to subsist of itself, and especially unfit to subsist together with neighboring nations. Hence the jeremiads of their priests were naturally bound to be lost upon the winds, because the priests obstinately persisted in their design for an untenable constitution created by themselves; and thus they could infallibly foresee the issue.

So far as their influence extends, our politicians do precisely the same thing and are just as lucky in their prophecies. —We must, they say, take human beings as they are, not as pedants ignorant of the world or good-natured visionaries fancy they ought to be. But in place of that *as they are* it would be better to say what they *have made* them—stubborn and inclined to revolt—through unjust constraint, through perfidious plots placed in the hands of the government; obviously then, if the government allows the reins to relax a little, sad consequences ensue which verify the prophecy of those supposedly sagacious statesmen.

Immanuel Kant, in *Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?*



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Preface for the Lazy

For those who like their reading material to be brief and succinct, let me clearly state the argument that I will expand upon in this book. It is my contention that an analysis of the *Camp David II* summit and its aftermath shows that it was not intended to reach an agreement, but to prevent, as a last resort, the imminent outbreak of violence designed by Arafat before the negotiations. As for the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, the analysis will show that it encompasses two kinds of peace, one which is segregationist and exclusionist, and the other which is integrative and inclusionist. The first has separatism as its guiding-ideal, the second strives for reconciliation. Both are attainable, and both, in the past and present, have supporters, who are found, on both sides of the conflict.

The separatist approach involves a policy of perpetuation of the conflict, while the reconciliatory approach comprises a process for ending it. Segregation is achievable by forceful international intervention, or third-party decisions, while integration is accomplished through direct negotiations that seek reconciliation and cooperation. The one seeks to live with sealed borders, while the other seeks to eliminate them. The one hopes for closed markets, while the other looks forward to the establishment of a common market with no barriers to movement of goods, people and capital at the conclusion of the peace process. The one is supported by active terror, while the other is supported by economic investments and developments. The one is secured through the perpetuation of dictatorship, and the other through the advancement of democratic regimes. The one ensures a residue of bitterness after each step, where disputes are often resolved in a way that moves the parties further away from the resolution of the major conflict. The other ensures that the solving of disputes will create hope by bringing the image of a peaceful

solution closer to fruition. The one takes an adversarial approach based upon friction; the other adopts a strategy of problem solving and cooperation. One looks at the situation from the perspective of “we are here—they are there;” the other sees the situation simply and plainly as “we here and there together, with a shared suffering and a common destiny.” One involves corruption, and the other transparency. One involves making unilateral decisions; the other shared bilateral resolutions.

In short, one is a process of fear and walls, the other is a process of hope and bridges. The rest of this book is just a matter of filling in the details. The reader who does not have time to pursue these arguments any further is now invited to leave.



Acknowledgments

Thanks are extended to the *New York Review of Books*, for generously allowing the publication of the entire discussion under analysis, included here as an appendix: Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert: “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *The New York Review of Books*, August 9 2001. Ross, Dennis: “Camp David: An Exchange” (in response to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *The New York Review of Books*, September 20 2001. Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert, “Reply to Dennis Ross,” *The New York Review of Books*, September 20 2001. Morris, Benny, “Camp David and After: An Exchange: 1. An Interview with Ehud Barak” (in response to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors”), *The New York Review of Books*, June 13 2002. Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert, “Camp David and After: An Exchange: 2. A Reply to Ehud Barak” (in response to “Camp David and After: An Exchange: 1. An Interview with Ehud Barak”), *The New York Review of Books*, June 13 2002. Morris, Benny and Barak, Ehud, “Camp David and After—Continued” (in response to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David and After: An Exchange: 2. A Reply to Ehud Barak”), *The New York Review of Books*, June 27 2002. Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert, “Reply” (in response to Benny Morris and Ehud Barak, “Camp David and After—Continued”), *The New York Review of Books*, June 27 2002.

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My greatest debt is to Debbie Rothfeld-Kushner, Glendyr Sachs and Michael Fry, not only who read and assisted me with the editing of the final draft but also helped to organize and clarify my arguments.

My gratitude to my daughter Lirit, my son Ilay, and Ada Chosyd, who were very supportive and were always ready to discuss the political transcendence of the arguments.

I hope that some of my theses are interesting enough to deserve criticism. Good contentions against one's own ideas in politics are an irreversible loss. In research, the advantages they bring are self-knowledge and the improvement of mind.



Abbreviations

Abbreviated references to quoted paragraphs from *Appendix I*:

A and M I: par. 1–63

Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert: “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *The New York Review of Books*, August 9 2001.

Ross: par. 64–75

Ross, Dennis: “Camp David: An Exchange” (in response to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors”), *The New York Review of Books*, September 20 2001.

A and M II: par. 76–87

Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert, “Reply to Dennis Ross,” *The New York Review of Books*, September 20 2001.

M and B I: par. 88–148

Morris, Benny, “Camp David and After: An Exchange: 1. An Interview with Ehud Barak” (in response to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors”) *The New York Review of Books*, June 13 2002.

A and M III: par. 149–197

Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert, “Camp David and After: An Exchange: 2. A Reply to Ehud Barak” (in response to “Camp David and After: An Exchange: 1. An Interview with Ehud Barak”), *The New York Review of Books*, June 13 2002.

M and B II: par. 198–210

Morris, Benny and Barak, Ehud, “Camp David and After—Continued” (in response to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, Camp David and After: An Exchange: 2. A Reply to Ehud Barak”), *The New York Review of Books*, June 27 2002.

A and M IV: par. 211–218

Agha, Hussein and Malley, Robert, “Reply” (in response to Benny Morris and Ehud Barak’s “Camp David and After—Continued”), in *The New York Review of Books*, June 27 2002.



A Mode of Introduction

This work is intended as a philosophical contribution to the understanding of politics; more specifically, of the *Camp David II* negotiations for a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians which took place in Camp David, Maryland, between July 11–24 2000. The Israeli delegation was headed by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and the Palestinian National Authority delegation was headed by its President, Yasser Arafat, under the initiative of then President of the United States, William J. Clinton.

I will treat *Camp David II* as a case study, approaching the case by offering an analysis of what was said and written *about* the negotiations and their aftermath.

Specifically, the analysis will be based on the discussion that Hussein Agha and Robert Malley held with Ehud Barak and Dennis Ross in a series of papers and interviews published in the *New York Review of Books*, and included here in *Appendix I*. I will try to show that it is a discussion between Agha and Malley who, by adopting a narrativist approach, do not believe that the conflict can intrinsically be resolved, and Ehud Barak and Dennis Ross, who contend that it can be resolved without Yasser Arafat's leadership. I will analyze Agha and Malley's paper that appeared in 2002 in *Foreign Affairs*, which I will consider as a key for understanding the former discussion.¹ I will also refer to other sources insofar as they are relevant to the understanding of the discussion. As a corollary, I will analyze how the Camp David negotiations found a kind of continuation in the Taba talks and two proposed plans for peace in the Middle East—the *Geneva Accord*, of which Robert Malley is coauthor, and the alternative *Road Map*. I will try to show, that the clarity and vigor that can be achieved in the case of the *Camp David II*

summit, may shed light on the subsequent *Al-Aqsa intifada* and on the Middle East peace process as a whole.²

The events at Camp David remain one of the riddles in a process that forms an important part of the so-called Palestinian and Israeli narratives. Until now, views on this subject seem to rely mainly upon the perspective of those involved, and their unconditional support of one side or the other. Whether a view is supportive of the Palestinian or the Israeli narrative—it is almost predictable. Pro-Palestinians are likely to argue that Barak has severely distorted the account of the events, and pro-Israelis tend to say the same about Arafat and his supporters. On the other hand, there are those, the narrativists, who believe that nobody can be held responsible. Since everyone acted according to his/her own historical and cultural circumstances, no one can be accused or praised. This belief they raised to the rank of a theory, which is highly disputable. They contend that ultimately, nothing can be done in order to solve the conflict. Since there can never really be a dialogue between narratives, but only a tragic conflict of values or cognitive perspectives, each unsuccessfully accuses the other of being wrong or ill-intentioned.

Before beginning a discussion of the actual negotiations themselves, I will devote this introduction to the analysis of several theoretical considerations needed for the analysis of these events. A theoretical introduction to the issue is bound to be a snapshot of a moving object. Moreover, there is none which does not reveal further questions with no general agreement about the answers to them. However, I need this introduction because I also want to argue for a theoretical approach, as opposed to a normative, politically involved one. Specifically, I will try to draw a distinction between the assumptions that underlie political actions and those that should be taken by science of politics, or rather, politology.

Politics and Ideology

A sharp distinction should be drawn between the values that policymakers hold, and their political ideologies. Their values are not necessarily explicitly stated, while ideologies are arranged for being consumed by the public in order to support the decision maker's stance. Hence, ideologies are put forward in order to satisfy the values and expectations of the

public, and are not necessarily a manifestation of the politician's own values.

Political discourse, as a recruited narrative, is a goal-directed language, a means to an end that is different from its explicit content.

Though any discourse has two aspects, content and form, in the political discourse they become separated.³

From the viewpoint of the content, it is a discourse about *something*, while from the viewpoint of the form, it is a discourse addressed to *someone*. As a discourse about something, it can be either true or false, while as a discourse designed to recruit someone (in order to influence his/her thinking or behavior), it can either succeed or fail. The intention of normal, communicative discourse, is to the content. The intention of the political discourse is to the form.

Such ideological make-believe, goal-oriented discourse, gives the appearance of being informative, manifest and straightforward. The speaker or author may or may not, believe in the truth and validity of his/her arguments, but this is not what it is about. It is a manipulative speech. Its real aim is to recruit others to the author's position and to manipulate the listener or reader's trust or distrust (as required).

The intention of the ideological discourse, then, is indirect and devious. It is not an intention that relates to the content, the truth or falseness of the discourse. It is a "doublespeak." Nor is it a metaphoric discourse, because metaphors do not try to hide their double meaning. The content (the overt discourse) of "doublespeak" appears to be a direct and manifest intention, while its intention is expressed in its form (the covert discourse) that is its latent, hidden and real intention. Contrary to political science, which ought to be able to state itself without saying what it doesn't mean, ideology is a discourse where the author does not say what he/she means and does not mean what he/she says. With his enlightened exaggerations, Jonathan Swift makes Gulliver explain to the wise horse what it means to lie; something the horse was unable to grasp because of his infinite naiveté. In order to demonstrate his point, he uses the example of a First or Chief Minister of State. Gulliver defines him as someone that "never tells a truth but with an intent that you should take it for a lie; nor a lie but with a design that you should take it for a truth." A policymaker is goal-directed at an extent that he even uses his emotions as a way to illustrate how they have become, "a creature wholly exempt from

joy and grief, love and hatred, pity and anger, ...that ... applies his words to all uses, except to the indication of his mind.”⁴

This is a result of the nature of politics being viewed as a type of practical wisdom. Politicians are experts at using language to conceal their intentions. Their words are not employed in order to illustrate the most exact and clear meaning of events. However, concealment is not the main reason behind their instrumental use of language; rather in their minds, language is a means to an end that has little or nothing to do with the explicit or formal meaning of words. The use of concealment in political language arises from the fact that it is efficient. France’s celebrated foreign minister, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, is reputed to have remarked that language was invented so that we could conceal our thoughts from each other. As a matter of prudence, policymakers do not reveal their thoughts without some goal in mind. Hence, we have another quotation ascribed to this great negotiator, described by Chateaubriand as the epitome of vice, who asked, upon hearing the news of the death of the Turkish ambassador, “What does he mean by that?” To die without hidden intentions, has no place in politics.

Policymakers do two things at once: First, they attempt to apply their values to the political reality, either in order to modify it or to maintain its current state. Secondly, they use their ideologies as a means to propagate and apply their own values. The function of their ideologies is to convince others of the need to implement their viewpoints. In the hands of politicians, political narratives are *posteriori* interpretations of reality, which enable that specific reality to be efficiently controlled.

Kinds of Reflection

Facing this duality of language, theoretical reflection tends to adopt one of two attitudes: it denies a “doublespeak” considering either only the content while disregarding the form, or it takes into account only the form while disregarding the content.

The first reflective-attitude focuses on the explicitly manifest contents expressed by political discourses. It recognizes that the contents of political statements may contain either pure information or debatable value-stands. The problem is that once it is recognized, political scientists assume that they are therefore compelled to “imitate” political judgments

and adopt their ideas and values. They “feel,” so to speak, compelled to adopt the point of view of the object of their analysis. Consequently, such scholars tend to enter into virtual disputes with policymakers. They either praise or blame them, according to whether they believe them to be right or wrong. They treat the discourse at its face value, as if it indeed were about the facts and values it alleges to be. If one argues against their custom of thinking in naïve categories, they will accuse him/her of supporting conspiracy theories, as if politics were free of conspiracies. What is a strategy of negotiation if not intrigue, and what are secret negotiations and second-tracks diplomacy if not secret artifice?

Moreover, judging by their attitudes, they appear to believe, that at times politics is a kind of science intended to support the knowledge of reality, and judge politics accordingly, while at other times it consists of a discussion about the explicit values politicians claim to hold. In short, they identify themselves with the missions of the object of their analysis.

This approach blinds them in two senses. First, it blinds them to the very fact that the point of view they adopt, is exactly the same as the point of view of their object of analysis—policymakers. Hence, researchers feel committed to intervene in politics as if they were themselves decision makers. Now, as if they were facing the same tasks and questions that policymakers face, they find themselves supporting or rejecting the policymakers’ stands. Moreover, they believe that they have no choice but to take sides in political discussions. Second, this approach blinds them to the real subject matter of the political discourse. They fail to perceive the second-level, covert intentions behind the appearance of words. They consider political words as if they should be taken only at their face value. Politicians, like mimetic creatures that change color when observed, do not try to help them break out of their delusions. On the contrary, they try to convince the public that they speak on behalf of (or against) the values that they support and on behalf of (or against) facts as the public know them to be, and to serve as their spokesperson.

The origins of the illusion of political science’s reflection are the same as the origins of the illusion of the public in general. It is the result of the unawareness of the mind’s tendency to immerse itself in the content of the words and deeds of politicians. It is similar to watching a movie, where one forgets him/herself and becomes emotionally involved in the scene. A policymaker tries to convince the public to forever believe that

his/her words express their real wishes, values and thoughts in the same way that a filmmaker convinces spectators to temporarily imagine that they saw something that really was not there. He/she attempts, with quite a good success, to be regarded as playing the part of the people and speaking in their name.

Politicians try also to convince the public that their values (which actually are the values of their supporters) are the result of their correct understanding of reality, as if values were deducible from the knowledge of facts. The result of this combination of holding values and believing that they are deduced from facts engenders another illusion—that values are true, or that they have “truth-value.” “We are right—they are wrong” is the underlying assumption of politics.

Epistemological relativism, which is also a reflective attitude, is the reactive-product of the first. Relativism negates the other factor of political discourse, its content, or meaning. What rules in politics, so relativists assert, are neither “true” values nor “true” cognitions, but interests. Reducing the contents of political discussions into interests, relativists believe that only they are to be taken into account, and that each interest has its own narrative, coming up with an excuse to justify it. The content of a discourse, according to the first approach, is a candidate to be true or false on the cognitive level, and right or wrong on the level of values. Now, in the mind of relativists, those discussions become irrelevant. What is to be taken into account in order to understand politics are the realities behind the discourse, so that the discourse itself becomes neither true nor false, neither right nor wrong, but is only the product of the circumstances of the speaker, of the politician and of the scientist alike. Therefore, relativists—these days called “narrativists” —devote themselves to “revealing” those interests behind the discourse and behind scientific analysis.

Epistemological relativism is not pluralism, because it does not contend that there are many “truths,” but that there is no “truth.”⁵ It also does not contend that there are many valid values, but that there actually are no valid values. The content of the political discourse, under the narrativist approach, is not to be tested. The narrativist approach annuls the actual meanings of political discussions and of their scientific knowledge.

For relativists, the discourse is only an expression of values—which are an expression of the reality of their holders—and an expression of a nec-

essarily biased knowledge, including their own “knowledge.” Beyond that, there is nothing else to refer to. By annulling the content, relativists absolutize the narrative—it then becomes the only subject matter for analysis. Moreover, the subject, as an active being, since it is also annulled, it becomes a product of its circumstances.

However, this definition of relativism may be accused of being too permissive. Is not relativism itself ideological? Does it not also operate a “doublespeak?” Ironically, relativism is by no means relative. It is at most, a last resort in order to avoid discussions; a kind of laziness of thought for which thinking itself is a disturbance and requires unpleasant efforts. Relativism is, as Theodor Adorno puts it, “a father’s retort to his son’s decidedly uncomfortable views ...that all things are relative, that money makes the man, as in the Greek proverb.”⁶

Taken to its logical extreme, relativism would result in an abjuration of thought. Indeed, I cannot think, and at the same time, maintain that what I am thinking about is neither true nor false, and neither right nor wrong. Even if I think about something that is false, I think it is true that it is false, and if thinking that it is wrong—that it is right that it is wrong. Therefore, relativism is a thought that thinks about itself from the outside. It reflectively evaluates knowledge and values once they have taken place. It is not concerned about the actual process of thinking, which is thinking about the contents of the thoughts (what else can it be?). When I think, I believe in what I think, and I believe that it is true. While holding a value, I indeed hold it without relativizing it.

To bestow the same validity on each opinion (which is essentially what these “narratives” demand) not only runs against the idea of validity, but also reflects the desire to avoid confronting the truth and to remain undecided in value-disputes. They prefer to relativize the truth in order to conceal it and to relativize values in order to annul their original meaning. There is one exception though: they do not relativize their own point of view. Not because they do not want to, but because they cannot do that. If relativism becomes relative, it annuls itself. Relativism, as a reflective attitude, forgets that it is a reflection about values and knowledge annulling its own source. In order to maintain its point of view, it contends that everything is an interpretation. Nevertheless, by making no distinction between data and *its* interpretation, they close the doors to interpretation.

Relativism condemns the researcher to silence and causes people to avoid taking sides. Indeed, if two narratives are in conflict with each other, narrative theory forbids attempts to delve into the truth, or to sustain a value against another. If there are two narratives, the Palestinian and the Israeli narratives, the narrativist reflective theory cannot go beyond their contentions. It may accept the contradiction, or at least it does not seek to resolve it. Whatever occurred between both narratives, will remain deterministically explained, and practically irresolvable, due not to the absence of data in the first case nor to the absence of good will in the second case, but because of the presence of narratives.

I do not try to offer an extremist realism, as an alternative. By means of distinguishing between data and interpretation, my only intention is to expose the discussion that relativism decided to avoid.

There is yet another option. It is the use of narrativism for the sake of advancing a policy rather than to abstain from taking, or proposing to take decisions. This is the ideological use of narrativism by Hussein Agha and Robert Malley. They are actively engaged in politics and make narrativism serve their practical designs. Actually, as a hammer can be used for many tasks, even to achieve opposing tasks, let's say, of building chairs and destroy them, narrativism can also be used for the achievement of other agendas.

I will propose a third approach to the understanding of politics, neither reducing, as narrativists do, contents to interests, nor reducing, hidden intentions to the manifest expression of the political discourse. I will attempt to explain the various positions that were under dispute in Camp David as being both explanations and justifications of certain policies, and will examine them on the two different levels of content and form. Avoiding the use of the subtext as a substitute for the text, I will analyze their contents and will regard them as "documents" that can be "interrogated" in order to uncover operative stances. I will interpret them by searching for the *intention* of the discourse (or its subtext) not only for its content; that is, I will treat them as attempts to present the facts as a means to justify or foment political goals.

Formally stated, I will often take political declarations as "x asserts *that* he believes *that* y" which is a reflection on other reflections such as "x believes *that* y is z." There are, formally stated, three levels of statements:

- (1) y is z .
- (2) x believes that y is z .
- (3) x asserts that he/she believes that y is z .

The differences between those expressions are as follows:

In (1), the question is what is y , and the answer is that it is z .

In (2), the question is what does x believe, and the answer is “that y is z .”

In (3), the question is what does x assert that he/she believes, and not what his/her actual belief is. In this case, we can detect the possibility of goal-oriented or rhetorical discourse, intended for manipulation, which leads us to ask a further question: “Why does he/she assert that he/she believes this?” By way of this second level of reflection, we can analyze the practical meaning of political statements. Therefore, each level addresses very different subjects, and asks very different questions. We especially need to formulate ways in which we can ask questions of the kind expressed in (3), in order to reveal the operative meaning of the political discourse, leaving aside the question if x believes or not in what he is asserting.

The Real Side of Political Discourse

As part of the analysis of the hidden side of goal-directed discourse, I will also analyze its real side. “Real side” means those aspects of the discourse that have a practical meaning, though they are not part of the content. The intention of the goal-directed discourse is precisely directed toward this aspect, which is not explicitly stated. I seek to reveal those aspects that express the real standpoints, intentions, or values of policymakers. They comprise the core of a political speech, its real position—the *reality* that the ideas intend to change. In order to expose this aspect, I will analyze the manifest content of the political discourse as if it were directed towards its operative meaning. This is the core of the “double-speak.”

Here an example of what this peculiar use of words, from both sides—the side of the speaker and the side of the interpreter—looks like. Henry Kissinger quotes Anwar Sadat in a meeting that took place in the Oval Office in the presence of President Gerald Ford on October 27 1975. Sadat wanted to reveal his program for the next two years:

Next came Sadat's attack on King Hussein, a Sadat trademark in the way that film director Alfred Hitchcock made fleeting appearances in all his movies. He described the King as "a nice man" advised by an "unreliable Prime Minister" (Zaid Rifai) and embarked on a "suicidal course" of confrontation with both the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] and Syria, from which the United States should dissuade him.⁷

Kissinger does not take those words at their face value. When Sadat points out that the King is a nice person embarked on a suicidal course of confrontation, etc., Kissinger disregards the explicit content of Sadat's words. It is, for him, neither true nor false. Kissinger interprets him as saying something practical and informative about his plans, not about the events he evaluates. This meaning can be discovered by looking beyond and behind those words:

When all was said and done, *this meant* that Sadat was urging talks with the PLO, with which Israel would not negotiate, and rejecting a role for Jordan, with which Israel might be prepared to talk. It was a clear prescription for stalemate on the Palestinian front and a basis for yet another separate Egyptian move as the peace process unfolded (*ibid.*).

Since it is clear that Israel would not negotiate with the PLO, Sadat's operative meaning was *not* urging talks with it. He was also rejecting a role for Jordan (by invoking "irrelevant" things about the King's suicidal confrontation with Syria and the PLO.) He was only proposing a basis for yet another separate Egyptian move.

I will not elaborate on the details of Sadat's policy. I only wanted to stress the way Sadat speaks and the way Kissinger interprets him. This is the way I will understand political discourses.⁸

Neutrality and Reflection

Counter to current approaches, and as a tribute and vindication of theory, this work does not set out to argue the case of its objects of analysis; it is neither for nor against the rivals. Unlike scholars, policymakers take sides and commit themselves to their stands. Their writings are political because they have a political intention, which includes convincing their readers of their position; their commitment to certain values takes place

within the framework of a political struggle. Moreover, their debate is not really a discussion; rather, it is a struggle wrapped up in the guise of an intellectual argument.

The mixing up of values with the analysis of political events is so widespread, that when reading works on politics one cannot decide if the writer is offering his own ideas and proposals or analyzing those of the politicians. One cannot decide if the analysis is about what should be political actions or what they actually are. The following are typical examples of such statements: The “‘peace process’ which managed to go on for over ten years without producing peace, has degenerated into major violence.” “Israel rather than the Palestinians bears the greater share of the responsibility.”⁹ “The misjudgments and procedural errors made by all three parties significantly reduced the likelihood of a successful deal.”¹⁰ Those scholars explain insofar as they take a stand, and take a stand insofar as they attempt to explain it. We never know whether they are referring to their actual knowledge of how a certain event unfolded or whether they are expressing their own wishes about how they hoped the event would have occurred.

I will remain a neutral outsider. As far as I will enter into “discussions” for and against political arguments, it would be *for the sake of the discussion alone*. Spinoza contended that he would “consider human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes, and bodies.”¹¹ This statement made him the founder and guiding spirit of modern psychology. It should be obvious that he did not assert that human beings are kinds of circles, or triangles. Spinoza asserts that just as we do not become particularly angry at triangles because their angles’ sum total is 180 degrees, and do not feel specially fortunate for that—so we should not be motivated by emotions and proclivities while trying to understand human beings. This is not a call for indifference. Geometricians are full of the keenest curiosity about triangles and straight lines.

Neutrality is a state of mind in which we refrain from making value judgments. Value judgments include asserting that policymakers are wrong or that they commit mistakes, or that they are right in making this argument or taking that stance. No matter how much the issue of academic neutrality has been discussed, it has not yet been acknowledged as a guide to political scientists. Many assume that neutrality means a knowledge of facts without including a neutral analysis of values. The

knowledge of values and value-judgments should also be of interest to political scientists.

Other approaches generally fail to differentiate between the subject of neutrality and that of reflection. Many scholars tend to distinguish between non-reflective and reflective sciences, connecting neutrality with non-reflective science and non-neutrality with reflective science. It seems that those who are ready to allow some role for neutrality believe that they need to restrict its field of application. Instead, I will distinguish between different kinds of reflection.

Jeremy Waldron's distinction between empirical science of politics and normative reflection on politics, represent a typical case that encapsulates the prevailing approach towards the issue. Empirical science of politics is supposed to be value-neutral. "The empirical science of politics is the study of the way in which ... deliberation and decision making actually take place."¹² On the other hand, *normative* reflection on politics amounts to "reflection on the values and principles that are implicated in the processes of deliberation and decision-making" (*ibid.*).

It is clear why the first is neutral. However, why should the second be normative? Waldron refers to *normative reflection* and *reflection on norms* as having the same meaning. Normative reflection is obviously normative (though I am not sure I know what it means); but why is there no place for a non-normative approach to norms? Is it because the subject matter of this reflection is norms? Let us try to apply this logic to other fields of philosophy, for example, to aesthetics. Let us assume its subject matter is the beauty. Does it mean the arguments of aesthetics should be beautiful? Does the philosophical reflection on law have to be just? Of course, these questions sound ridiculous. So, when dealing with norms, why is the reflection required to identify with its object, and be normative? Why there is no place for a reflection on norms that is not in itself normative as in the case of the empirical science of politics?

These are rhetorical questions formulated in order to conclude that reflection on norms should be non-normative. Both, norms and argumentations that try to justify them, are issues to be analyzed, and can be dealt with as objects of analysis, hence in a scientific non-normative way.

Against the distinction between empirical science of politics and reflection on norms (confused with normative reflection), the question may arise, how can stand an empirical science of politics that ignores the pre-

suppositions of politics? Waldron's approach seems to be a kind of positivism that attempts to analyze politics without taking sides. However, if Waldron believes that it is impossible to conduct a neutral-value analysis of values, he should also not believe in a political science that is not in itself, political.

If a neutral analysis of presuppositions—values and principles included—is not clearly distinguished from taking sides, political science oscillates between two opposite approaches. One is a value-neutral positivism that believes that in order to remain neutral it should desist from including values and principles in its science. The other, a kind of post-modernism, believes that it is impossible to remain neutral and for this reason, its supporters believe that they have to avoid the analysis of values. On one point, they agree: that the analysis of values cannot be neutral.

Neutrality and Dogmatism

Taking sides for or against political decisions has two consequences: ignorance and dogmatism. For what does it mean to take sides? It means to compare political decisions as they are actually taken, with certain criterion (be it a value, a principle or a norm) that determines how decisions ought to be taken. And what does it mean to criticize the decisions of politicians in this way? It means that politicians do not know what they ought to know, or that they do not hold the values that they ought to hold. Therefore, the “benefit” that value judgments can provide to knowledge is the ignorance of the very facts that scientists are supposed to explain. Such value judgments only assert that their objects of analysis are not what they ought to be and that they ought to be what they are not. Nothing new has been added to the knowledge of politics as it is. Asking for what politicians have to be aware of, actual politics—what politicians really believe and care for—remains ignored.

Whoever chose to explain politics by mixing-up values with cognitions, would be unable to distinguish between the errors committed by policy-makers and his/her own errors, because he/she cannot identify whose values the error actually violates. Declaring the discovery of errors in decision-making is itself one of the political science's shortfalls. Instead, it should attempt to delve into the analysis of those errors by recognizing

them as symptoms of its own failure to cope with them. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, the following statement:

- (1) A researcher discovers an error in a decision that was taken by a politician.

If we take the “error” as a symptom, we can translate the statement into the following one:

- (2) A researcher commits the error of misinterpreting a political intention.

Since these statements have different orientations, there is no clue how to decide which of them best describes the cognitive situation. The first is object-oriented, and the second is oriented to the state of mind of the researcher. In the first case, the category of error puts an end to the analysis. What more can be said besides complaining that politicians do not learn from history and exhortations in order to avoid errors in the future? Moreover, when compared with the second statement, the first now appears as a case of ignorance, although under the guise of an explanation.

However, the second case opens new horizons for research. The searcher can ask his/herself, “How should I recover from the failure?” The error that in the first statement was attributed to the politician, in the second statement is regarded as a category of mind. The decision that in the first statement was regarded as politically “wrong,” now becomes a symptom of our discovery of something unusual and unexpected.

Why should we misinterpret a decision? First, it is because we were expecting a different one. We got something other than what we expected, and unusual and unexpected decisions provide the best key to understanding politics.¹³ Unexpected events and unusual declarations contain more information than the common ones. To reject them as mere errors or exceptions to rules, as the first statement does, means to maintain the prejudices that have formed those very rules, according to which we judge something as being “an error.” We should learn from Sigmund Freud and Sherlock Holmes who, by transforming them into “symptoms,” “tracks,” and “signs,” took great advantage of those “errors.”

The first statement can be regarded as a case of ignorance. As such, it is closely related to dogmatism. Let us assume a case in which the political

decisions under scrutiny do not fit *our expectations* about what decisions *should* be taken. Now, let's assume in addition, that instead of admitting that we might have used inadequate assumptions, or might have framed hypotheses that lead to wrong conclusions, we finally assert that policy-makers committed errors or made mistakes. Let's now assume another case, in which our expectations, contrary to the first case, are confirmed by the politicians' decisions, so that our expectations about what decisions should be taken are fulfilled.

Putting together the three assumptions, and with the assistance of the categories of error and mistake, we "succeed" in building a theoretical model that becomes proof against the instances that it does not fit. Our model would always be right, either if it fits the facts or not. Namely, we "succeed" in building a theory that turns its back on facts. This is but the definition of dogmatism. This kind of theory is a substitute for knowledge and the use of the category of error is its best collaborator. Such a theory, like those puppets that when knocked down spring up again—is indifferent to facts, and never can be tested on them.¹⁴ The utterance "Don't confuse me with facts" is the mark of dogmatism. Political scientists, prone to overusing the category of error, are victims of dogmatism far more than they are ready to admit.

Dogmatic theories are the result of using the categories of error and mistake as a cognitive device. What about the politicians themselves, who are operating on a non-reflective and non-theoretical level, and who are committed to their own values and ends? Should they also prevent themselves from using the argument of error? Are they dogmatic if they use it? Not at all. They use the category of error as an argument, maybe by necessity. Their commitment is not to knowledge but to the efficient questioning of their rival's stands, a questioning that they will even hold without arguments. To assert that your rival is morally wrong or makes mistakes is an argument that, when properly exploited, may be instrumental in promoting the rightness of one's own side, and this is precisely what Agha, Malley, Ross and Barak try to do.

Practical and Theoretical Knowledge

Practical knowledge, like theoretical knowledge, needs a neutral knowledge of the relevant facts in which it plans to intervene.¹⁵ However, there

is a difference between the contents, or data gathered by practical knowledge and the data required for theoretical knowledge.

The end of practical knowledge is to manipulate reality according to certain vision of what it should be. In this sense, it is knowledge motivated by values rather than knowledge per se. Here the knowledge of facts becomes a means to an end. The knowledge of facts, serving goals, refuses to be wishful thinking. It is part of a strategy for translating ideas into reality. For this reason, it should remain uninfluenced by the inclinations or aversions of the actor. In other words, practical knowledge cannot but be neutral knowledge, or else it would not be useful.¹⁶ Therefore, the difference does not lie in the issue of neutrality. Even though a practical, goal-oriented person has to know things as they exist in themselves, in order to be able to intervene and manipulate them (and not just become a false myth or a wish without fulfillment) he/she still has to understand these things *in relation* to his/her own goals and intentions.

Therefore, to a certain extent, practical knowledge is a synthesis between the knowledge of reality as it is in itself, and the application of one's goals and values to this data, in order to be able to modify it. Therefore, the aspect of reality that someone has to know in order to change it—will be guided and determined by his/her goals.

A practical, goal-oriented mind, gathers completely different knowledge-data from a theoretical mind, even though both sets of data can be approached in a neutral way. These different purposes, affect the very decision about what ought to be known and what is irrelevant. It is from within this perspective that there is room left for the notion of relevance.

For instance, when analyzing the use of different kinds of wood in the construction of a bridge, the wood's resilience is more relevant than its color. Because the bridge should be able to support a specific amount of weight, for instance, two cars at once. For an artistic photographer, it is quite the opposite, the color of the wood is more relevant than its resilience. What wood is and what its multiple qualities are, is a theoretical-neutral enterprise rather than a practical question. Furthermore, such a question, guided only by mere curiosity without asking for further outcomes, may lead to the analysis of the origins of forest and may prove boundless or timeless. Knowledge for practice, in contrast, requires the establishment of clear limits in the investment of time and therefore clear

limits on what realistically should be known and what should remain purposefully ignored.

Likewise, Policy-making is a practical profession. There is an essential difference between knowledge for the sake of political practice and knowledge of politics for its own sake. To be efficient in achieving their goals, policymakers should consider reality for the sake of an ulterior interest. Political science, on the contrary, analyzes those interests from a purely cognitive reasoning, and not in order to modify its object (political action) or to take a stand on the same matters that politicians take stands (although it may create a new knowledge, that itself may provoke changes, and serve as grounds for the implementation of values).

Scholars have a completely different objective than policymakers—their subject matter—have. Each of them refers another aspect of reality. In other words, each deals with another objective.

Having different knowledge, different subject matters, different orientation towards reality, and different guiding values, I hope it becomes clear why those who are really committed to explain politics, should not engage in discussions with policymakers. Policymakers are their objects of research, and as researchers, they should neither justify nor reject their deeds and decisions.

Facts and the Application of Values

There is still another confusion regarding political practice. We are prone to believe that the pragmatic point of view in politics means that facts should determine the politicians' decisions. When this is not the case, they are accused of dogmatism or as taking the wrong decisions because of their ignorance of the real facts that are supposed to destroy their fantasies.

This kind of thinking is just the illusion that our values and decisions are deduced from facts. Since making decisions means to apply values to facts, commonsense, as being practical oriented, indeed regards values as derived from facts. Values are so intermingled with facts, that one believes them to be derived from facts. This conclusion is a *non sequitur*. If we examine this point closely, it turns out to have rather surprising significances. For example, if someone escaped safely from her house that

collapsed during a powerful earthquake, and we ask her for the reason behind her decision to escape, she would state that the earthquake was the reason. Nevertheless, she could have stayed at home as well. In this case, assuming she was provided with the relevant information, she would not have placed a positive value on her life. The specific reason she escaped was to save her life, which was endangered by the earthquake. That is to say, she applied the value of life to a state of affairs. The earthquake, by itself, cannot serve as the reason why she should escape or stay home.

This example demonstrates how facts *do not* and *cannot* dictate what should be done. Facts are derived from (or are caused by) other facts, and values are derived from other values. Facts are not derived from values and values are not derived from facts. Hence, distinct values would allow different people to make different decisions when faced with the same situation. Now simply keep in mind that there are less common values than that of life itself; for example, exactly how good life should be.

Politics, accordingly, is not a struggle between those who correctly understand the circumstances underlying their actions and those who do not. It is not a struggle between those who correctly understand the reality and those who fail to do so (I call the reader's attention to the fact that the more responsible a policymaker is, the more he surrounds himself with capable advisers). Knowledge and ignorance are irrelevant, because we may assume that the partners in the dispute possessed the same degree of knowledge of the facts. The dispute is not about the knowledge of facts, but about the stand that the participants had taken regarding the facts, a stand that is not deducible from the facts themselves. Politics is a struggle over the implementation of values under the fancy guise of a discussion based on rational arguments about facts. In politics and in practical reason in general, the knowledge of facts is a means enabling the implementation of values. Facts assist in putting values into practice, but this is not a reason to presume that they are derived from those facts.

Neutrality and Theory

Politicians are practical oriented. They take means—including the knowledge of reality—in order to achieve their goals. These goals are

definitely not shared by the analyst. Political scientists have a completely different aim: to reveal and understand policymaker's goals.

Nevertheless, political science seems to suffer from an inborn deficiency. Political scientists, whose subject matter should be political decisions and the analysis of policy-making, do not seem to have enough patience to remain faithful to their aim. As I argued in the discussion about dogmatism, they tend to decide, what the policymakers' goals are even before beginning their analysis. Indeed, if they realize that the means the policymakers take, are not appropriate for achieving their alleged goal, they blame it on the politicians. They conclude that the politicians committed an error, rather than holding their own assumption responsible for the allegation. Therefore, scholars are in the habit of judging policymakers for not taking adequate steps to achieve "their" goals, namely, the goals that the researcher presumes they have. Scholars seem to be prone to judge a policymaker for not fulfilling the very goals that they, the scholars, have imagined to be appropriate, in their minds.

Analysts should not attempt to project their own values on policymakers. Scientists are supposed to understand and explain politicians as they are and not as they should be. Otherwise, it invalidates itself as a science *of* politics.

When scholars are tempted by the illusion that their profession summons them to give advice (this is the way I call what is generally regarded as stating value judgments) to their object of analysis, political science ceases to be a science. Their writings are filled with virtual recommendations as to what politicians should do (just imagine an historian who advises the protagonists he researches, and changes the real events to fit his/her own scenario). This way, they find themselves virtually involved in politics instead of explaining it. However, most of their efforts are unfruitful, because no one either consults them, or pays them for this advice (I do admit that there are exceptions but in those cases they have often had to choose between their loyalty to science and their loyalty to their political commitments). To be a political researcher does not mean to become a politician, just as a specialist in aquatic biology does not become a fish. On the other hand, being a policymaker does not mean that you are an expert in politics, in the same way that a fish is not a biologist. In the same way that a biologist does not advise a fish how it should

swim, if by zigzagging or by tracing straight lines, a scholar should not advise a policymaker how he/she ought to make decisions.

To profess theory and analysis, and to be committed to taking part in the changing of political events, are two incompatible and at times antagonistic roles. Truth and efficiency are incompatible values. The ideals of political science and the ideals of politics are in permanent conflict. Whoever opts for efficiency must be ready to stretch the truth beyond its limits. Because of the political requirements of efficiency, there are thoughts that cannot be expressed, and words that cannot be spoken.¹⁷

Political science, in contrast, would attempt to reveal precisely such concealed information, or else it departs from being theory, and starts seeking to gain political control of the facts.

Politics uses knowledge as a means, while political theory is knowledge *about* political practice and the instrumentality of political knowledge. A political theory that on its own becomes political and practical eventually becomes an ideological justification of politics. Involving itself in politics, it ceases to be a science.

With this neutral spirit as a guide, I will not take a stand for or against the texts and sayings of politicians. However, I will engage in hypothetical discussions, if only as a means for revealing their positions.

Problems of Interpretation

Because of its goal-intended “doublespeak,” politics is an esoteric field and requires interpretation. Politicians do not say what they mean and do not mean what they say. Interpretation should be based upon certain rules and criteria established by the researcher consciously and explicitly. The need for a hermeneutic of political discourse arises from the very character of political negotiations and diplomacy. Written documents in particular, and available evidences and testimonies in general, are especially problematic. To say that the evidence for drawing conclusions consists of spoken or written words of politicians is to speak in a rough-and-ready way. Evidence in this field is something that has meaning for those who are able to understand it through their own questions. The researcher’s question is the starting point for making inferences, and inferences are the result of deciphering unwritten and unspoken intentions behind facts, which are, unlike in the natural sciences, their result.

The words of negotiators are to be understood as part of their cautious skill, that includes not leaving signed or even written papers that might fall into the irresponsible hands of people like us, who might disseminate such information and therefore modify the course of events in ways they will be unable to predict or control. Properly understood, this factor may lead to the conclusion that even when we fortuitously discover such “documents,” we should seriously consider two alternatives. Properly understood, this factor may lead to the conclusion that even when we fortuitously discover such “documents,” we should seriously consider two alternatives. That they might deliberately be made available for disinformation rather than information, or they could be leaked by opponents in order to change the course of the decision-making process. In both cases, they are part of the process of the negotiations themselves.

This is the origin of what policymakers call “non-papers,” namely papers that are not what they seem to be, or “non-talks,” which are talks that, if we are to believe their words, are as if they never occurred, or “oral notes,” which are obviously not oral. Talks, dialogues and negotiations that are not what they seem to be, were created for the benefit of speaking and writing without commitment. We should realize that policymakers do not think this way because of an inborn love of secrecy. There are those, however, who are fascinated with power plays and intrigues, and its relevance is analogous to that of a professional fisherperson who likes sailing. Instead, it is simply because covert and private negotiations, away from the glare of the mass media and the scrutiny of the public, offer them a greater likelihood of efficiently achieving their set goals. This is the purpose for which hypothetical language is used in negotiations: in order to speak freely without facing the danger posed by written documents, note takers and recorded tapes, three big enemies of negotiators.¹⁸

I will attempt to decode the political discourse while taking into account the evasive character of political words in order to gain the very information that political rhetoric attempts to conceal or distort.

Our analysis should take into account the following facts: (a) The dearth, or even absence of empirical information, that is a result of the negotiators’ unwillingness to report the details of negotiations, (b) the disinformation often delivered efficiently by the negotiators as a means

for achieving their goals, and (c) the contradictory versions that found their way into the public's mind.

These difficulties should be overcome by resorting to the analysis of the *presuppositions* behind the documents, declarations and even mere insinuations. This may help to fill up the information vacuum. A careful critical analysis may fill the gaps in our knowledge. One of the tasks of such analysis is to detect these gaps; for how else can one know that he/she is missing information? There are passages in documents or speeches where missing information is present, namely, data we conclude that should be present but is not available to outsiders. To identify what one misses is to already know something about the thing one is searching for.

R. G. Collingwood invented the example of a detective who, in order to prove that his reasoning was correct, *only* has to find "the presence of certain object in a certain dustbin, and of certain paint-smears on the cuff of a jacket made in the conventional clerical style and shrunk by wetting."¹⁹ If he finds them, his mental reconstruction will be endorsed. It is through the guidance and encouragement of this ideal that the *Camp David II* summit should be analyzed. Unlike Collingwood's perspicacious detective, I do not expect to find elegant evidences like that. Fortunately, political scientists, unlike policymakers, do not need to take political decisions, so that they should not be worried about making mistakes. This is an essential difference between theory and practice—between a goal-oriented activity and an activity done for its own sake.²⁰

With the power of mind, or by means of self-consciousness, we may actually discover that we really know more than we believe we do. Without it, any effort to add data to our archives will not help a bit, because we would not be able to recognize the evidence when we found it. Sherlock Holmes encourages the confidence inspired by the power of mind. When Watson reacted to one of Holmes's mental reconstruction crying: "Holmes, this is impossible!" Holmes pointed out: "Admirable! A most illuminating remark. It *is* impossible as I state it, and therefore I must in some respect have stated it wrong."²¹

This is the case in any reflection, but in political science, it becomes clear. Because of the need to rely on something more than given data, the political detective must count on his own reasoning. Therefore, lacking the light that should be shed by further information, new information

should be available by the power of just thinking while reading the texts. It should be commonplace that historical testimonies and documents carry meaning only if we know how to sift them through. Therefore, it is our understanding that becomes the guarantee of their authority. Without such guarantees, testimonies and written documents are merely bits and pieces that hold future potential, but currently remain unreliable information.

Understanding the *Camp David II* summit is a big challenge, both because of its historical significance for the Middle East, and because of the theoretical difficulty produced by the mist of the discussions themselves. The cognitive task becomes even more complicated given that the negotiators on each side even disagree about what was the other side's position at the summit. I will try to reconstruct a reasonable image of the proposals. It should include who offered what, who accepted the offers, who rejected them and for what purpose. The interpretative task should employ reasoning and information.

Presuppositions of the Political Scientist

For the purpose of such reconstructive analysis, we need to assume certain research presuppositions that will serve as a guide. The following presuppositions should be treated as neither true nor false. They are not intended to be informative but express restrictions we impose upon ourselves in the way we identify events. However, they are relevant to the subject matter under analysis. They should be accepted because of their explanatory value, inasmuch as they describe the political stances in which we are interested without turning, as much as possible, to the conclusion that policymakers commit mistakes.

1. As policymakers, the leaders who participated in the *Camp David II* summit were goal-oriented. Therefore, we may treat their whole political activity as means to an end, including the methods they adopted and the arguments they used. It is possible therefore, to conclude about their goals out of the means they take to achieve them. Hence, analyzing the whole negotiations in this light, we may reach conclusions about their goals.

2. Assuming that these leaders were goal-oriented, and justified *for methodical purposes only*, I reject the assumption that they may have committed errors in their judgment and practical discretion. “Professional” errors will be the only acceptable exceptions. They are not similar to those that are generally ascribed to policymakers. If someone who plans his/her actions often fails to fulfill his/her ends, he/she will soon refrain from making such sacrifices—after all, to take means in the frame of a goal-directed activity is a kind of sacrifice of present time for the sake of the future. Only those whose experience leads them to expect their plans to succeed take such means. If a carpenter knew that while planning to build chairs he/she usually ended up with tables, he/she would no longer attempt to make chairs. He/she makes a chair precisely because he usually makes what he intends to make, and his errors (be they misshapen chairs or unintended tables) are infrequent.
3. The negotiators of each represented country did not adopt a single monolithic position, but expressed positions that they did not agree upon among themselves. Thus, the proposals constantly crossed over the lines drawn up by the official national stance. Within each delegation, each proposed stance exerted some resistance to its own “red lines” and encountered both opposition and support from negotiators in the other delegation. The positions are intertwined with one another, so that the conflict may be redefined in terms that are quite different from the official stances represented by the delegations. Since the proposals did not always concur with official positions, we need to seek other criteria in order to distinguish between them, and to explain those proposals. Agha and Malley recognize that there were conflicting internal positions, although they identified them only within the Palestinian delegation. However, they do not define this internal political struggle. They mention that “tensions among the dozen or so Palestinian negotiators” were “never far from the surface,” (*A and M I*, par. 48) and that these negotiators appeared “to act disparately and without a central purpose” (*ibid.*). Akram Hanieh hints that the main opposition to Barak’s

policy in the Israeli delegation came from Shlomo Ben Ami and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.²²

4. The confrontation between disparate stances within each delegation did not represent a debate about the means that should be taken in order to achieve shared ends; it was rather a struggle about what those very ends should be.
5. Understanding the aims of each faction within each delegation should be reached by analyzing the means that each one proposed, either at the level of language as a rhetoric means, or at the level of practical decisions. We must analyze—or even decipher—the language used. Since it was employed as a rhetorical device, it a means to an end. What is relevant about means is only its efficiency. Using language as a means implies that the speaker does not care about the value of truth that his/her speech carries, but only cares about the value of efficiency. Whether saying truth or not, it is a decision dictated by considerations concerning the best strategy to achieve the goal.
6. The interpretative process should take into account that rhetorical language has two levels of meaning: the direct and open exoteric meaning, as well as the operative meaning for which the first is a means. This can be applied both to the discourse as it appears in the media, and to the discourse around the negotiating table. Thus, to some extent, any information simultaneously stands for disinformation. Any trodden path implies the retracing of previously taken steps, any progression may mean a regression, a yes may mean a no, and being may mean nothingness. At its peak, this is the triumph of George Orwell's "newspeak."²³

Intentions and Results

Orwell does not propose a dystopia, which is still a kind of utopia, but rather a *topia*. He attempts to emphasize the actual side that is inherent in any idea. Ideas do not only stand in front of reality or above it, but are also part of it. The real side of ideas, what Descartes calls "formal reality," has a force of its own, beyond what he calls "objective reality," which is the content as it is out of context. This is the source of the difference

between intentions and results, namely, the existence of factors other than those included in the “objective” aspect of the idea, other than the manifest content. Since it is not a part of the contents, the real aspect of the ideas, which comprises the context, is usually not obvious. Thus, the same idea uttered in different situations, has different meanings. Because while reality changes, the objective content does not.

This gap enables the Orwellian “newspeak,” because to support or reject an objective manifest idea, may actually stand for the real opposite operative stance, because of the context of reality.

For example, under an atmosphere of confrontation, a right-wing Israeli leader who embraces a Palestinian leader publicly actually harms him badly. He causes him to be suspected as a “collaborator” (in the negative sense often used in such situations.) While on the contrary, a right-wing Israeli leader who condemns a Palestinian leader, actually removes the menace.

The following real example is not untypical. Shortly after making public his plan for Palestinian Autonomy at the end of 1977, the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin was asked whether he had partners among the Palestinian leaders in the occupied territories. Begin pointed out: “Of course, I have very good friends, with whom I use to drink tea, for example, Nablus’s mayor Bassam Shaka.” The political career of Bassam al-Shak’a, who was a very popular leader and was elected mayor in 1976, was really endangered by Begin’s declaration. It was a trap. How could al-Shak’a respond when there were not any Palestinians who used to drink tea with Begin? “I do not drink tea with Begin?” In November 1979, Begin’s prominent political opponent, Ezer Weizman, then Minister of Defense, of the same right-wing Likud party of Begin although with a completely different political agenda, decided to put Begin’s “friend” under arrest. Major al-Shak’a, who formally opposed the *Camp David I* accord, was accused of inciting terrorist attacks and sheltering their perpetrators, even without substantial evidence.²⁴ Weizman, instead of immediately expelling him, as he used to do with other Palestinian leaders, decided only to *announce* his deportation. By this, he actually inspired an appeal to the Supreme Court against his decision, especially given the lack of evidence. Felicia Langer—an Israeli lawyer and human rights activist who since 1967 has represented Palestinians in the Israeli Military Courts—granted the invitation, appealed to the Supreme Court,

and finally overturned Weizman's "decision." She defined it later as her "most important victory."²⁵ When the Supreme Court overruled the mayor's deportation, the town of Nablus celebrated along with Langer, who for a short time was able to believe that "reality may sometimes surpass our wildest dreams" (*ibid.*).

This case teaches that national, religious and "political" identities (left, right, etc.) may not be used as explanations of policies. Each of them can be compatible with almost any policy. Even "separatism" and "reconciliationism," the two "isms" that I will use in my explanations, may be viewed with suspicion. Each identity has the most nebulous and multifarious meaning. It changes its meaning with the change of its use, or rather, its use teaches about the mindset, needs and expectations of their consumers rather than of the politicians.

These identities (or ideologies) have a very practical use. However, they barely have any cognitive value for a work of theoretical inquiry on politics. Theory means contemplation, from the Greek, *θεωρία*, which does not imply practical effect. It means understanding with no intention of doing anything other than examining one's object. It implies a fresh inclination to become astonished beyond clichés, adopted opinions and stereotypes. My intention is to write an essay for spectators, readers who are ready to stop for a while their value-judgments.

I would like to try to disarm, in advance, certain potential critics in order to prevent them from labeling my considerations as "speculative" in its negative sense. It is indeed a speculative work, in the positive sense of "contemplation." Likewise, since it is possible to consistently be in error, I am not looking for consistency as a sufficient test of truth. Neither will I identify policymaking as if it were the production of unintended outcomes of good intentions. I will not rely on their errors for supporting my ignorance.

Just to be on the safe side, however, if critics would insist on being negative despite my dissuasive efforts, then let me add, that the events and characters depicted in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.



Chapter One

Tragedies or Decisions

Agha and Malley's *Camp David II: The Tragedy of Errors*

In August 9 2001, a year after the summit, Agha and Malley (called “revisionist”) denied the common assumption (called “orthodox,”) that the failure to reach a final settlement was because of Arafat’s intransigence.

They do not contend that Arafat was not the cause of the summit’s failure, but merely that it is “a dangerous” contention (*A and M I*, par. 2). Specifically, for some reason, it is inconvenient to admit Arafat’s responsibility. According to Agha and Malley, this contention is dangerous because of its ripple effect. They note that if it is understood that Arafat really did not want to reach an agreement, then two different conclusions can be drawn: (1) That there is no partner for peace on the Palestinian side, and (2) that there is no possibility of ending the conflict while Arafat is in office. When faced with the option of choosing between building their argument on facts or values, they chose values.

At first glance, it appears that there is no room for distinguishing between the two conclusions—that there is no partner and that peace is impossible to reach while Arafat is in power. Both conclusions point to a fact that is built upon their value-preference: that if Arafat does not want to reach an agreement, it cannot be reached at all.

What is the purpose of distinguishing between the two arguments when they are apparently identical? We may conclude either that Agha and Malley have made an unnecessary distinction, or that a difference does exist, though is not readily apparent.

If the distinction is not unnecessary and therefore does have some meaning, the following conclusion may explain this meaning, even

though they do not say it explicitly, but it is all implied in what they do say: *It would be possible to find another leader who, unlike Arafat, could serve as a peace partner.*

I am trying to reconstruct an alternative position taken against the stand that Agha and Malley are explicitly taking. I tackle such a task in the same way that police Lieutenant Columbo usually reconstructs a crime—by scrutinizing the declarations of those who want to conceal it, which are his best collaborators. The very distinction between (1) and (2) is presented by Agha and Malley themselves, and I make use of it by searching for its cognitive value beyond their own intentions.

Agha and Malley's argument reveals, that their intention is to preserve the peace process by defending Arafat's policy, or to protect Arafat's leadership by defending the peace process. In making an inseparable connection between Arafat's leadership and the peace process, they imply that his leadership is a necessary condition for keeping the process alive. This implies a simultaneous rejection of the alternative strategy, namely, keeping the peace process alive by renouncing Arafat's leadership. Agha and Malley's position regarding the political controversy surrounding Arafat's leadership and its consequences (which I will discuss later in terms of their own analysis) are not neutral; rather, they are trying to support his policy. Agha and Malley argue that the allegation that he was responsible for the failure of the second Camp David summit is one-sided, and therefore untrue. Let me stress that this defense does not mean that Arafat is regarded as not responsible. He is also part of the problem. They are advocating for him by also explaining his inability to make the necessary decisions to achieve peace. Even though it seems quite bizarre, I will try to explain this *sui generis* defense hereinafter.

With regard to the question about *why* the content of the "orthodox" argument is not true, Agha and Malley offer an abstract reply. They contend that the "orthodox" description is one-sided, not because it does not reflect the facts of the *Camp David II* summit, but because of a matter of principles. The "orthodox" approach, so they argue, ignores (I have arranged their arguments starting from the most abstract and ending with the least abstract): (a) history in general, (b) the dynamic of negotiating in general, and (c) the relationships between the three parties (Americans, Palestinians and Israelis) in particular. Agha and Malley emphasize these principles, but do not explain them *in concreto*. The reader presumes that

because of this enumeration, one-sidedness is annulled and replaced by the feeling that there is something impersonal that caused the failure of the summit, without really pointing at someone as responsible for it. We should remember that their contention is that to hold Arafat responsible is a dangerous conclusion.

They point out that it is easy to blame Arafat. Furthermore, if it is as easy, something in his policy facilitates arguing against him. His attitude was not very likely to engender confidence in his commitments. In any event, just because it is easy does not mean that it is untrue, just as if it were difficult does not mean that it would be false. Agha and Malley try to advocate for Arafat's policy by leading the reader to believe that the very ease with which Arafat can be blamed is almost a reason why such blame is unfounded. Again, it becomes clear that their purpose is to protect him and not to analyze the events in a value-neutral way. As we will see later, Arafat, in their opinion, could not behave otherwise.

Now, let us analyze the critical arguments they level at Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Barak. According to Agha and Malley, three principles guided Barak's behavior:

1. They contend that Barak was against an interim accord, because it would involve gradual steps that would force Israel to pay a heavy price without prior knowledge of the scope of the Palestinian's final demands:

In Barak's binary cost-benefit analysis, such steps did not add up: on the one hand, if Israelis and Palestinians reached a final agreement, all these minor steps (and then some) would be taken; on the other hand, if the parties failed to reach a final agreement, those steps would have been wasted. What is more, concessions to the Palestinians would cost Barak precious political capital he was determined to husband until the final, climactic moment (*A and M I*, par. 7).

2. According to Agha and Malley, Barak believed that Arafat was not ready to make a "historic compromise" but preferred other possibilities that they do not specify. What, in their eyes, were these possibilities? Was it the continuation of violence? If so, how did Arafat intend to manage that? Or, was he hoping to reach a

new interim accord? If so, what kind of interim accord would have been acceptable to him? These issues remain unexplained. If they are not explained, then all of their arguments regarding Barak's attitude also remain unexplained.

3. Barak recognized that only in return for a stable and final peace, the Israeli public would be ready to accept far-reaching concessions, and because of this, they would be strongly opposed to the concessions demanded of Israel in the interim steps. Therefore, "...The better route, he thought, was to present all concessions and all rewards in one comprehensive package that the Israeli public would be asked to accept in a national referendum" (*A and M I*, par. 8).

There is indeed a coincidence between Barak's readiness to make far-reaching concessions and what he believes Israeli public opinion expects. The point here is that if Agha and Malley knew about Barak's readiness to make far-reaching concessions, how is it that Arafat did not? We may suspect that he knew at least as much as everyone else did. Moreover, if he did not—Malley was there in order to remind him.

We should note that the arguments are not really *against* Barak but rather try to explain his behavior, such as in the case of their explanation of Arafat. In this case, they also explain that from Barak's perspective, he was unable to make different calculations, or different tactical and strategic decisions. They neither lay blame nor chastise, they, so it seems, merely describe and explain. However, as I will explain later, it is not just for the sake of understanding.

Is Barak's readiness to commit himself to a final agreement the real reason for the failure of the second Camp David summit? If so, we might conclude that Agha and Malley themselves are against a final and definitive agreement. This is a position that contradicts their subsequent article in *Foreign Affairs*, where they propose precisely such a final agreement as the *only* solution for the conflict and in which they argue strongly against interim accords.¹ I will address the meaning of Agha and Malley's contradiction at *Chapters Seven and Eight*.

However, they were correct on some issues; they detected Barak's readiness to move directly into a final agreement. Barak himself con-

firmed this in a television interview on July 2 2002, noting that it was clear to him both beforehand, as well as from the first day of the negotiations at Camp David, that there was no chance of arriving at an agreement with Arafat, and that Arafat was heading towards a violent confrontation. Therefore, Barak proposed making concessions intended for a final agreement, in order to make clear that Israel was not responsible for any future Palestinian violent initiative, which was also an attempt to prevent it.

It would be incorrect, however, to use this declaration to conclude that Barak did not want to reach an interim agreement.² Barak assumed that Arafat did not intend to reach any agreement and this allowed him—as he almost admits—to be open and generous on the matter of concessions.³ His proposal was serious. Let us suppose that he had miscalculated and that Arafat was ready for a final agreement. After proposing the withdrawal from almost all the territories occupied during the Six Day War in 1967, Arafat could have accepted the proposal, and Barak would then have been obligated to implement it—precisely what, according to the hypothesis, he was unwilling to do. Barak must have been committed to such a substantial withdrawal, because he knew that however small, some chance existed that Arafat might have accepted his proposal. Therefore, we may conclude that his proposal was absolutely serious.

As for Agha and Malley, the fact that there is a contradiction between what they say in the *NYRB* (a “recommendation” for interim agreements) and what they say in *Foreign Affairs* (only a final agreement can bring about peace), may lead to the reasonable conclusion that the issue does not lie within those arguments themselves. They are being used for the sake of another aim, in which, once accurately understood, those “positions” will no longer be viewed as contradictory.

Revealing contradictions in other people’s minds however, should not be used against him/her, but should serve as a warning sign that encourages the interpreter to find an appropriate perspective that can explain—though not eliminate—the contradiction. It is a matter of principle, that even if someone makes contradictory arguments though under different circumstances, these arguments may not be regarded as contradicting each other. Extreme cases of alleged contradictions are declarations made under circumstances that are not only different, but are also completely opposite in nature. In this case, since the declarations change in concert

with the corresponding change in the circumstances in which they are made, they may be expressly regarded as being clear cases of consistency. In short, the test for understanding opposite or “contradictory” declarations is to take into account their operative meaning.⁴

A good example of this is the change in Arafat, Barak and Clinton’s positions a year after the end of the summit. Under the new circumstances, Arafat wanted to accept what he rejected a year before, and Clinton and Barak wanted to reject their own former proposals. Clinton gives expression to these changes in his biography, by saying that as the result of the failure,

Sharon would take a hard line towards Arafat and would be supported in doing so by Ehud Barak and the United States. Nearly a year after I left office, Arafat said he was ready to negotiate on the basis of the parameters I had presented. Apparently, Arafat had thought the time to decide, five minutes to midnight, had finally come. His watch had been broken a long time.⁵

In the specific case of Agha and Malley’s apparent contradiction, let me leave its operative meaning open, and return to their line of argument. After a fair analysis of the rationale behind Barak’s process of negotiating, they criticize him while, again, “contradicting” themselves. They assert that

Barak’s single-minded focus on the big picture only magnified in his eyes the significance—and cost—of the small steps. Precisely because he was willing to move a great distance in a final agreement [on withdrawal from most of the territories], he was unwilling to move an inch in the preamble (prisoners, settlements, troop redeployment, Jerusalem villages) (*A and M I*, par. 9).

What Agha and Malley call a “preamble” is merely what they previously called “interim steps.” If we change “preamble” to “interim,” the tautology in Agha and Malley’s complaint becomes clear: Barak supported a final agreement and therefore, not an interim agreement. Nevertheless, the point here is that they admit that Barak was ready to make far-reaching concessions in a final agreement, a point neglected by the discussions of the matter.

In order to further explain Barak’s policy to attempt to reach a final agreement, Agha and Malley say that he supported an all-or-nothing ap-

proach: either agreement or confrontation. As they make clear, Barak's aim was not to be regarded by international public opinion as the party responsible for the imminent confrontation that might emerge from the failure of the summit. Barak was convinced that Arafat had decided to follow the track of confrontation, and he behaved in accordance with this conviction. As part of his negotiating tactic, "Barak repeatedly urged the US to avoid mention of any fall-back options or of the possibility of continued negotiations in the event the summit failed" (*A and MI*, par. 10).

Without information about the content of the "fall-back option," it is difficult to analyze their statement. Continued negotiations, interim agreements and final accords are tactical stances taken by each side in order to advance its goals. Sometimes Barak was in favor of a final agreement, while at other times, mainly regarding Jerusalem and the Israeli presence along the Jordan Valley, he supported the need for interim accords.

Agha and Malley's interpretation, if carried through to its logical conclusion, is that Barak was consistent in his principles. Agha and Malley fail to understand, as it were, the intention behind this sort of tactic. Indeed, they regard the tactic as if it were a principle. Once a tactic fails (in this case, the purpose of reaching a final agreement), remains the possibility of continuing the dialogue and moving forward to fuller and more realistic negotiations. If Barak's tactic was as Agha and Malley "suggest"—to negotiate a final accord and leave open the possibility of continuing with interim steps instead—this very attitude would have ensured that no final agreement could be reached and that future interim agreements would become the only form of negotiations. Through this turnabout, we come back to their initial, apparent support of the interim agreements.

Whichever way one looks at the nature of negotiations, they are tactical positions and not irremovable principles. Moreover, in theory, the failure of the one does not imply the failure of the other. In any event, if there are genuine intentions to reach an agreement, then the failure of one set of negotiations is merely the starting point for a new round. The process of negotiations does not have full stops, but only commas. This is true even if the intention is not to negotiate, or to negotiate under fire after the summit has ended. Again, this shows that their arguments are not the

reason for their position, because if they really wanted to, they would also be able to defend a position that is in support of a final agreement.⁶

Facts as Containers for Values

Agha and Malley attempt to justify their values by expounding specific arguments about either psychological or political facts. They use facts as containers for their own values.

They choose to follow this path on many different occasions. They contend that at the time Barak was elected Prime Minister, an atmosphere of distrust and impatience existed in the territories. They contend that Israel engendered the climate. They point a finger at an array of issues: Barak's proposal for the re-negotiation of the 1998 Wye River Memorandum;⁷ his delay in beginning permanent status talks; the way in which Oslo's legacy became a litany of deferred or unfulfilled promises; the creation of new Israeli settlements; reduced freedom of movement for the Palestinian population; worsening economic conditions; disillusionment with the peace process; increasing doubt about Israel's willingness to implement signed agreements; and Barak's decision to concentrate on reaching a peace agreement—a "deal" in Agha and Malley's words—with Syria rather than with the Palestinians (cf. *A and M I*, par. 13 and 14).

When examining the context of the previous accounts, we see that both Arafat's and Barak's policies are justified, but not explained. Barak is described as contributing to the atmosphere of suspicion among the Palestinians. They could also assert the contrary—that Arafat *decided* to be suspicious of any proposal. Be that as it may, Agha and Malley have not provided an explanation for why Barak's supposed attitude is inconsistent with his generous offers. Moreover, this general skepticism and suspicion still does not explain Arafat's strategy at Camp David. Such skepticism was indeed part of the atmosphere, but both sides contributed to it and both sides suffered from it, though not, as in a Greek tragedy, without responsibility. For example, we can describe Barak's move to resume peace talks with Syria, which was a continuation of Yitzhak Rabin's "Syria first" policy, as the result of, and not the cause of, Arafat's refusal to negotiate an agreement. It is not a tragedy but a political struggle between active subjects that have opposite agendas. Tragedies are the result

of the ignorance of disturbing actors, and there was not a scarcity of actors at *Camp David II*.

How can we decide, however, whether an account of the facts is intended to be an explanation, or if it seeks to make value-justifications and therefore, implies taking sides? Explaining and justifying are different states of mind. An explanation is neither for nor against the issue under examination. In contrast, to justify means to take a stand for or against the issue being scrutinized. One option is to see if this is a valid explanation for all of other instances of the policymaker's behavior, without conflicts or contradictions. Psychologists use this criterion as a way to discover rationalizations that may be hiding under a mask of rational explanations. Contradictions and lack of consistency, and their consequent attempts to explain them away, are signs of rationalization.

In the case of Agha and Malley's account of the facts, it is clear that their description of them as a tragedy is an attempt to find ways that may help in building a "narrative," in which either there are not human subjects, or they are victims of a "tragedy of errors." Neutral theory, on the other hand, is not concerned with an explanation or enumeration of facts that are beside each other, constructing a kind of structural net devoid of subjects. Instead, it intends to consider and explain the values and the *subjective* intentions behind the decisions. After all, Agha and Malley are politicians no less than Barak and Arafat. Agha was a member of Mahmud Abbas's team in the negotiations that engendered the Beilin-Abu-Mazen accord, and Malley was a representative of the NSC at *Camp David II*. They are not devoid of practical intentions.

However, there is not a formal principle to distinguish between explanations provided for the sake of theory, and justificatory excuses for the sake of practice. In this case, we can be assisted by the context and circumstances in which the explanations are offered.

The following passage provides an indication to the conclusion that Agha and Malley's arguments are an attempt to justify Arafat's policy and do not offer a neutral account of the events. They contend that "...Like Barak, the Palestinian leader felt that permanent status negotiations were long overdue; unlike Barak, he did not think that this justified doing away with the interim obligations" (*A and M I*, par. 17).

The operative meaning is that under the guise of discussing permanent status negotiations, Arafat supported interim negotiations. It was to gain

Israeli concessions without any obligation regarding the final agreement.⁸ Barak, on the contrary, was committed to reaching a final agreement. He was not prepared to make concessions without receiving real payment in return. Moreover, the important thing here is that the reason for Arafat's position—the refusal to negotiate a final agreement—was shrouded in mystery. Therefore, the assertion that Arafat was ready for a final-peace agreement reveals itself as untrue, mainly because of the lack of evidence; namely, it is unexplainable, even by Arafat, who was unable to account for his stance. Even Arafat's statement that interim and permanent issues are inextricably linked, being “part and parcel of each other” (*A and M I*, par. 18), confirms that he was trying to push the negotiations this way. If he finally was ready for interim agreements—let leave it, for the moment, as an additional open question, except that Arafat knew that in the atmosphere of terrorism and violence, Barak could not make concessions.⁹

In order to understand Arafat's policy, let me stress that “permanent issues” mean the end of violence and the cessation of further demands, such as the right of return. Arafat's strategy, even according to Agha and Malley's summary, is to obtain Israeli concessions without committing himself to those cardinal issues.

To understand Arafat's policy it is worth noting the internal struggles within the Palestinian camp. Dahlan was against Arafat's support of an interim accord. At least, this is the meaning behind his following words about the demand for interim agreements at *Camp David*:

There was a strategic mistake built into the 1993 Oslo agreement: to go for an interim, transitional deal, when the two peoples were ready for a comprehensive peace. The interim period allowed the Israelis to carry on as they had before, pressing ahead with settlements, closures and land expropriation, behaving like a classic occupier. There were also constant changes of leadership on the Israeli side, which led to the cancellation of agreements and understandings.¹⁰

Arafat's opponents were against him, for instance, when at *Camp David II* they were against Abu Ala, who when speaking on behalf of Arafat, said that the Palestinians cannot “present a map where they gave up their territory.”¹¹ This method of negotiation, in which the risk of offering concessions only applied to the duty of Israelis, provoked Clinton to react angrily and shout out several times that Abu Ala's approach is outrageous. Mohammed Dahlan and Mohammed Rashid understood

Clinton's reaction and, against Arafat's established policy, pushed for the drawing up of a Palestinian map as well.

Agha and Malley's support of Arafat therefore means to take a stand against other members of the Palestinian team. The question may arise as to why, in their opinion, Arafat refused to conduct negotiations about the final solution and insisted, prior to further negotiation, in the implementation of former accords under an atmosphere of violence (including a third partial redeployment of troops in the West Bank, the transfer to Palestinian control of three villages abutting Jerusalem, Abu Dis, Eizariya, and Suwahra, and the release of Palestinians imprisoned for acts committed before the *Oslo Accords*).¹² They explain that Arafat did not refuse to negotiate, but sought to insure that the final negotiations did not come at the expense of abandoning the interim obligations already agreed upon at Oslo, Wye and the more recent meetings. If this is the alternative, what does it mean to be for one without being against the other? Let us examine their reasoning more closely. They contend that "...If Israel still held on to land that was supposed to be turned over during the interim phase, then the Palestinians would have to negotiate over that land as well during permanent status negotiations" (*A and M I*, par. 19).

If true, that means that the Palestinians were against renegotiating pre-existing agreements and if Israel had accepted such a position, it would have been obliged to carry out its own preexisting obligations, and if it had fulfilled them, there would no longer be need for the second Camp David summit. If we place this reasoning with a series of other factors—Arafat's apparent distrust of Barak's intentions; Barak's difficulties to reach a peace with a feeble coalition (he just survived a non-confidence vote in the parliament by only two votes);¹³ Clinton's trip to Okinawa, Japan, for the G-8 economic summit in order to ask for a pledge of about US\$40 billion upon the signing of an agreement; Arafat's refusal to formulate a counterproposal of his own; his plea for additional time to prepare; his belief that there was a U.S.-Israeli conspiracy¹⁴—it becomes clear that the operative function of Arafat's distrust was to avoid an agreement.¹⁵

It was not a way to reach a more favorable agreement in an unforeseeable future. Arafat did not need Israel's approval for an independent Palestinian state.¹⁶ Moreover, it becomes evident that it was preferable not

to gain such recognition—it was not necessary to declare an independent state.

Agha and Malley admit that from the very beginning, Arafat was against the *Camp David II* summit, and Saeb A'reikat admitted that maybe Arafat was interested in the summit breaking down.¹⁷ For Agha and Malley, this summit “seemed to encapsulate [Arafat’s] worst nightmares” (*A and M I*, par. 21). They regarded it as a

...[H]igh-wire summitry, designed to increase the pressure on the Palestinians to reach a quick agreement while heightening the political and symbolic costs if they did not. And it clearly was a Clinton/Barak idea both in concept and timing, and for that reason alone highly suspect (*A and M I*, par. 21).

Furthermore, on June 15 2000, Arafat told Madeleine Albright (as quoted by Agha and Malley) that the summit was “the last card” (*A and M I*, par. 22), hinting at the forthcoming violence as “result” of the summit failure. This argument, used before the summit to describe it, may have two meanings, which support the same policy: either to exert pressure to suspend the meeting, or to legitimize the result if it failed. The intended result was a period of violence and the creation of an atmosphere propitious for unilateral decisions like the unilateral declaration of an independent Palestinian state on September 13 2000, as Arafat promised before the summit.¹⁸ Whether or not he intended to fulfill his promise—remains another unanswered question.

What was ultimately Arafat’s plan? If he wanted to avoid reaching an agreement, he certainly would have been under immense pressure. Let me recall what was at stake here. In return for peace, both sides would have to pay a high price. The peace agreement may have included the solution to the issue of the refugees.¹⁹ Clinton’s “Marshall Plan” for the Middle East under the guise of generous compensations, not only for Palestinian refugees, but also for Jews from Arab countries.²⁰ Agha and Malley assert, on the contrary, that the US proposals “were silent on the question of refugees” (*A and M I*, par. 49), purposefully ignoring the American proposal.

The idea underlying the negotiations was tough penalties for those who were not ready to reach an agreement and great benefits for those who were ready to sign it. For Barak, the summit’s failure would exact a do-

mestic political penalty: the danger of his wakening in his own party, and even perhaps the end of his political career.

Those who argue against this interpretation need to explain why Arafat did not put Barak to the test by accepting his proposal despite his alleged suspicions. The fact that he did not indicates that Agha and Malley's analysis is committed to Arafat's stance. If they are right, Arafat could have jumped at the chance to call Barak's bluff. According to Agha and Malley Barak offered something that Arafat was unable to accept. It is hard to provide a reasonable explanation other than that Arafat had decided to reject an accord.²¹ Mohamed Sid-Ahmed, in a striking article published in *Al-Abram* as early as July 13 2000, at the very starting of the negotiations, not only predicted "a resurgence of violence in the region that could exceed anything it has witnessed since the initiation of the Madrid process," but even asserts that one of Arafat's cards was his own failure.²²

The Rationales of Arafat and Barak

What was Arafat's master plan as it emerges from Agha and Malley's analysis? They reveal it themselves. In their attempt to show that the summit was a tragedy, they state that Barak "warned that without a summit, his government (at least in its current form) would be gone within a few weeks" (*A and M I*, par. 29). Under these conditions, it is clear that the request for extra time for additional preparatory talks—on the pretext of avoiding the complete failure of the negotiations—was to ensure the downfall of Barak's government by determining that an agreement cannot be reached. The failure of the Camp David summit did not threaten Arafat's downfall.²³ Given Arafat's policy of avoiding an agreement, the collapse of both the summit and Barak's government were part of the same strategy. It is unconceivable that Arafat was blind to this linkage, especially when Barak himself openly discussed the threat that he, not Arafat, was facing.²⁴

In order to guarantee the failure of Camp David or to prevent it from taking place at all, Arafat proposed three tactical conditions before the summit:

1. He asked additional preparatory talks relying on the fact that Barak's inability to show any political achievement would ensure Ariel Sharon's decisive victory in the coming elections. With Sharon as Prime Minister, Arafat's strategy of continuing or even exacerbating violent confrontation would be viewed internationally as the legitimate response to a right-wing, intransigent government. With Sharon as Prime Minister, the Palestinians will be able to claim that he, not Arafat, is blocking the way to a final settlement.²⁵
2. He asked that the third Israeli territorial withdrawal be implemented before *Camp David II*, something that was clearly unacceptable. Under the pressure of terrorism, such a withdrawal could only mean a reward for violence; as such, it would ensure the collapse of Barak's government and the creation of the necessary conditions for the renewal of violence, or the internationalization of the conflict. On September 10 2000, 11 days *before* the visit of Sharon to the Temple Mount, Arafat implored the Security Council to send a roving 2,000-member multinational force that could separate between Israelis and Palestinians everywhere in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. "Given the violence that started more than 40 days ago and has killed almost 200 people, most of them Palestinians," Arafat said, "the Security Council could no longer sit by and let the bloodshed continue."²⁶
3. He asked that if the summit failed, the United States would remain neutral and would not blame the Palestinians for such a collapse. "Clinton assured Arafat on the eve of the summit that he would not be blamed if the summit did not succeed. 'There will be,' he pledged, 'no finger-pointing'" (*A and M I*, par. 31). This promise gave Arafat a green light to negotiate according to his private strategy the failure of the summit—without the threat of sanctions for his behavior.

Agha and Malley admit that the prospects offered by Arafat were "interminable negotiations over a modest territorial withdrawal" (*A and M I*, par. 33), the unilateral declaration of Palestinian independence on September 13 2000, or a new intifada (uprising), a hint of which was re-

vealed during the May 2000 unrest. The Palestinians, though heavily out-manned and out-gunned by the IDF, have undertaken an ambitious program to prepare for the possibility of a large-scale conflict with Israel. Palestinian Authority [PA] security forces (more than 40,000 divided among 13 security services), have been staging battalion-level training exercises geared toward the preparation of military operations rather than police duties. Security officers were being sent through military training courses in Yemen, Algeria and Pakistan to prepare for a conflict. Several PA security positions have been heavily reinforced with sandbags, and even trenches.²⁷ In addition, the PA has integrated all-terrain vehicles with armored personnel carriers to create highly mobile mechanized brigades. Although under the Oslo Accords PA forces were prohibited from possessing heavy weaponry, “there have been unconfirmed reports over the last few years that the Palestinians have acquired anti-tank weapons.”²⁸

This does not contradict what we have already noted: that endless negotiations facilitate an atmosphere in which unilateral decisions can be easily made, or in which an explosion of violence may occur, which in turn may postpone a peaceful solution while enhancing the possibility of the intervention of international forces. Arafat did not miss a opportunity to call for international intervention, which seems to be a task of first priority: “I always was in favor of sending international forces to the West Bank and Gaza,” he admitted, adding that he also proposed the idea at the *Camp David II* summit.²⁹

Finally, all of these factors put together work against the prospect of peaceful cooperation and shared responsibilities. The Middle East will remain a conflict area.³⁰ Potential and actual conflict in the Middle East may serve many goals. A multitude of chain-reactions could occur if the parties failed to reach a peace agreement. In their essay, Agha and Malley, operatively, support this kind of policy.

Even so, they never go as far as contending that Barak did not propose far and wide-reaching concessions. However, although they can be meticulous, their formulations about Barak’s concessions are extremely vague and imprecise. They note that the Israelis’ version of the offer was the return of more than 90% of the territories, but “it is hard to state with confidence how far Barak was actually prepared to go” (*A and M I*, par. 38). Regarding this uncertainty about Barak’s intentions let me re-

call my hypothetical proposal for Arafat: put Barak to the test; call his bluff, if you think it is a bluff. He did not try this and Malley did not ask him to try.

Agha and Malley point out that “each Israeli position was presented as unmovable, a red line that approached “the bone” of Israeli interests; this served as a means of both forcing the Palestinians to make concessions and preserving Israel’s bargaining positions in the event they did not (*A and M I*, par. 39). They resort to explaining a tactic understandably adopted by the Israeli negotiators, from which it can even be deduced that Barak did indeed propose extensive concessions. It is hard to believe, how such “bargain” concessions can be called “unmovable” while also approaching “the bone” of Israeli interests. They make a general statement without providing the actual content of these concessions.

As to the question of how far Barak was ready to go, they say that this is “hard to state.” This is highly questionable. Although nobody would formulate his/her proposals until being able to see the “hidden” end of the negotiations, this hurdle does not imply that this “hidden” end cannot be already discerned in the behavior of the negotiator. If this were not the case, any negotiation would have no value. A negotiator can learn about other negotiator’s ends by the means he/she uses. He/she knows about the final proposals by means of the interim bargain-offers that the other side is ready to discuss, or ready to reject. If it is agreed that Barak proposed to return more than 90% of the territories, the main question is what was the price did he demand for this exchange. At this point, we have another opportunity to understand the positions of both sides. The Palestinians had no intention of discussing this price. According to Agha and Malley, they were looking for an interim accord. Consequently, they had no reason to delve into conclusive issues—the end of the conflict, the end of terrorism, a final agreement on recognized borders and economic cooperation. Barak’s proposal was part of a tactic adopted to prevent the failure of the negotiations. Barak proposed a generous hypothetical concession of land in order to avoid it. Agha and Malley call all this, and not without some justice, an “ambiguity” that “always was there.”³¹ However, in bargaining situations, ambiguity is understandable, and for those who understand it, the ambiguity becomes unambiguous. Any negotiation may be called “ambiguous”—it is an intrinsic part of negotiation.

Furthermore, Agha and Malley understood perfectly the Israelis' tactic:

Barak apparently took the view that, faced with a sufficiently attractive proposal and an appropriately unattractive alternative, the Palestinians would have no choice but to say yes. In effect, each successive Palestinian "no" led to the next best Israeli assessment of what, in their right minds, the Palestinians couldn't turn down (*A and M I*, par. 40).

This argument apparently works against Agha and Malley's main thesis. The tactic of attractive proposals commits the user to actually support the proposals. If Barak really did not support his proposals, the risks involved might have been enormous, because, as I have already said, the other side might suddenly have accepted them. True, Arafat did not take this path, but he could have done so because of the pressure exerted upon him by his internal contenders.

Disregarding their recognition of the fact that there were "attractive Israeli proposals," the heart of Agha and Malley's arguments is that they never were made:

The final and largely unnoticed consequence of Barak's approach is that, strictly speaking, there never was an Israeli offer. Determined to preserve Israel's position in the event of failure, and resolved not to let the Palestinians take advantage of one-sided compromises, the Israelis always stopped one, if not several, steps short of a proposal. The ideas put forward at Camp David were never stated in writing, but [were] orally conveyed (*A and M I*, par. 41).

Agha and Malley are familiar with the *modus operandi* of negotiations. What, for them, is a proposal? According to the above paragraph, it is something to which one commits his/her self to in writing. They dismiss, or at least they wish others to forget, that in negotiations, proposals are always hypothetical, in the style of: "If I were to propose relinquishing all the territories to you—a thing I am not actually proposing. Since my proposal is *an if and only an if*, What would you be prepared to *offer* in exchange?" And the other side responds: "If you propose this—a proposal I have heard you make, although I did not record your offer and you have not agreed to put your proposal down on paper and to sign it, which I would prefer because I could then ignore your 'ifs'—then I

would propose something I am not yet proposing but only *supposing* I am proposing.”

Agha and Malley admit that they are acquainted with these tactics when they assert that Barak suspected that Arafat “would seek to put Israeli concessions on the record” (*A and M I*, par. 41), and this contradicts their assertions that Israelis never made offers because they never wanted to commit themselves to signed papers. Dennis Ross pointed out that

Nothing could be more ridiculous or misleading. President Clinton himself presented both sides with his proposal word by word ... Given Arafat’s negotiating style, Clinton was not about to formalize the proposals, making it easier for Arafat to use the final offer as just a jumping-off point for more ceaseless bargaining in the future.³²

This is the logic (whether or not it is in accordance with certain moral standards) of political negotiations. Proposals are always hypothetical in order to be able to deny them if the other side refuses to pay the price. Only the other side attempts to make them categorical, even before formulating their own counter-proposals.

Despite the eventual protests of their proponent, hypothetical proposals are indeed almost categorical, because it is difficult for them, unilaterally and without reason, to reject their own proposals. The hypothetical proposal however, is conditionally linked with some approval of the other side in the form of a counter-proposal or a payment. It establishes the character of the negotiations as a dialogue in which each side endeavors to calculate the motivations or operative offers of the other side and attempts to prevent it from remaining unmoved by each new offer. A proposal is also always an attempt to change the other side’s stance. Barak pointed out that “Unfortunately, we were exposed more than once to Arafat’s practice of taking conditional offers that had been put on the table and trying to turn them into the starting point for the next round of negotiation.”³³

The question may therefore arise, as why to bother demanding to put the proposal in writing. Taking things to such an extreme is one way to bargain down the proposal. Contrary to what is implied by his open statements, the Palestinians, or at least Arafat, were not ready to accept an Israeli withdrawal. Agha and Malley do admit at least, that the Israelis’ proposals, although not submitted in writing, were “orally conveyed” (*A*

and M I, par. 41). As for the content of the Israeli proposal in question, Agha and Malley admit that

Palestine would have sovereignty over 91 percent of the West Bank; Israel would annex 9 percent of the West Bank and, in exchange, Palestine would have sovereignty over parts of pre-1967 Israel equivalent to 1 percent of the West Bank (*A and M I*, par. 42).

On the issue of refugees, the proposal spoke of a “satisfactory solution” (*A and M I*, par. 42). Regarding Jerusalem, Palestine would have sovereignty over the Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City, but only “permanent custodianship” over the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount.³⁴ The status of the rest of the city would fluctuate between Palestinian sovereignty and functional autonomy (*A and M I*, par. 42). In total accordance with the “orthodox” approach to the Palestinian position and contrary to what “revisionists” thought about Agha and Malley’s stand, they assert that the Palestinians “were unable either to say yes to the American ideas or to present a cogent and specific counterproposal of their own” (*A and M I*, par. 46). They quote President Clinton saying to Arafat:

If the Israelis can make compromises and you can’t, I should go home. You have been here fourteen days and said no to everything. These things have consequences; failure will mean the end of the peace process... Let’s let hell break loose and live with the consequences (*A and M I*, par. 46).³⁵

Agha and Malley begin their explanation of Arafat’s behavior by asserting that convinced that the Israelis were setting a trap, he decided, “to cut his losses rather than maximize his gains” (*A and M I*, par. 47).

In what sense can Barak’s offers be interpreted as a trap and given the context, what does it mean to “cut losses” and “maximize gains”? At the level of the *operative meaning* of reasoning, both the idea of avoiding a trap and, in this specific context, the idea of cutting losses means the refusal to negotiate for a final agreement. Agha and Malley admit that, for Arafat, the goal of a final deal “seemed far less attainable than others” (*A and M I*, par. 47). The point here is not how the deal seemed to Arafat, but the practical meaning of something when it *seems* that its nature is of a certain kind. If y seems to be z , then the behavior towards y is as if it were z , so that, in practice, y *becomes* z . The operative aspect is the only

one relevant to a political analysis of arguments, whether you are committed to a political struggle, or if as a spectator, you are only trying to understand this struggle for the sake of theory. And the main intention now, is to explain the incapacity of Barak and Arafat to fulfill their mission.

Historical Compromises?

The argument that Barak believed that “Arafat merely wanted to extract Israeli concessions” (*A and M I*, par. 50) is highly improbable. He knew that Arafat was unready to pay the price. We may conclude that Barak recognized that Arafat really wanted the summit to fail—which could be achieved only if concessions were *not* made.

Agha and Malley instead, state only that each party was suspicious of the other. They say that “...The mutual and by then deeply entrenched suspicion meant that Barak would conceal his final proposals, the “end-game,” until Arafat had moved, and that Arafat would not move until he could see the endgame” (*A and M I*, par. 50).

If true, it is proof that both sides were unprepared to make an historical compromise. However, according to all of Agha and Malley’s arguments everywhere else in their article, this was not the case. Agha and Malley admit that Barak did not conceal his final proposals. He stated them plainly, even though he presented them as subject to negotiations and not as a written, signed paper. Thus, they dismiss what they asserted some paragraphs before, simply in order to maintain the balance they need for their thesis, that both leaders were unready for an agreement. This is the essence of the alleged tragedy.

On the surface, Agha and Malley’s selection of facts appears to be useful for “a Palestinian narrative” of the events. However, this is not their intention. Their aim was not to side with a Palestinian narrative but to show the tragedy of an impossible reconciliation. In order to show the tragedy, Agha and Malley must introduce their arguments as if they are motivated by a “neutral” cognitive aim; they are also compelled to present the Israeli case in a positive light. This inevitably leads them to contradict themselves. Their contradiction is the result of the tension between their intentions and the disposition of their target audience. The target audience of Agha and Malley’s message are those readers who may

accept an argument only if it appears to be committed to reaching some level of truth. Although their arguments seem to fulfill this condition, they are arranged according to their own stands. For some practical and predetermined reason, their tragedy thesis is an instrument to be used as the basis for a political agenda. In order to achieve this task, they have to use arguments that, in turn, we can use for cognitive purposes in order to delve into the hidden sides of the negotiations.

Agha and Malley, guided by the principle of appearing to be accurate and faithful to the facts, but actually trying to prove that there are no alternatives for the negotiators but to act as they did, attempt to expose the essence of the summit's failure, as stated above, in the mutuality of suspicions:

Barak's strategy was predicated on the idea that his firmness would lead to some Palestinian flexibility, which in turn would justify Israel's making further concessions. Instead, Barak's piecemeal negotiation style, combined with Arafat's unwillingness to budge, produced a paradoxical result. By presenting early positions as bottom lines, the Israelis provoked the Palestinians' mistrust; by subsequently shifting them, they whetted the Palestinians' appetite. By the end of the process, it was hard to tell which bottom lines were for real, and which were not (*A and M I*, par. 50).

These sentences, which are intended to depict a fatalistically balanced state of affairs, merely describe a situation typical of all negotiations, even while they are introduced as an insurmountable tragedy. However, if we consider what Barak's "firmness" actually consisted of, even Agha and Malley admit that he offered more concessions than any previous Israeli leader. Hence, contrary to their conclusion cited above—that "Barak's piecemeal negotiation style, combined with Arafat's unwillingness to budge, produced a paradoxical result"—the result is clearly non-paradoxical: we find an Arafat unready to offer negotiable proposals. What is disingenuous in their argument is their depiction of the Palestinians as so reliant on the Israelis' proposals that they were only able to react to each separate strategy of Barak's. They do not explain why there were no counterproposals.

If Arafat's refrain from offering counter proposals means that he will disclose his cards only when the endgame is finally under discussion, his

tactic may be interpreted as being against any kind of negotiation, or of a negotiation without the potential of reaching an agreement.

Agha and Malley assert that Barak offered firm positions in order to obtain Palestinian flexibility, but that he was also ready to make further concessions. This is hardly surprising and quite normal in any negotiating process. They comment, however, that Arafat was not ready “to budge” in response to Barak’s flexibility. Instead of seeking to understand *why* Arafat was unwilling to move toward an agreement, Agha and Malley conclude that there lies here a paradox. By turning to the negotiating tactic of offering something as the bottom line, while later being prepared to shift that line, they assert that, “the Israelis provoked the Palestinians’ mistrust.” The Israelis “whetted the Palestinians’ appetite” with their gradual concessions—namely, with their flexibility. Here there lies no paradox at all. It is additional proof of Arafat’s unwillingness to arrive at an agreement. This cannot be identified either as a paradox, or as proof of symmetry between the two sides.

The US Role

In § 6 (*A and M I*, par. 51–7), Agha and Malley turn to an analysis of the United States’ role in the negotiations. According to them, the United States had different and even contradicting roles. America was an ally of Israel:

As the broker of the agreement, the President was expected to present a final deal that Arafat could not refuse. Indeed, that notion was the premise of Barak’s attraction to a summit. But the United States’ ability to play the part was hamstrung by two of its other roles. First, America’s political and cultural affinity with Israel translated into an acute sensitivity to Israeli domestic concerns and an exaggerated appreciation of Israel’s substantive moves. American officials initially were taken aback when Barak indicated he could accept a division of the Old City or Palestinian sovereignty over many of Jerusalem’s Arab neighborhoods—a reaction that reflected less an assessment of what a “fair solution” ought to be than a sense of what the Israeli public could stomach. The US team often pondered whether Barak could sell a given proposal to his people, including some he himself had made. The question rarely, if ever, was asked about Arafat (*A and M I*, par. 52).

Agha and Malley's reference to the American cultural and political affinity with Israel is made in order to convince the reader that the United States was indeed an Israeli ally and not a neutral mediator. They reinforce this distinction in the American approach to the two sides by complaining that "the question [i.e., what the Palestinian public could stomach regarding possible concessions to Israel] rarely, if ever, was asked about Arafat." However, a "cultural and political affinity" neither defines nor creates operative alliances. When they say "political affinity," they refer rather to ideological affinities that do not involve practical accordance with political steps, tactic or even strategy. America can be an ally of India against Pakistan, or an ally of Kuwait against Saddam Hussein, just as the Europeans can be "pro-Palestinians," and so on and so forth. Political allies may be defined, in whatever cultural *milieu*, as parties who share common goals, but not common cultural traditions. To speak in terms of cultural and political affinity only serves to blur the facts, or to prove their narrativistic approach binding the actors to their historical circumstances. Hence the question of the public's reaction to their leaders' concessions is not hypothetical, but very real and decisive in all cases, in all communities, certainly for the Israelis and the Palestinians.³⁶ Therefore, if the question about Arafat did not come up, it was because Arafat was unready to make concessions of any kind whatsoever, and therefore the question of how to explain a Palestinian concession to the Palestinian public never arose.³⁷ However, let me assume, for the sake of analysis, that the question did arise. Like any other people, the Palestinians, be they full of hate toward Israelis, will tend to follow the road of peace rather than war when their leaders will propose it, particularly when such leaders cautiously and confidently will present their *concessions as gains* (indeed, any concession shall be assumed for the purpose of a gain, according to an old bargaining principle). The Palestinian people reacted with optimism after the Oslo Accords. If, on the contrary, the intention is to create hostility, the losses that people would suffer from accepting a peace proposal should be emphasized.

Furthermore, what are the implications if American officials did not try to inquire about what the Palestinians people could stomach? Even if we concede that the officials were pro-Israel, even if they wanted to reach an agreement only because it suited the Israelis, they would primarily be concerned with what the Palestinian people were ready to accept. To

state the opposite is tantamount to saying that they were against an agreement. It would assume that the Americans were unconcerned with the way in which an agreement might be reached and efficiently sold to both parties.

Barak's and Arafat's Strategies

Agha and Malley describe Barak's strategy as a policy of ultimatum—"this is it!"—that was in fact an attitude of shifting ground—"well, perhaps this is not" (*A and M I*, par. 53). They cite this as the reason for Arafat's loss of confidence in the Israeli proposals. In doing so, they invert what might be considered cultural differences between the two sides. This kind of bargaining is considered to have its origins in the "oriental market" system of negotiations, and in fact is well accepted as part of the process of bargaining in any Middle East. Agha and Malley appear to claim a Palestinian ignorance of this quintessential Middle Eastern cultural process. We must surely assume that Arafat was not ignorant about how to bargain in an "oriental market." Moreover, if we assume that Arafat understood this tactic, this should have encouraged him to continue with the negotiations; it should have led him to believe that further compromise and additional concessions might have been forthcoming. In addition, after asserting that there was a pre-understanding between Clinton and Barak, Agha and Malley admit that Barak complained to Clinton that, "on matters of substance, the US was much closer to the Palestinians' position than to Israel's" (*A and M I*, par. 55), a factor that "has systematically been ignored by Palestinians and other Arabs alike" (*A and M I*, par. 55).

All of this makes it appear as if Agha and Malley have drawn the wrong, though efficient, conclusion based upon the materials they provide. The clearest statement that they make about Arafat's stance is as follows:

By failing to put forward clear proposals, the Palestinians deprived the Americans of the instrument they felt they needed to further press the Israelis, and it led them to question both the seriousness of the Palestinians and their genuine desire for a deal (*A and M I*, par. 56).

Assuming that Arafat was aware of his own policy, the conclusion to be drawn is that he did not want to do what he indeed did not do. The the-

sis that Arafat was putting pressure on Israel is unacceptable. Arafat did not need Israeli concessions; in fact, such concessions would simply make it more difficult for him to emerge as the victim of an impasse to be sold as being created by Clinton and Barak.

Furthermore, and again in order to appear neutral but advancing their “tragedy” thesis, in their report of the facts, Agha and Malley admit that:

As the President repeatedly told Arafat during Camp David, he was not expecting him to agree to US or Israeli proposals, but he was counting on him to say something he could take back to Barak to get him to move some more. “I need something to tell him,” he implored. “So far, I have nothing” (*A and M I*, par. 56).

Agha and Malley summarize the dynamic of the negotiations in a manner that is again not so favorable to Arafat’s image: the negotiations “started without a real [Israeli] bottom line, continued without a [Palestinian] counterproposal, and ended without a deal” (*A and M I*, par. 57). Arafat, who was “fixated on potential traps, ... could not see potential opportunities” (*A and M I*, par. 58).

In many places in their essay, when explaining the perceived shortcomings of Arafat, Agha and Malley complain that others are inclined to censure Arafat alone for the collapse of the negotiations. However, those “others” censure Arafat for precisely the behavior that Agha and Malley describe.

Arafat’s intention, if we assume that he simply did not make a multitude of mistakes, was to prevent his reaching an agreement with Clinton and Barak. For this task, he needed a “hawkish” administration in Washington and a right-wing government in Israel. This aim is hinted at by Agha and Malley in a very laconic way, as if those results were unrelated to Arafat’s positions, and there was only room for the reporting of isolated events, without causal relation:

In January [2001], a final effort between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in the Egyptian town of Taba (without the Americans) produced more progress and some hope. But it was, by then, at least to some of the negotiators, too late. On January 20, Clinton had packed his bags and was on his way out. In Israel, meanwhile, Sharon was on his way in (*A and M I*, par. 61).

In concluding their thesis, Agha and Malley pose the rhetorical question as to whether a generous Israeli offer was really made. Their humorous, though also very carefully written reply, is as follows:

Ask a member of the American team, and an honest answer might be that there was a moving target of ideas, fluctuating impressions of the deal the US could sell to the two sides, a work in progress that reacted (and therefore was vulnerable) to the pressures and persuasion of both. Ask Barak, and he might volunteer that there was no Israeli offer and, besides, Arafat rejected it. Ask Arafat, and the response you might hear is that there was no offer; besides, it was unacceptable; that said, it had better remain on the table (*A and M I*, par. 62).

Agha and Malley are advocating for Arafat by blaming and explaining both sides. If this is the case, what is their purpose? After all, to complain and explain about already accomplished facts, by itself, has no practical value. Agha and Malley write with practical intentions, and we should ask for them, both in the text and in their circumstances.



Chapter Two

Arafat's Mistakes?

Dennis Ross—A Rejoinder to Agha and Malley

On September 20 2001, an answer to Agha and Malley's essay was published by Dennis Ross, Clinton's special envoy to the Middle East, who was part of the American team at *Camp David II*. He fiercely criticized Agha and Malley's omission of Arafat's "mistakes."

In this section, I will discuss Ross's reply. In particular, I will show how such an assumption of Arafat's mistakes is problematic, to say the least. Ross, by referring to Arafat's mistakes, assumes that Arafat wanted to achieve certain political goals that he did not achieve. How can we verify or dispute Ross's assumption? The following two questions cannot have the same answer: If Arafat's agenda was the one that Ross assumes he had, then why would Arafat behave contrary to that agenda? Why to argue that Arafat made mistakes if his agenda was not the one that Ross assumes he had? We fall into a dogmatic hermeneutic circle: whatever the question, we get the same answer. If given Arafat's agenda, Arafat had behaved as Ross assumes he should have then what Ross claims about Arafat is correct. And if Arafat had behaved contrary to the assumptions of Ross about Arafat's agenda, then Ross's account would still be correct. Ross's interpretation depends upon the assumption that Arafat made mistakes. Whether Arafat acted one way or in the opposite way—Ross's contention would remain immune from criticism. Facts would have no impact upon this approach; it is immune to any old or new data.

The only way to avoid this circular argumentation is by assuming that Arafat did not make mistakes, not because he could not act as he did and not because he could not make mistakes. But because of methodological

restrictions and requirements that needed to be met in order to avoid explanations that ignore facts (see “Neutrality and Dogmatism,” in the *Introduction*.) The choice is between being unable to explain the case, or explaining it by understanding what practical consequences might conceivably result from such behavior. However, in principle, the relation between human motives and the consequences of their behavior cannot be proved. Therefore, the explanation should be regarded as reasonable conjectures or as reasonable working assumptions.¹

However, this criticism of Ross’s approach assumes too much. It assumes that Ross wrote as a political scientist who tried to understand Arafat’s behavior. On the contrary, Ross was an integral part of the negotiations. As such, he spoke with an eye to political efficiency, claiming that Arafat made mistakes rather than offering a non-valuative account of his behavior. The criterion to judge his words is efficacy, not truth.

On the other hand, his *pragmatic* arguments may be used in a very different way—for the purposes of research. Ross resorts to making a distinction between tactical mistakes and strategic errors (*Ross*, par. 65). The distinction allows him to make room for the possibility of saying that one can make tactical mistakes without making strategic ones, and vice versa. Such a distinction is useful for two reasons: a) In order to imply that although Barak and Clinton made tactical mistakes, Arafat made something worse—strategic errors—so that Arafat is the main responsible person for the failure to conclude a deal; b) In order to imply that Arafat committed an error and that his behavior was not because of his immovable resistance to reach an agreement.

According to Ross, Barak and Clinton were ready to confront history and mythology, while this cannot be said of Arafat. His failure cannot be reduced to Agha and Malley’s assertion that he was “fixated on potential traps,” and therefore “he could not see potential opportunities” (*Ross*, par. 58).²

Why is this mistake not enough for Ross? Because in such an explanation of Arafat’s error, the dividing line between explaining and justifying becomes blurred. Agha and Malley wanted to justify by explaining, and Ross wants to criticize. Interesting enough, both concur in their description of Arafat’s behavior, or at least they do not propose different facts. They only differ in judgment.

Agha and Malley may be ready to accept Ross's contention that "Arafat was extremely passive. His style was to respond, not initiate ideas" (*Ross*, par. 67). For Ross, however, this was not the tactic, as it were, of a weak party seeking to obtain more concessions; Ross views this as a consistent attitude, not a tactical mistake. "If it was only a tactic, it should have stopped when serious ideas or package proposals were put on the table" (*Ross*, par. 67). Moreover, Ross adds, "Whether the Israelis put a generous offer on the table is not the issue. The issue is, did Yasser Arafat respond at any point—not only at *Camp David II*—to possibilities to end this conflict when they presented themselves" (*Ross*, par. 67)? Ross answers his own question with an emphatic "no."

Ross agrees with Agha and Malley that Arafat wanted more time to prepare for the summit. However, he adds:

But they neglect to say that he was neither revealing anything himself nor authorizing his negotiators to do anything to make additional preparation possible. On the contrary, at this very time, his negotiators hardened their positions, not being willing even to discuss security arrangements until the Israelis conceded the eastern border (*Ross*, par. 68).

Therefore, the argument is not whether Agha and Malley's report was true, but if it was the whole truth, and it is now clear that, according to Ross, it was not.

The following words clarify Ross's contention that Arafat acted consciously and intentionally, and did not commit mistakes:

It is not just that he had, in the words of President Clinton, "been here fourteen days and said no to everything." It is that all he did at Camp David was to repeat old mythologies and invent new ones, like, for example, that the Temple was not in Jerusalem but in Nablus. Denying the core of the other side's faith is not the act of someone preparing himself to end a conflict (What's more, in the completely closed environment of Camp David, he did nothing to control the fratricidal competition in his delegation—effectively giving license to those who were attacking other members who were trying to find ways to bridge the differences) (*Ross*, par. 69).

By level criticism at Arafat's behavior, Ross shows us to gain insight into those very aspects that have rich cognitive value. In his attempt to clarify Arafat's stance, Ross reveals what we already suspected: that there was an

inner struggle inside the Palestinian delegation.³ In contrast, Agha and Malley assert that Arafat controlled the inner struggle and defended those who wanted to bridge the gaps. They (and Ross) are probably referring to the same people, members of the Palestinian delegation such as Hassan A'sfour, Mahmud Abbas (aka Abu-Mazen) and Mohammed Dahlan. The last was accused, according to his own account, of being too ready to concede ("I had to put up with accusations from others in the Palestinian delegation that I was too keen to reach a deal.")⁴ On different occasions, the three declared their opposition to Arafat's intifada. Apart from that, Agha and Malley believe that Arafat supported them and Ross believes that he did not.

In order to support further his opinion that Arafat's policy was not the outcome of a tactical mistake, Ross adds that

...[N]ear the end of September, when we had just concluded three days of quiet talks with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators and Arafat knew we were on the verge of presenting ideas that would have been close to those the President presented in December, he allowed the violence to erupt and did nothing to prevent it or contain it. This, despite a phone call from Secretary Albright asking him to act and reminding him of what we were about to do (*Ross*, par. 70).

After offering evidence that Arafat did not commit tactical mistakes, he goes on to answer the question as to whether or not he made strategic errors.

Ross asserts that he believes in Arafat's sincere wish for peace, a statement that contradicts both the data provided by Agha and Malley's paper, and Ross's response. Indeed, what proof of this faith in peace can Ross find in Arafat's actual behavior? The answer is not difficult—nothing at all:

*I am not one who believes that Chairman Arafat is against peace in principle. Nor am I one who believes that Palestinian negotiators made no concessions. But at no point during Camp David or in the six months after it did the Chairman ever demonstrate any capability to conclude a permanent status deal [My italics] (*Ross*, par. 72).*

In other words, Ross's conclusion is that Arafat wants peace; he has the will, but lacks the capability to act upon it. Ross relies on a conceptual distinction between will and capability. We are bound to ask what Arafat

having or not having the capability means, and what he *does* have the capability for. The question of Arafat's will, remains, if Kant is right, beyond the analysis of actual behavior. However, Ross travels further along this path and analyzes Arafat's capabilities. Ross's distinction between will and capability neatly avoids criticisms that might have arisen if he had said that Arafat did not want peace.⁵

Agha, Malley and Ross agree upon another issue: They all assume that there are dangerous and non-dangerous thoughts. In cognitive issues, there is no place for "dangerous" thoughts, but only for true or false thoughts. Furthermore, the danger/non-danger distinction crosscuts the truth/false distinction.⁶ A true thought may be dangerous and a false thought harmless. This then proves that neither Ross nor Malley and Agha are committed to the priority of the knowledge of facts; rather, they are guided by efficacy—the use of words as a means to political ends. The gap between theory and its practical use remains, also in this case, insurmountable. According to Henry Kissinger, this was the paradox of the Enlightenment. This paradox lies because contrary to the ideal of their unification, truth remains perpetually in conflict with practice. At the very moment it is used, it can be either dangerous or harmless, namely, it becomes dependent on an extrinsic value. Truth becomes its opposite—either faith or dogma. In Kissinger words: "When truth is strong, its foundation is faith... when truth is challenged, it becomes a dogma."⁷

For this reason, they cannot be considered partners in a theoretical discussion. Their matter is practical. They use arguments, describe and explain events, either in order to learn from the past for the future, or to support some policy. The result is an analysis of facts mixed with ideals or goals. They do not differ over their understanding of events; they differ over the future. What is dangerous for Agha and Malley is safe for Ross. For Ross, it would be dangerous to show that there *is* a reason for the Palestinians' behavior, because it "may perpetuate a mindset that has plagued the Palestinians throughout their history" (*Ross*, par. 73). For Agha and Malley, it would be dangerous to show that there *is no* reason for the same behavior.

Below, and by changing the order of cause and consequence, Ross asserts that

It is not, as Abba Eban said, that the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. It is that in always feeling victimized they fall back on blaming everyone else for their predicament. It is never their fault. History may not have been kind or fair to the Palestinians. They have suffered and been betrayed by others. They are, surely, the weakest player with the fewest cards to play. But by always blaming others, they never have to focus on their own mistakes. And that perpetuates the avoidance of responsibility, not its assumption (*Ross*, par. 74).

He explains Arafat's behavior as committing mistakes. If we circumvent Ross's explanation that Arafat committed mistakes, we get exactly the opposite: that *some* Palestinians (at least Arafat and his closest aides) have an agenda that does not include the assumption of what Ross regards as "responsibility." Their commitment is not to reconciliation or to a peace process but, at least under the given conditions, to the perpetuation of tension. Whether or not it was a mistake, Ross admits that after nine months of violence, "it will take a long time to create the conditions in which solutions can again be discussed" (*Ross*, par. 75).

Ross's arguments are constructed in an opposite way to those of Agha and Malley. According to his version, it is not that others inflict suffering upon the Palestinians, but that they inflict it on themselves. It is as if Ross were arguing that the violence (cf. *Ross*, par. 70/1) is less a reaction to Israeli provocation, but more a Palestinian initiative, whereas for Agha and Malley the initiative for, or at least the cause of, the hostilities is to be found on the Israeli side more than on the Palestinian side. What is interesting here is that, in principle, both sides can be designated as being the initial cause of the violence, and thus, both authors can achieve their readers' support. They can do this by manipulating the relationships between two necessary conditions. They can easily transform this non-temporal relation (in which each appears simultaneously with the other) into a temporal causal relation, and then at their convenience decide who acted, and who re-acted, what was the cause, and what the consequence.

Since the arguments are used as a means to an end, we do not even know if they believe in their contentions. One thing does emerge clearly: Ross, unlike Agha and Malley, is against Arafat's policy. The content of both sides' policies may be *the product of the analysis of the operative meaning fomented by those arguments*.

Arafat's Win/Loss Assumption

Arafat's passivity, as reported by Ross, was the expression of his inability to create the necessary concessions for an agreement of reconciliation. Arafat tended to take an adversarial approach to the negotiations. His assumption was that the negotiations should be based on a win/loss process, namely, under the assumption that the benefits gained by one side indicate a loss to the other side.

In addition to the material we are analyzing, the most authoritative evidence of Arafat's position are the semi-official memories of the events kept by Akram Hanieh, a member of the Palestinian delegation who can genuinely be regarded as Arafat's spokesman.⁸

Reading Hanieh's work, together with Ross's criticism, the conclusion is that Arafat's basic stance in the negotiations was based on the following six guiding principles:

1. The negotiations should not be intended to bring about a resolution of the conflict but should be designed to maintain its *management* as adversarial. A conflict can be managed in order to end it. However, it can also be managed for the sake of monitoring it as a conflict, even for years. Arafat's passivity, combined with his rejection of any proposal that demands concessions from him, is sufficient proof for the characterization of his policy as adversarial.
2. The essential issues, or what are regarded as the most difficult issues to be resolved, should be treated first. The purpose of Arafat's win/loss approach was the perpetuation of the conflict. If some agreement were to be reached, it would be an agreement not to agree. The tactic of a win/win approach, in contrast, consists of first discussing any matters, in which an agreement of mutual benefit can be expected, separately from the other more contentious issues. Paradoxical as it might seem, agreements can often be reached on what are regarded as the less essential matters in the conflict. Those matters, once agreed upon, have the effect of creating favorable situations for the discussion of what are regarded as essential ones. Clinton's win/win tactic was supported by his proposal to discuss those "easy" matters, mainly water and economic relations issues

such as the establishment of a regime of open borders, on a different level. Hanieh recalls that there were the Palestinians who objected to such a procedure and believed that: "The major issues of Jerusalem, refugees, land, borders, and security had to be dealt with first" (*ibid*: 79). Arafat also rejected the link proposed by Clinton between the *Camp David II* and the Okinawa summits, "promising huge financial support from the G-8 for any agreement the two sides would reach" (*ibid*: 79). It was only Barak, who supported a comprehensive agreement that accepted Clinton's procedure. And it was precisely Arafat, who was apparently in favor of interim agreements alone, who rejected the idea to postpone the issue of Jerusalem for two years: "Not even for two hours" he said (*ibid*: 81). Jerusalem, he pointed out, is not only a Palestinian issue, but also concerns Indonesia, Pakistan and Malaysia.⁹

3. To make offers that are unlikely to be accepted. Arafat's zero-sum view of Jerusalem was as follows: On the one hand, he asserted that the conflict concerns the entire Arab world, and that he is not only the representative of the Palestinians. On the other hand, he stated that, "The issue of the Jews who left Arab countries and their compensation was not within the domain of the Palestinian side and would not be discussed" (*ibid*: 94). On the one hand, the Israeli demand for allowing Jews to pray in the Haram al-Sharif meant, "toying with explosives that could ignite the Middle East and the Islamic world while also adding a religious dimension to the conflict in such a way as to make a conflagration inevitable" (*ibid*: 83). On the other hand, Arafat himself added the religious dimension to the conflict by saying to Clinton that: "I am not only the leader of the Palestinian people, I am also the vice president of the Islamic Conference. I also defend the rights of Christians. I will not sell Jerusalem. And I will not allow for a delay in discussions on Jerusalem, not even for a minute" (*ibid*: 95). Moreover, Arafat said that Jerusalem "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" (*ibid*: 86).

4. To remain uncooperative regarding the political problems created by the other side's political adversaries. As for Barak's need and will for an agreement at *Camp David II*, Hanieh defines it as being pursued in order to remain in power. He calls it a "tired refrain" (*ibid*: 79). Assuming, for the sake of the analysis, that this is indeed Barak's motivation, Hanieh recalls the insensitive Palestine stand: "In the last days of the summit, the refrain became "If an agreement isn't reached, Barak will form a national unity government" (*ibid.*). Hanieh says that these statements were repeated to the point that a Palestinian delegate asked angrily: "Is this a summit to salvage the peace process or to rescue Barak's government?" (*Ibid.*). It is reasonable to assume Arafat's attitude served a dual purpose: to avoid an agreement and at the same time to damage Barak's political status in Israel. These are but the same even in the eyes of Arafat, as can be realized by the nature of the complaint that connects both issues.
5. To play the role of a victim in order to prevent the need for concessions. In doing so, Arafat tried to avoid the need for equal flexibility and concessions. In Hanieh's words, Clinton's policy demanded that: "Any Israeli step should be matched by a Palestinian step. Such a policy ignores the fact that the Palestinians are the victims of Israeli aggression and that the land the Israelis are offering to 'give up' is Palestinian land occupied by military force" (*ibid*: 80).
6. To adopt a divisive stands that either prevent an agreement or indefinitely perpetuate the conflict. Hanieh's assumption is that there is room to be either pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian, so that what is good for one side is surely the worst choice for the other. He says that the Palestinians suffered "from the total pro-Israeli bias of the U.S. peace team" (*ibid*: 78). The assumption implies that since the sides are in total opposition, there is a need for a broker, and in this case, Clinton the broker "met with Barak before and after every meeting he held with

Arafat" (*ibid.*: 91). Such a biased description makes Barak the point of departure and the point of arrival in Clinton's order of meetings. This description reveals the assumption at work. The same process would be perfectly described by saying that Clinton met with Arafat before and after every meeting he held with Barak or, if the intention is to emphasize the symmetry, to say that Clinton met with each leader separately. From a logical standpoint, the three descriptions describe the same state of affairs. Hanieh's preferred description reveals Arafat's assumption. The rationale of the procedure, about which Hanieh complains, was to avoid direct meetings between both leaders in order to keep them as a safety-valve in case of acute "misunderstandings" between the negotiators.¹⁰

Arafat and the Conspiracy Theory

Agha and Malley believe that subconsciously, Arafat obsessed over his feelings that there was an Israeli-American conspiracy against him (*A and M I*, par. 21). Daniel Pipes, who has studied this phenomenon at length, gives many examples of Arafat's similar allegations. Israel and the United States not only plot against him personally, but also plot against both the Palestinian people and the Arab world.

Arafat's allegations are understandable. However, to accept that he really believes in those conspiracies, as Pipes seems to believe, requires an extraordinary amount of naiveté. Arafat's references to conspiracies are themselves part of his own conspiracy. He uses them as a means for achieving his hidden goals. Arafat is trying to present himself as being naïve in order to cover his intentions and to prevent people from perceiving that all of his actions are calculated, or to show that he cannot negotiate in good faith with those who plot against him. While at other times they are used to condemn the western world for its supposed intentions to rob the Arab's of their oil reserves. However, in order to understand his policy, we need to analyze the content and context of his allegations.

The real problem however, is the way in which political scientists and analysts deal with the political use of those allegations. A distinction

should be made between conspiracies resulting from a pathological state of mind, and real political conspiracies.

Pipes writes that Arafat has himself a career of conspirator, that began at the time he was arrested in Egypt at the age of 25 for complicity in an attempted plot to assassinate then Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954. Pipes points out that "this provided the perfect public debut for a man whose whole career involved conspiring in the shadowy and layered world of Palestinian politics."¹¹

This insight into Arafat's style however, runs contrary to the general tendency of Pipes's own theory regarding conspiracy theories. If, as Pipes states, Arafat's inclination to conspire is the result of his susceptibility to belief in conspiracy theories, then it can hardly be instrumental, because the manipulative use of arguments as a means requires emotional detachment from the victims. If on the contrary, the use of conspiracy theories is part of Arafat's pathological pursuit of profit and power, or part of an affective disorder, then he would be prone to plot in the first case, and to suffer paranoid delusions in the second case. In both cases, he would be compelled to act in a predictable way that would cause him political damage. Pathological liars can easily hurt themselves rather than damaging others, while instrumental liars mostly obtain benefits from their victims.

Arafat certainly conspires like anyone else in the political world. However, readiness to conspire is a matter of differing degrees. There are politicians that take their conspiracies much farther than others and those who are more reluctant to conspire. However, some degree of conspiracy is part of their everyday activity. The fact that people are fascinated by fancy conspiracy theories is not an argument against the existence of political conspiracies. Conspiracy is an inseparable part of instrumental rationality.¹²

A second distinction should be made between a pejorative meaning of conspiracy theory that judges politicians negatively as people conspiring to cause certain perceived ills, or to commit unlawful acts, and a value-neutral approach which is intended to analyze conspiracies without taking sides for or against their use. In this second sense, which is the sense of political science, we should recognize the pivotal role that secret diplomacy, second track negotiations, tactic and strategic planning, and the intelligence services, play in political affairs. Stauffenberg's conspiracy

against Hitler can hardly be defined as an attempt to cause certain perceived ills, and yet they were still conspirators. Charles Pigden defines conspiracy in such value-neutral way, as:

[A] secret plan on the part of a group to influence events partly by covert action. Conspiracies therefore can be either good or bad depending on the purposes, circumstances and methods used. ‘Conspiracy’ ... is not necessarily a pejorative word. However in a democracy, where politics is supposed to be above board, there is perhaps a *presumption* (but no more) that conspiracies are morally suspect.¹³

A third distinction should be made between a conspiracy *mentality* and conspiracy *theories*. Conspiracies are not theories but a type of behavior that “conspiracy theories” should try to explain. Arafat for instance, does not have a conspiracy theory but plainly and simply conspires. One can conspire without possessing a special conspiracy theory, and another can embrace a conspiracy theory without conspiring.

Conspiracies are a rational way to deal with negotiations and secret talks, especially if the sides cannot publicly coordinate their strategic decisions. The problem is most likely with those value-oriented conspiracy theories and not Arafat’s (or anyone else’s) conspiracies.

Pipes’s contention is that, “While the *conspiracy* mentality exists in all regions of the world, it is outstandingly common in the Middle East.”¹⁴ I will apply the principle of charity, assuming that he recognizes conspiracies, but is against conspiracy theories. Pipes asserts that conspiracy theories are *used instrumentally* more in the Middle East than in any other place. It is not true, obviously, because such theories have scarcely been discussed in the Arab world. Besides, he does not offer a reference. Instead of explaining his statement, on the one hand, he offers examples of *a conspiracy mentality*, while on the other hand he analyzes the meaning of *conspiracy theories*. His contention is that:

Conventional thinking starts with data and then builds theories (a process known as induction). Conspiracy theorists reverse the order, starting instead with a paradigm and arranging the information to prove it (the process of deduction). Seeking knowledge in this peculiar manner has a great number of implications. What elsewhere would indicate weakness—obscure evidence, farfetched schemas, and imprecise language—seem not to harm a conspiracy theory. ... [I]n inductive reasoning, facts determine views; a change in facts leads to a

change in views. Not so with deduction, where convictions precede and override facts. Elevating beliefs into a faith implies a closed-mindedness that broaches no contradiction. Focusing on what fits his thesis, the conspiracy theorist ignores everything else.¹⁵

Pipes's description of the conspiracy and of the not conspiracy theories is inaccurate. In regard to Pipes's "inductive" approach, a process of knowledge cannot start with data and then come up with theories. There is not a pure inductive reasoning, because any induction implies asking a question that defines the field of research and delimits its scope. The question that begins the inductive process is not itself part of the process. An induction implies a deduction. Facts gain their conceptual meaning within the framework of theories. The result of the posturing to get in touch with facts without a theory or a presupposition is the discovery of their own assumptions but under the guise of "empirical findings." The ignorance of presuppositions leads to the conclusion that even the inquirer's questions are part of the "findings." As in Mythical thinking, unrecognized presuppositions tend to gain the status of an independent reality.

On the other hand, Pipes asserts that the rationalist conspiracy theorist will never be wrong. Conspiracy theorists reveal, "great talent at finding ways to get around new evidences that shows him to be wrong; rather than reconsider, he redoubles his allegations of conspiracy" (*ibid*: 252). However, empiricists such as Pipes will never be able to build a theory. They will always try to find it in the wrong place, as if theories come to the world attached to their objects. Theories without facts become fantasies, in the same way that facts without theories become meaningless.

When discussing evidences, Pipes contends, conspiracy theories are highly selective in disregarding "negative" evidences. They "follow a highly subjective approach ... achieving 'consistency through omission and embellishment'."¹⁶

While Pipes argues that conspiracy theories are "highly selective," he contends, on the contrary that, for them, "any evidence is acceptable:"

When conjecture does the work of proof, evidences can take any form. Coincidence of outlandish fact will do; should even this be missing, the merest hint or allusion serves as evidence. When it's convenient, the conspiracy theorist applies a most undemanding standard of proof. Any piece of confirming information serves as evidence. What supports his paradigm readily becomes established fact. ...

Fantastical minutiae and specious documents take on a life of their own. A few facts and hunches spin a full and detailed fabric (*ibid.*).

Pipes's non-critical empiricism suffers from the same contradiction. It is highly selective and it accepts any evidence. This time however, he believes that "facts determine views." Through such a selection, Pipes explains that Jerusalem is not important for Islam, and its centrality is simply an Arab plot against Jews and Christians. Although he does not define himself as a supporter of the conspiracy theory, he actually imitates it perfectly. One of his assertions is that: "In Jerusalem, theological and historical arguments matter, serving often as the functional equivalent of legal claims."¹⁷ What is the purpose? It is for the sake of power: in order to "help determine who governs the city" (*ibid.*). The proof he uses consists of a highly selective collection of historical facts and contentions, which is the same fault he found in conspiracy theories.

Pipes also uses "negative" evidences that he claims are used by conspiracy theorists: "Jerusalem is not the place to which Muslims pray" (*ibid.*). For him, this is a fact that should determine a view. Another proof is that Jerusalem "is not even mentioned by name in the Koran" (*ibid.*). These arguments are mirror images of what he alleges is the conspiracy theory. Has Pipes offered any proof that Jerusalem is less central for Islam than for Judaism? It seems that this is not the case. Since there are no evidences about the originality of Solomon's Temple, Judaism has as much "right" to the city as Islam. It was probably built upon the ruins of an older Canaanite temple, just as the Aksa Mosque was built upon the ruins of Solomon's Temple. As for the issue of names, probably the name "Jerusalem" comes from Ur-Shalem, a Canaanite word meaning "the city of Salem," a city of the clan of Jebusites. The name Salem is Shalem in the Aramaic language and only later was introduced into Hebrew and Arabic to mean "peace." Additionally, the Arabic name for Jerusalem is Al-Quds (The Holy One) and not "Jerusalem." Those arguments are selectively obviated by Pipes's empiricism.

However, this entire issue is separate and distinct from Pipes's inductive scientific methods and of what he alleges is the deductive method of conspiracy theories. In order to claim sovereignty over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, history and facts become totally irrelevant. Instead, the whole issue of religious rights over sacred places is a matter of tradition, and tradition is what counts in this "debate." As a result, it appears to be

a common conspiracy of both sides, where the positions of both Islam and Judaism, appear to be in contradiction to historical facts. Even if archeologists and historians will reveal hard facts on this issue, nothing will change the mind of conspiracy theorists and their opponents. The particular “hard-fact” is that both sides rely upon a treasury of legends and tales that became real in the minds of both peoples. Those are the hard historical facts, and to try to remove them from their minds by means of “enlightenment” about genuine historical facts is condemned to failure, because it would mean the removal of ideas that are an expression of the being and behavior of their holders.¹⁸ It would mean to annul them as what they *really* believe they are, and therefore of what they really are.

Unaware of his own presuppositions, the conspiracy theory, in Pipes’s criticism, becomes a mirror image of his own approach. The peak of this being is the inverted image of the other. If conspiracy theories transform mishaps into plans and coherence, then Pipes transforms them into mishaps and incoherence. If the former transforms coincidence into schema, then Pipes transforms schema into coincidence. If aimlessness becomes strategy—strategy becomes aimlessness; and if folly becomes intention, then Pipes transforms intention into folly.¹⁹ If for the one there are no mistakes, then for the other there is only a “march of folly.”²⁰

Both theories are irrelevant to the understanding of politics. Their explanations are abstract and produce poor cognitive output. They are abstract, because their type of evidences and their account of facts end in the expression of the values and wishes of the proponents while moving away from facts and evidences. Those who sustain them, conspiracy theorists and their opponents alike, use them as ideological arguments for implementing their stands.

If political science wants to understand politics beyond stances, then nothing is evidence except what it can interpret as evidence, and everything which it can interpret as evidence, is evidence. Every situation which it studies is a concrete situation; every political action is a concrete action. When political science is studying the *Camp David II* summit, what makes it a science is the fact that it thinks of the summit as something unique; something from which there is and can be only one of, in the entire history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, something that did not and could not happen twice: not an instance of things called “summits” which have often happened and will frequently happen again, but

the unique summit held at Camp David in July 2000. Political science may generalize about summits, but only, not in their capacity as science. This is not its business. Its business is to deal solely with the tangible situation presented within its context of an equally concrete nature.²¹

It is for this reason that details are so important in scientific research. Wrestling with the minutiae of declarations, documents and circumstances, should be regarded a merit of empirical analysis rather than a defect of conspiracy theories. Popular conspiracy theories and their opponents definitely enter into details, but only at the point that they help them to build up their preconceived views. And when given-data does not fit their views, they avoid entering into details.

The common outcome of such procedures is lacking in explanation and offers inadequate cognitive mapping. Their reductionism causes them to become confused by, or indifferent to details. In this sense, they are unempirical just because they are compatible with every conceivable finite set of facts, namely, they fit any fact, and any fact can become the excuse for any theory. This is absolutely correct because their aim is not to search for the truth but to discredit other researcher's positions. However, from the point of view of knowledge, after all their efforts to either show conspiracies, order and plan or, in contrast, chance and chaos, they find only one guiding force in politics: the search for power. Exercising power is the aim, but power as an explanation, explains almost nothing. "Power" is used in the same way as those who, when events cannot be explained, evoke the power of God as an *ignorantiae asylum*.²² Power cannot offer an answer to definite questions about political decisions in a specific context. It is an empty answer to empty questions. Exercising power is a means that can be used for contradictory goals. It can bring peace and war, poverty and wealth, dictatorship and democracy, or destruction and construction. Regarding a specific decision—those theories cannot explain its meaning. They can only say: "It was made for the sake of exercising power." Reference to power for the sake of exercising power is even anti-intellectual. Intellectual work should not be measured by its capacity for abstract generalizations, but by its capacity to dissociate issues that traditionally are inseparable. Intellectual work is the capacity for analysis (for instance, the capacity for "detaching" a color from the colored-thing) without directly "restoring" its original unity, namely, with-

out quickly jumping to conclusions—it is the capacity for analysis without running into a synthesis.

Pipes seems to maintain an extreme empiricism while conspiracy theories, as he describes them, seem to support an extreme rationalism. Both are distorted descriptions of the methods of political science. According to Francis Bacon, empiricists such as Pipes are like the ant; they only collect and use data. The rationalists, like conspiracy theorists, resemble spiders, “who make cobwebs out of their own substance.”²³ Science, on the contrary, is a synthesis of Pipes and his version of conspiracy theories. Ants collect facts without clearly understanding them, while spiders have the ability to be logical, but choose to invent their facts or compel the facts to fit their imaginations. The bee which gathers pollen from the flowers, but transforms and digests it through its own power producing a synthesis, honey, is an appropriate metaphor for the process of knowledge.

An accurate theory should remain attached to facts without renouncing to itself. Political research is guided by its own questions. The selection of testimonies, documents and evidences is determined by their relevance to the question that the scientists pose. There are also unscientific questions. If the question is how to convince others, as Pipes contends is the case in conspiracy theories, then the answer is guided by predetermined values. In this case, theory becomes a justificatory ideology for the support of preconceived political stands. Since it does not pose, openly and directly, the question it asks—“how to convince others?”—ideology becomes “conspiracy.”

Value-charged conspiracy theories and Pipes’s inductive method, are not value neutral and therefore do not pose their questions openly. Political science should adopt a neutral and detached attitude being able to ask hard questions and surrender to disappointing answers.

Since conspiracies are instrumental in politics, political science should benefit from seriously taking them into account.²⁴ The questions about Arafat’s allegations of conspiracies against him are about the ends he wishes to obtain, and the rules that he chooses to follow. His implicit message can be stated as: “I am at most a partner for certain partial arrangements, but not for mutual agreement.” Since he does not say it openly, Arafat’s arguments about conspiracies against him are themselves part of his own conspiracy.



Chapter Three

Barak's Mistakes?

Agha and Malley—A Rejoinder to Dennis Ross

Agha and Malley wrote a rejoinder to Ross's letter in the same issue of the *NYRB* (September 20 2001). They summarize Ross's position by asserting that he says that Arafat was incapable of "doing a permanent status deal," so that the missteps (if there were such) of the Israeli and American sides "...Might have had any significant impact on the ultimate outcome of the effort to reach a final agreement. Were Arafat capable of reaching a deal, we would have had one; the fact that we do not proves that he is not" (*A and M II*, par. 76).

This is indeed the essence of Ross's position. Even so, it is exposed in a way that makes it easily refutable. First, it puts the reader into a mood that makes it easy to reject Ross's argument. The essence of Ross's argument is that Arafat did not want a deal, but he prefers to say that he was incapable of making it ("I am not one who believes that Chairman Arafat is against peace in principle" (*Ross*, par. 72)). While Agha and Malley, in order to avoid the conclusion that Arafat did not want to reach a deal, use the word "capacity" (instead of "capability") as a substitute, or a synonym, for "will." By doing so, they make it appear that Ross asserted that the fact that Arafat did not reach a deal proves that he did not want it, which is indeed true, but Ross did not want to state that so clearly.

Agha and Malley exploit Ross's refusal to admit that for Arafat, the lack of a deal was actually a success (Instead, Ross refers to it as Arafat's "mistake") that would facilitate the coming conflict. If Ross were able to advance such an idea, Agha and Malley would then be forced to prove that this is not true. But their basic assumption is that Arafat, like everyone else, wanted to reach an agreement. Therefore, it never has to be ques-

tioned. It remains unspoken and safe, as Ross does not force them to defend it. The essence of Agha and Malley's response is that nobody was able to reach a deal, and everybody was subjected to the tragedy of historical and cultural circumstances.

In their rejoinder, they state that Ross,

...[W]ho spent countless tireless hours seeking to bridge gaps between Arabs and Israelis, knows—better than most—that any negotiation is a fragile enterprise, in which one must be attuned to questions of timing, personal psychology, popular moods, domestic constraints, distrust, and politics pure and simple. This is all the more true in the case of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which is so laden with cultural, historical, and religious components, where deep insecurities on both sides magnify the importance of the negotiating process, and whose core issues the leaders had to resolve in a fortnight after having studiously ignored them for years (*A and M II*, par. 77).

If they are correct in their assertion regarding Ross's awareness, then the conclusion might be exactly the opposite: precisely because Ross knows, "better than most," the context in which these negotiations took place, his decision to censure Arafat's stance should be more convincing than any others.

Obviously, this is not their argument. Agha and Malley sustain, unlike Ross, who blames Arafat for the failure, that they are not biased. Their article "does not assign blame or catalog each side's respective mistakes" (*A and M II*, par. 78). However, the paradox of the Enlightenment does not skip over them; they are committed to the process, they intend to intervene in it, so they try to offer a solution, and not only to understand it. They are not "neutral" but present themselves as being neutral in order to build their deterministic version of the events, which in its turn, is nevertheless, just another means to advance their proposals.

Following this line of argumentation, they make general observations about the negotiations, in order to entice the reader's mind to reach the conclusion that an agreement could not and would not be able to be achieved in the future:

... [T]he historical context and conduct of the negotiations shaped the parties' attitudes and effectively undermined the possibility of a deal. Dennis wishes to treat Arafat's behavior at Camp David in a vacuum—divorced from what had occurred during the seven years

since Oslo and the twelve months since Barak had become prime minister; and divorced, too, from political dynamics on the Palestinian side. But it is no more possible to do this than it is to divorce Barak's behavior from Israel's parallel experience or from its own political realities (*A and M II*, par. 78).

Years of accumulated mistrust and loss of faith in the peace process, political circumstances in Israel and among the Palestinians, the history of prior agreements, perceptions of the United States' role, the relationship (or lack thereof) between Barak and Arafat, the mechanics of the negotiations—all these contributed to a situation in which each side's actions were interpreted by the other in the most damaging way (*A and M II*, par. 79).

The idea is to prepare our mind to not censure the actors, but to understand how each party's historical circumstances shaped their attitudes and undermined the possibility of achieving a deal.

In order to prove that an agreement cannot be achieved, they deny the parties an active role and allow them to disavow responsibility for their respective behavior. For this purpose, they do not describe the parties as active historical subjects but as being passively acted upon by circumstances. They need this fruitful paradoxical conclusion. It is indeed convincing. After a fast and normal reading, the reader tend to agree that nobody tried to undermine a deal, because according to their explanation, it was impossible to reach a deal from the very beginning.

With this purpose in mind, Agha and Malley transform the circumstances into actors of history while the actual actors become objects upon which the circumstances acted, so that they themselves become "circumstances" of the circumstances. They want us to believe that policymakers are not those who act upon circumstances and even shape them in order to advance their values. They describe them rather as objects of circumstances. They cannot decide not to be the objects of their circumstances, they cannot decide to be what they are—politicians, or active subjects. As the hero of a classical tragedy, they are lead, step by imperceptible step to their destiny by events beyond their power and will.

This is however the role of the observers. They are "like the chorus in Greek tragedy, whose vocation was to express musical consternation at events that it was powerless to control."¹ It works well for persuading the reader, though is not the case of those analysts. Agha and Malley write with an intention. In this case, it is not to justify Arafat's (and even Ba-

rak's) behavior per se. They try to provide an explanation of the situation in order to draw the conclusion that *they cannot resolve by themselves their tragic situation*.

Agha and Malley go further, offering more details, with their "circumstantial" thesis. As an example of their argument for a non-subjective tragedy of errors, they cite the following:

For instance, Barak's decisions not to implement some of the interim commitments made at Oslo and afterward, and not to turn over three Jerusalem-area neighborhoods to the Palestinians, were consistent with his desire to seek a comprehensive deal and therefore entirely logical from his point of view, but those decisions were seen by the Palestinians merely as further examples of Israel's ignoring its obligations and seeking to maximize the pressure it was bringing to bear on them (*A and M II*, par. 79).

One might add here "...And were therefore entirely logical from their point of view." Such an addition, left to be drawn by the reader's mind, is almost a completion of the text. It clarifies Agha and Malley's argument, especially their search for a tragic symmetry between the parties.

The conclusion is simply that the summit's failure is the only logical outcome that could be expected, a necessarily and deterministic failure.

Within that argumentation, there is no place for decision-making, for subject-actions, and no useful political progress can be made in the Middle East until a providential change of circumstances takes place. Who is the subject of, or who are those subjective forces that might replace the lack of subjects and the all-embracing presence of "circumstances"? Who are those who might bring the solution, from without, to the unavoidable Israeli and Palestinian "narratives?" Without stating it explicitly, there are the international forces that are to be deployed along the borders between both countries. In essence, the criticism they level at Ross is that "...Nothing in what Dennis writes demonstrates that Arafat's alleged inability to reach a deal, rather than the overall context and the clash of opposing mindsets, was responsible for the failure to achieve an agreement" (*A and M II*, par. 80).

In their version of events, it is the circumstances, and neither Arafat nor Barak, who bear responsibility. All of their fatalistic account of the events comes in order to call for a providential, foreign intervention, a *deus ex machina*.

Deus ex machina and Malley's Intervention

Agha and Malley assert that the Palestinians “will avoid responsibility when, to date, they are the only ones to have been held accountable for the failure to reach a deal” (*A and M II*, par. 81).

This implies that if the Palestinians (I would prefer to refer to Arafat specifically and his supporters) were under pressure to decide between supporting the failure of the negotiations or its success, they would prefer its success. However, they fail to prove this assumption. Instead, it is proven that Arafat preferred its failure to its success; and if the result of this failure and the price to be paid are the serious incriminations made against him, so be it—providing that the state of violence is preserved.² The question regarding the reason for his behavior is secondary here; since whether or not we realize it, the events resulting from his decisions remain the same. For the moment we are trying to verify Arafat's decisions, not their reasons or causes. Moreover, the reasons that may be given for his actions are seldom a consequence of the pattern of his thinking, but more a consequence of the pattern of thought of his public, those to whom the reasons are addressed.

Agha and Malley rightly said that:

...[T]he question is not whether Arafat made mistakes, or whether these were justified. The question is whether his behavior can be explained by factors other than his presumed inability to put an end to the conflict. A close scrutiny of events, we believe, shows that it can (*A and M II*, par. 82).

This indeed is the issue under discussion. His behavior *must* be explained by factors other than his inability to put an end to the conflict. His inability is not at all a factor, but rather it is an interpretative device for anyone attempting to decipher Arafat's behavior. It is somewhat paradoxical to appeal to a subject's ability or inability. How can we know if someone has the capability if it is not put into action? In this case, how would we know whether or not this is the interpreter's *assumption* about the values and goals of the subject under analysis? In fact, this is impossible to determine, and the concept of capability, in the absence of evidences, becomes an easy and ready-made excuse, a type of “wildcard” or “joker” to be played at will. In this case, they only use it because Arafat's could not be investigated. If as an interpreter, one wants to support an

action taken by the actor, one can argue that he/she did what he/she was capable of doing. If one dislikes the actor's behavior, but wants to defend him against bearing responsibility for his/her actions, one can say he/she was unable to do what he/she in fact wanted to do.

They are concerned with a factor other than Arafat's inability in order to justify their call for the sudden appearance of a *deus ex machina* upon the stage of political life. If one side in the conflict is blamed, then the other side is justified and gains legitimacy for his/her hostile actions, and a *deus ex machina* remains unjustified. Its presence will appear as coming to the defense of those who support terrorism and violence. This is the real intent behind the refrain from placing the blame on Arafat. The need to bring international forces into the picture implies the need to justify his policy.

Others in the Palestinian team at *Camp David II*, who opposed Arafat, tried to prevent an end of the summit that would, by necessity, lead to violence. Dennis Ross, assuming, maybe, that God intervenes in history by means of His creatures, spoke about the details of a particularly unpleasant conflict in which Robert Malley was involved.

During the night before the last day of negotiations, before Clinton's trip to Okinawa, some members of the Palestinian team, probably Arafat's opponents (Ross does not tell who they were, although Hassan A'sfour is probably among them), asked for some clarifications regarding the content of the Clinton's proposal to be discussed next day at 9.00 a.m. with Arafat. Sandy Berger and Robert Malley decided, without consultations, to reply on behalf of the American delegation, while the rest were asleep.

Ross tells that during course of the evening the mood of the Americans "shifted from doom and gloom to hope."³ At 7.30 a.m., Ross was reported that "things had not gone well during the night" (*ibid.*), that Samuel "Sandy" Berger, Clinton's National Security Adviser, with Robert Malley and Gamal Hilal, went back to the Palestinians with answers that together they had worked out. Although Ross does not tell what the answers of this "Berger-led" group were, he reports that the Palestinian response to Malley and Berger's clarifications was to take a break of two weeks in order to allow Arafat time for consultations with Arab leaders. This proposal was at least worthy of being discussed, as a move in order to prevent the total failure of the summit, or as a way to pass peacefully

and gradually into a new process of interim accords. Their proposal was rejected by Berger and Malley: "The Sandy-led group response was that there would be no break; we needed an answer on the U.S. ideas: Were they a basis for concluding an agreement, yes or no. The answer came back 'no'" (*ibid.*). Their negative answer pushed the Palestinians to give a "no." Berger and Malley brought the Palestinians to turn down the package of ideas as the basis for a deal. Ross writes:

I was stunned that I had not been awakened. Neither had Madeleine. I called the Secretary to tell her what had happened so she would know before going to the meeting with the President. She was furious. That she had not been awakened made her angry. That I had not been awakened left her incredulous. How, she asked, could they develop any answers without going to you? I had no response (*ibid.*).

Ross interpreted the Palestinian's questions posed during the night, as an initiative coming from those in their delegation that wanted to offer a positive answer, "or at least to give something other than a negative response" (*ibid.*: 691.) Ross based his reasoning on the specificity of the Palestinian's questions. He believed that they were not part "of a game to whittle down what we had presented" (*ibid.*). After Malley's and Berger's answers, "the possibility of testing the meaning of the Palestinian questions had apparently been lost" (*ibid.*). Ross adds:

But there was no need for me to get angry with anyone, the Secretary's anger was sufficient for both. She blew up at Sandy, whose response was that he assumed that with Gamal involved, she and I had been kept informed. Gamal's explanation was that Sandy had determined who was involved and Sandy wanted to work quickly and not expand the circle. Rob [Robert Malley] simply apologized, saying he had known there would be a problem.... It was obvious that we were in serious trouble (*ibid.*).

Regarding Malley, who recognized that he was aware that he was creating a "problem," when he acted against those moderates in the Palestinian delegation that wanted to bring an end to the summit without crisis, by allowing the continuation of the negotiations, and pushing them into Arafat's camp. I believe his behavior on that night was consistent with his view that the sides would be better off if they recognized the impossibility of bridging the discrepancies between the "narratives" instead of

reaching any type of agreement either final or an interim. The alternative interpretation is to believe that only knew that “there would be a problem” when asked by Ross the next morning.

Compatible Interests

According to Agha and Malley, both sides had compatible interests:

The fact is that Camp David and the talks that followed demonstrated that, at their core, Israeli and Palestinian interests are compatible. For Israel those interests include its continued existence as a Jewish state; genuine security; Jewish Jerusalem as its recognized capital; respect and acknowledgment of its connection to holy Jewish sites. For the Palestinians they include a viable, contiguous Palestinian State on the West Bank and Gaza with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital and sovereignty over its Muslim and Christian holy sites; meaningful sovereignty; and a just settlement of the refugee issue. In short, both sides share a fundamental interest in realizing their national right of self-determination within internationally recognized borders on the basis of the two-state solution (*A and M II*, par. 84).

If true, why did they fail to reach an agreement? Three answers may be offered, but only the last of them is plausible:

1. The goals that Agha and Malley ascribe to the parties were indeed their goals, but the parties failed to find the necessary means to achieve them.
2. The goals that Agha and Malley ascribe to the parties were indeed their goals, but the parties were unaware of their own interests.
3. The goals that Agha and Malley ascribe to the parties are *not* their goals; Palestinians and/or Israelis do not hold these goals or interests.

Regarding (1), if the argument is that the sides, or at least one side, failed to find the necessary means for achieving their goals, we are left with the unanswerable question as to whether they *could not* find the means or they *did not want* to find the means. The latter leads directly to the conclusion that they did not want the ends that (1) assumes they want. Whoever wants the end, has to want the means.⁴ Besides, if you

assume that the actors failed to find the necessary means to achieve their goals, then these goals become desires or wishes, and are not really ends. Ends are defined as correlative to means—that is, their definition incorporates the notion that there are means to achieve them. Wishes may become ends only if added a readiness to take the necessary means. Without this readiness, a wish is not even volition and is likely to remain unpractical.

As for (2) (declaring that they had goals that they did not acknowledge,) it seems even more problematic than (1). After all, what is an interest if it is not the objectification of a goal?⁵ A goal is determined only consciously. In order to explain something, we may sometimes refer to “unconscious goals,” but this is simply a metaphorical figure of speech, an exaggeration in order to clarify a situation. Sometimes, we use the term “unconscious goals” to refer to the unsolicited results of goals, or to repressed desires or drives. However, unconscious goals cannot be applied to the means-end relationship. Furthermore, this argument assumes that the interpreter (Agha and Malley in this case) knows better than the actors do about what their true interests, namely, their goals, are—and this is a manipulative assertion. If other people believe that you know better than they do about what they wish for, then they will be ready to follow you come hell or high water.⁶

Only the third conclusion is reasonable. Indeed, if evidence works against one's thesis, one may need to modify the thesis rather than adjust the facts. One or both sides were clearly not ready for the agreement that Agha and Malley believe both parties hoped to achieve. Moreover, they are so reluctant to accept the facts that they contend that the tragedy of errors that led to the summit's failure, “contains a message of hope. For it points to the possibility that things can turn out differently if they are done differently” (*A and M II*, par. 86).

Therefore, their reason for avoiding accusation of Arafat is clear: beyond the question of whether Arafat did or did not decide to avoid an agreement, they believe that admitting Arafat's responsibility for the summit's failure would be dangerous to the future of the peace process.

As to the question about why they do not accept this conclusion, they alone hinted at the answer: things, with Arafat, can be different if are done differently. But the sides themselves cannot do them. Each one is too absorbed in its own narrative, forced by the power of their circum-

stances in order to solve their own problems. In short, they are not political subjects.



Chapter Four

Lies and Negotiations

Ehud Barak: An Answer to Agha and Malley

On June 13 2000, the *NYRB* published an interview with Ehud Barak by Benny Morris that can be regarded as an answer to Agha and Malley's first paper of August 9 2001.

Morris starts by describing Barak's July 18 2000 proposal mediated by President Bill Clinton:

Midway in the conference, apparently on July 18, Clinton had “slowly”—to avoid misunderstanding—read out to Arafat a document, endorsed in advance by Barak, outlining the main points of a future settlement. The proposals included the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian State on some 92 percent of the West Bank and 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, with some territorial compensation for the Palestinians from pre-1967 Israeli territory; the dismantling of most of the settlements and the concentration of the bulk of the settlers inside the 8 percent of the West Bank to be annexed by Israel; the establishment of the Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, in which some Arab neighborhoods would become sovereign Palestinian territory and others would enjoy “unconditional autonomy;” Palestinian sovereignty over half the Old City of Jerusalem (the Muslim and Christian quarters) and “custodianship,” though not sovereignty, over the Temple Mount; a return of refugees to the prospective Palestinian State though with no “right of return” to Israel proper; and the organization by the international community of a massive aid program to facilitate the refugees’ rehabilitation (*M and B I*, par. 90).¹

Arafat said “no,” according to Morris (cf. *M and B I*, par. 91),² who quotes President Clinton as saying “You are leading your people and the

region to a catastrophe” (*M and B I*, par. 91). At the end of September 2000, the second intifada began.

Barak, referring to Arafat’s attitude at Camp David, pointed out that “he did not negotiate in good faith, indeed, he did not negotiate at all. He just kept saying ‘no’ to every offer, never making any counterproposals of his own” (*M and B I*, par. 92).

This does not contradict Agha and Malley’s contention; they state the same opinion, only in somewhat gentler words. Agha and Malley refer to Arafat pursuing an agenda rather than entering into negotiations (the implementation of previous agreements); in practice, this means he did not intend to negotiate, as Barak alleges. Barak also agrees with Agha and Malley that no Palestinian counter-proposal was made. Barak says explicitly that Agha and Malley were hoodwinked by Arafat (Cf. *M and B I*, par. 92).

How does Barak explain Arafat’s behavior? He contends that either Arafat lacks the character and will to make an historical compromise, or Arafat wants to destroy the State of Israel as a Jewish state and to create in its place a Palestinian state in all of Palestine. Actually, both these positions are entirely reconcilable and rather than alternatives, they can be seen as tactics aimed at the same strategy. Indeed, in order to create a Palestinian state in all of Palestine, it is logical to try to avoid an agreement that implies a final recognition of the State of Israel or bestows legitimacy on this state. In addition, similarly, being “unable” to arrive at a compromise is a perfect device for achieving this very end.

This raises two questions: One is if this is indeed the reason for Arafat’s behavior, while the other is why Barak used the tactic of accusing Arafat for the summit’s failure instead of recognizing, as many Israelis do, that they face a tragic conflict between opposite senses of historical justice.

Does Arafat have the “intention” to destroy the State of Israel, as Barak states? I do not believe in it mainly because of such an intention has no operative meaning—Arafat lacks the available means to implement it. We may assume that Arafat cannot avoid the conclusion that a war based upon terrorism, which is the alternative to negotiations or is the guarantee for countless further negotiations, cannot result in the creation of a Palestinian state in all of Palestine. He did not plan the destruction of the State of Israel; he did not need an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. Rather he needs Israeli occupation to continue.³ Certainly, the

most probable result of his policy is the perpetuation of violence as a *modus vivendi* for an indefinite time, with all its advantages. It may not be advantageous for the Palestinian people, but it creates a political climate in which terrorism is legitimated and perpetuated—and in which a corrupt and dictatorial regime may continue to thrive.

I use the word “advantage” here only for the sake of clarifying my argumentation. The advantages or disadvantages of using terrorism, as was amply demonstrated in the politics of the Cold War, are a matter of values and not of rational choice. Rational considerations are a matter of means, not of ends. For instance, the benefit accrued from the increase in the crude oil’s price as a result of tension in the Middle East is not a matter of rational choice. For those who support such an end (a rise in the cost of crude oil), the means employed (terrorism, in this case) to achieve that end is thoroughly rational. Ends are determined by values, not by intellectual argumentation. There are other ends that terrorism could serve, and for which it might be chosen as a rational option. Disturbed by the image of a unified world, it could serve to stop trade liberalization and economic globalization, to disrupt or curtail the integration of countries into open regional markets, to delay commercial and cooperative international plans, to speed up nuclear weapon programs upon the pretext of global insecurity, to enhance destructive globalization, to impede production and to encourage the rise of interest rates. Terrorism could be a means for all or each of these aims, so that tension in the Middle East could be used to achieve or perpetuate them.

Anyone who believes, for instance, that a nuclear balance in the Middle East requires Arab countries to develop nuclear capabilities needs a “stable” tension between Israel and the Palestinians, with or without a declared Palestinian state, with or without an accord.⁴ The main point is tension, not the creation of a state, not even the achievement of an agreement. Tension may help to preserve the situation as it is until a time when a nuclear balance is achieved in the Middle East. Even after that, the continuation of tension may be a useful means with which to achieve other goals. Tension is not an end in itself. It is a means to achieve a specific local or world order that may allow, among other things, the control of a price’s products based upon factors other than the market’s laws of supply and demand.

I am not trying to state that there is an inherent connection between oil interests, terrorism and world fragmentation; I am only pointing to this possibility within the framework of speculations about the rational uses to which violence can be put. Whatsoever, those goals are more instrumental than the destruction of the State of Israel. However, Barak's reasoning concerning Arafat's intention to destroy the State of Israel holds sway among defenders of the Israeli side. Certainly, in the struggle against Arafat, it may be useful to assert that this is his project. After all, Barak is trying to persuade the public—the interview is addressed for their consumption.

What are Barak's priorities? He could have explained to his target audience that Israel is facing a fierce enemy and that Israel is unable to change Arafat's mind and therefore, given the current political climate, considering that Israel cannot foment peace via dialogue and agreement, it might achieve more benefits if it takes unilateral decisions on its security and future. However, Barak did not turn to this line of argumentation, and this raises the question of why he did not. Barak knows that if international public opinion were to accept the thesis that the Palestinian leader seeks the destruction of the state of Israel and that he will use any means or trick to achieve this goal, there would be no point in inviting an international peacekeeping force to the region in an attempt to separate the parties. Rather, the best way forward would be to intervene in the Palestinian Authority and change there the regime as the US did in Iraq. However, this was not an option for him. His strategy, judging by the expected consequences of his words, was oriented towards an international recognition that Arafat is not a partner for a settlement, and to bring about a change in the Palestinian leadership, while avoiding international intervention of any type on the one hand, and preventing the continuation of violence on the other hand.

However, according to Barak's explicit arguments, Arafat needs temporary agreements only if he is to achieve his goals, agreements in the spirit of the

Hudnat Huda'ybiyah [a temporary truce that the Prophet Muhammad concluded with the leaders of Mecca during 628–629, which he subsequently unilaterally violated]. They will exploit the tolerance and democracy of Israel first to turn it into “a state for all its citizens,” as demanded by the extreme nationalist wing of Israel's Arabs and ex-

tremist left-wing Jewish Israelis. Then they will push for a binational state and then, demography and attrition will lead to a state with a Muslim majority and a Jewish minority. This would not necessarily involve kicking out all the Jews. But it would mean the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state. This, I believe, is their vision. They may not talk about it often, openly, but this is their vision. Arafat sees himself as a reborn Saladin—the Kurdish Muslim general who defeated the Crusaders in the twelfth century—and Israel as just another, ephemeral Crusader state (*M and B I*, par. 93).⁵

At face value, this allegation does not hold up. Arafat the policymaker, not the dreamer, could not see himself “a reborn Saladin,” if only because he lacks the means to destroy Israel. This idea, or dream, is not accompanied by any indication as to how it could be implemented, and therefore it is simply ideological rhetoric, useful merely as a means to justify or promote a specific political agenda. The only way in which an ideology based upon *Hudnat Hudabiyah* could influence Arafat’s actions would be to lead him to avoid agreements or to reach forceful, unilateral ones. In fact, this is Arafat’s preferred policy: the avoidance of bilateral agreements. The ideology of a Palestinian state in *all* of Palestine is merely a device with which either to perpetuate the conflict while avoiding negotiations under certain circumstances, or to prevent a comprehensive peace; either or both of these are the most probable outcomes of such an ideology. Be that as it may, this ideology serves only to keep the conflict going.⁶ However, it sounds more impressive to say, as Barak does, that Arafat wants the destruction of Israel (this is easily explained ideologically) than it is to argue that Arafat is interested in the perpetuation of the conflict.

Even if Arafat explicitly fomented this idea, it is plausible to assume that he knows that a Palestinian state in *all* of Palestine has no chance of being established, and since it is such an extreme demand given the prevailing circumstances, even he could not consider it as a starting-point for negotiations. Such a position could only serve to avoid fruitful negotiation. If Arafat’s stand were more moderate, then it might be interpreted as open to certain concessions.

However, the Palestinians, contrary to Barak’s explicit opinion, are divided on this issue, not between realists and anti-realists, but between realists of two kinds: those who attempt to achieve a *voluntary* peace and

those who try to achieve a *imposed* or *forceful* peace. Each political step may advance one or the other version of peace, but not both together. A forceful peace implies two factors: 1) International forces that could always be used as an excuse for the continuation of hostilities whenever and wherever one needs them; 2) an arrangement of segregation and disengagement on both sides that would easily facilitate closure of the borders whenever one side needs it.

Imposed settlements serve the parties to claim that they have no choice but to accept them. It will not be necessary to explain or defend them, and for this very reason they are easily challenged by those waiting for the proper circumstances to revert them. Imposed solutions can be easily used as an excuse to perpetuate the conflict.

“We here and they there” is the slogan for this policy among the Israeli right wing. “Two countries for two peoples” is the slogan for the same policy among the left wing. It is worth remarking that throughout the years, Arafat’s public statements about the *unilateral* declaration of a Palestinian state have helped to create an atmosphere favorable to a unilateral, separatist peace.

Barak, apparently, takes seriously what he alleges are Arafat’s intentions. Morris adds that:

Barak continues his argument regarding Arafat’s intentions by asserting that the Palestinian leader does not recognize the existence of a Jewish people or nation, only a Jewish religion, because it is mentioned in the Koran and because he remembers seeing, as a kid, Jews praying at the Wailing Wall (*M and B I*, par. 94).

And he goes on,

This, Barak believes, underlay Arafat’s insistence at Camp David (and since) that the Palestinians have sole sovereignty over the Temple Mount compound (Haram al-Sharif—the noble sanctuary) in the southeastern corner of Jerusalem’s Old City. Arafat denies that any Jewish temple has ever stood there—and this is a microcosm of his denial of the Jews’ historical connection and claim to the Land of Israel/Palestine. Hence, in December 2000, Arafat refused to accept even the vague formulation proposed by Clinton positing Israeli sovereignty over the earth beneath the Temple Mount’s surface area (*M and B I*, par. 94).

In all the above, Barak takes Arafat's positions at face value. Barak replies at the same explicit level at which Arafat operates, though not using the same coin. Barak attempts to show that Arafat seeks to widen the gap between the two sides in order to avoid a negotiation that would arrive at a shared reconciliation and compromises that would put at risk his ruling system. Arafat's archeological and historical opinion is yet further proof of his intention. Since there is an unbridgeable gap between the parties, his message is that on this point, too, they cannot arrive at an understanding. Only arbitration or international forces could once again solve the very imbroglio he had so forcefully tried to apply to the crisis in order to make it impossible to resolve.

The Liar Argument

Barak all but labels Arafat's pronouncements as "lies:"

They are products of a culture in which to tell a lie ... creates no dissonance. They don't suffer from the problem of telling lies that exists in Judeo-Christian culture. Truth is seen as an irrelevant category. There is only that which serves your purpose and that which doesn't. They see themselves as emissaries of a national movement for whom everything is permissible. There is no such thing as "the truth" (*M and B I*, par. 97).

Moreover, in his June 27 2002 reply to Agha and Malley, Barak continues this description of Arafat as a liar—an accusation that Agha and Malley know how to exploit:

Arafat's credentials as a serial liar are impressive, Malley/Agha's protestations notwithstanding. Take, for example, Arafat's interview with *Al-Ittihad* on February 6, 2002, in which he blamed the Israeli security service, the Shin Bet, for carrying out suicide bombings against Israeli soldiers and civilians; the attack on the Dolphinarium night club in 2001, in which about twenty-five Israeli youngsters died, he blamed on an IDF [Israeli Defense Forces] soldier. Arafat routinely tells anyone who will listen that Israeli troops use "poison gas" and "radioactive materials" against Palestinian civilians (Arafat on Abu Dhabi TV/Palestine TV, March 29 2002) (*M and B II*, par. 207).

These allegations can be understood in various ways. These passages can be analyzed at two levels. At the face value, we can examine whether it is

true that Arafat's words are the product of his culture, that his culture treats truth as pragmatically useful, and so forth. However, *any* political declaration stands at some distance from the truth. As we have already seen, this is the result of the gap between theory and practice. In the instrumental use of language, words and truth, rhetoric and reality do not coincide as often as people might like. Truth assertions can indeed also be effective or useful, without becoming truer. Likewise, false assertions can also serve as useful means to attain goals and are just as effective, and in certain cases they may even prove more profitable than truthful assertions. In other circumstances, revealing the truth is more harmful than concealing it. Where language is a means, truth telling is quite irrelevant. For this reason, Ortega y Gasset wrote, without passion or prejudice, that "the lie, at least within certain broad limits, is for him [the policymaker] a duty."⁷

Now the question is not whether Arafat tells the truth or not. Of more relevance is the question *about* that question: why Barak decided to *say* that Arafat does not tell the truth. The answer may reveal a vision of Barak's own goals in his discourse more than it does Arafat's intentions.

Obviously, Barak's argument is an attempt to disqualify Arafat's reputation as a leader, to expose him as someone who is not and cannot be in the future a partner for negotiations, a strategic decision he took during his term in office, well before Sharon deployed the same strategy. Barak's intention is to ensure that even if Arafat now says that he is ready to negotiate, he would be unlikely to be believed, and his words might simply be taken as another lie.

Barak understands that he can negotiate with Arafat, but he does not want to. This will facilitate Barak's refusal to accept the outcome of such negotiations. Arafat's vision of peace is not Barak's vision, and both parties, so Barak believes, would prefer an alternative partner. When Barak calls Arafat a liar, he is laying the groundwork for the search for another partner.

Why did he adopt this language in his interviews? It is plausible to assume that it was the result of a strategic decision to neutralize Arafat as a partner for future negotiations; Barak's words will find favor with those who are committed to the kind of policy that can be better fomented without Arafat's interference.

The image of Arafat as a liar may be useful for yet another purpose. From the point of view of Arafat's hidden agenda, it is interesting that he took no substantial steps to reject the accusation. Moreover, he encouraged this image by arguing, as Barak states, that the Israel Defense Force uses uranium-tipped shells against Palestinian civilians, that they spread poison gas, and so forth. In response to questions about the Temple Mount, he asks "What Temple?" We are compelled to conclude that he is fomenting this image, and that it helps him to accomplish his undeclared policy.⁸

This conclusion might appear to contradict the one I have just made regarding Barak's intention of disqualifying Arafat as a negotiating partner, and thus, as a partner for peace. His message is "Don't think of contemplate doing business with him; he is not reliable." And if it is impossible to negotiate with him, the best way of advancing the peace process would be, once again and consistently, an international intervention that would impose, from outside, a compulsory peace of disengagement, disregarding the will of the sides.

The contradiction is merely apparent. Because in principle, the "liar" image may be used in both directions—to support or to undermine Arafat's policy, depending upon the different political circumstances in which the allegation is made. When it is possible to encourage an alternative leadership to Arafat, presenting him as a liar may damage his policy. This was the case at the time Barak referred to him in such terms during the interview with Morris. However, if there really is no better alternative (in part because alternatives are suppressed by Arafat's supporters), then his disqualification may help to further his goal—that is, the creation of favorable conditions for the cherished imposed settlement. In such circumstances, it would serve Arafat's uniquely sophisticated policy—to be seen as an untrustworthy negotiator. This may explain why Arafat has never been concerned with his negative image. Herein lies also the answer to the question of why it was only later, in his interviews with Morris in the *NYRB*, Barak was ready to refer to Arafat as a liar, having refrained from labeling him thus at the time he was Prime Minister, when Arafat was his lesser evil.

It is unreasonable to assume that Arafat's status as a misleader was for Barak a revelation. The allegation itself is beside the point. Barak's alle-

gation surfaced at precisely the moment when conditions were ripe for circumventing Arafat.

Indeed, at times that were more auspicious for Arafat's policy, he even seemed to promote, by himself, this image. Evidence of Arafat's preference for dishonesty and extremism are recalled by Barak, *only now in his interview—not then, when such events actually occurred*—in connection with the “goals” of the Palestinian cause:

To Western audiences Arafat usually affirms his interest in peace or “the peace of the braves” (a Palestinian baseball team?), as he puts it. To Arab audiences, he speaks only of battle and planting the Palestinian flag on Jerusalem's walls (as Saladin planted his flag on Jerusalem's walls, after defeating the Crusaders, back in 1189) and of sacrificing “one million *shuhada* [martyrs, meaning suicide bombers]” in “redeeming Palestine.” On May 10, 1994, he told a Muslim audience in Johannesburg that he was engaged in the Oslo peace process much as Mohammed had briefly acquiesced in a truce with the Quraish tribe of Mecca, only to unilaterally revoke it and slaughter them several years later. For good measure, Arafat in that speech said there is no “permanent state of Israel,” only a “permanent state of Palestine” (*M and B II*, par. 208).

Why Arafat uses a “double-language?” One answer is that he achieves a “double gain” when employing this tactic. First, it is hard to believe that Arafat ignores the fact that his words are being translated, almost simultaneously, into many languages. In this sense, it is likely that Arafat's speeches serve the goal of portraying him as an extremist, thereby demonstrating that it is fruitless to negotiate with him. As a pragmatic and effective device, Arafat has single handedly constructed the image of his being regarded as prone to irrationality, furor, fanaticism, and even paranoia. Nahum Barnea states that:

Among the tactics he employs with his subordinates are: instilling fear, arrests, outbursts of anger, pleading, presenting himself as a victim and/or a pathetic person, showering praise, meaningless appointments, and even bear hugs. In all cases, the outcome is identical—Arafat gets the last word, and the requester sometimes departs confused and even stunned. Arafat uses some of these tactics (especially presenting himself as a victim of circumstances) in his contacts with Israelis, as well.⁹

Secondly, despite his awareness of being translated, he insists on using this “double-language.” It seems that the “lies” Barak refers to, are not directed towards other politicians but in reality are directed towards his own audience, or his own supporters. They tend to believe that Arafat is smart. Nobody will take him for a fool; he plays a shrewd and sophisticated political game. Since Arafat knows how to converse with the world’s leaders, nobody will cheat the Palestinians under his leadership. This then means that the more he fools his own supporters, the more they support him. The secret of his popularity is not what is generally regarded to be the case with other politicians, namely, fidelity to friends, tolerance of the opinions of others, or even that he speaks a language that is easily understood by the masses. Instead, he simply creates an atmosphere of fear and the illusion that the armed conflict is beneficent for the future of the Palestinian people. He also foments the image that he is right, a priori, without submitting any proof to support his arguments, in addition to his use of militant slogans. He repeats the same key words when addressing his people and these words instill hatred and a desire to seek retribution in their hearts that instantly elevates his image as their hero. Whoever takes sides against him, takes sides against the Palestinian cause. Rather than a culture of liars, it is a culture of manipulated naive minds. He promotes the image of someone who knows better than anyone else what is the business of ruling.

Whether or not Arafat operates from a culture of lies, as Barak contends, is therefore irrelevant. Even if it were true that Arafat is untrustworthy, this would not help us to understand his policy. Suppose someone who endorses Arafat’s goals and values discovers that he is, indeed a liar. He or she would surely not wish to reveal or spread that news, because it would not only damage Arafat’s reputation, but would also impact negatively upon Arafat’s goals and values, which this person supports. Therefore, we can learn from such allegation only one thing: that the one who spreads it is against his own policy. This is the case with Barak’s allegations. Their bottom line is that he used Arafat’s own weapon, the one that was the secret of his popularity, his “double-language,” against Arafat himself.

Arafat's Policy

In light of the above, the following story is symptomatic of Arafat's behavior:

Speaking of Arab society, Barak recalls: "The deputy director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation once told me that there are societies in which lie detector tests don't work, societies in which lies do not create cognitive dissonance [on which the tests are based]." Barak gives an example: back in October 2000, shortly after the start of the current Intifada, he met with then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Arafat in the residence of the US ambassador in Paris. Albright was trying to broker a cease-fire. Arafat had agreed to call a number of his police commanders in the West Bank and Gaza, including Tawfik Tirawi, to implement a truce. Barak said: "I interjected: 'But these are not the people organizing the violence. If you are serious [in seeking a cease-fire], then call Marwan Barghouti and Hussein al-Sheikh'."¹⁰

"Arafat looked at me, with an expression of blank innocence, as if I had mentioned the names of two polar bears, and said: 'who? Who?' So I repeated the names, this time with a pronounced, clear Arabic inflection—'Mar-wan Bar-gou-ti' and 'Hsein a Sheikh'—and Arafat again said, 'Who? Who?' At this, some of his aides couldn't stop themselves and burst out laughing. And Arafat, forced to drop the pretense, agreed to call them later. [Of course, nothing happened and the shooting continued.]" (*M and B I*, par. 98–100).

In addition to Arafat's attempt to discredit Barghouti's leadership, two questions arise here: First, what is Arafat's policy and how does he intend to advance it by behaving in this way? Second, what is Barak's policy and how does he intend to advance it by recounting this event? We can deduce the latter from Barak's assessment of the situation at the time that he was elected prime minister:

... [Barak] understood that the year and a half left of Clinton's presidency afforded a small window of opportunity inside a larger, but also limited, regional window of opportunity. That window was opened by the collapse of the Soviet Empire, which had since the 1950s supported the Arabs against Israel, and the defeat of Iraq in Kuwait in 1991, and would close when and if Iran and/or Iraq obtained nuclear weapons and when and if Islamic fundamentalist movements took over states bordering Israel (*M and B I*, par. 102).

This clarification of Barak's understanding helps us to detect something about Arafat's goals and agenda, too. He was concerned to evade any harm that might result from the collapse of the Soviet Union. At this time, the Middle East was a divided and warring region. Arafat hoped to ensure a Middle East in which the role of one superpower would be to support one side of the conflict, while the other supports the other side. The ideal was a regional balance of power. The balance would be reestablished when and if countries like Iran (and this was true, too, of Iraq before the American invasion), have or will try to produce nuclear weapons, thus creating a new balance of power, either outside the aegis of nuclear superpowers or under the aegis of China or France, a possibility that cannot be discarded at present.¹¹ It is not by chance, therefore, that Iran supported Arafat's regime with weapons and, with Iraq, gave aid to suicide terrorists' families in the Palestinian Authority.¹² Arafat's siding with Saddam Hussein in the 1991 *Dessert Storm* war is also well documented. Arafat uses negotiations in order to foment this kind of policy. Even so, instead of explaining his policy, which the public would find difficult to accept, Arafat prefers to encourage accusations of his untrustworthiness, lying, cheating and prejudice. His policy therefore, is an attempt to preserve the political style of the cold war era. Arafat fosters the illusion among his people that they do not have to compromise on any of the issues under negotiation. As victims, they are owed something. Referring to the failure of reaching an end-of-conflict peace until 2004, Dennis Ross states that Arafat educated his people against compromises promoting feelings of victimization:

Being a victim has never been compatible with responsibility. Their rights and their needs had to come first, and it was too much to expect that they would take unpopular decisions that responded to Israeli needs and stand by them. As victims, Palestinians could not be expected to put responsibility over unity, taking on those in their society who rejected peaceful coexistence. Finally, it was unfair to expect Palestinians to acknowledge mistakes and learn from them.¹³

Contrasting Egypt's Sadat and King Hussein with Arafat, Barak notes that they "did not wait for a consensus [among their people], they decided to lead" (*M and B I*, par. 104). This might encourage us to consider why leaders sometimes decide to seek a consensus instead of changing the prevailing consensus by opting for a policy and then con-

vincing their public to follow their lead. As soon as we pose this question, it becomes clear that arguments that appeal to the need for consensus or those that explicitly assert that consensus is unnecessary, like Barak's assertion here, are simply devices with which to advance a certain policy. When politicians accept a consensus, it only means that they happen to accept those ideas that are regarded as consensual; likewise, when they ignore a consensus, it is because the prevailing consensus does not suit their policy. Either way, popular consensus never really determines their policy. Ultimately, leaders always are leaders, whether they act against or with the prevailing current. For this reason, consensual declarations deserve more attention than they are commonly given; they are informative about their operative goals. However, we can expect to uncover more information when policymakers decide to speak against the consensus. In this case it is evident that their words are not intended for the general public, and are not, therefore, paying lip service to us.

Sharon's Temple Mount Visit

The Enigma

Another matter of interest that emerges in Barak's interview is his explanation of the visit to the Temple Mount by then Likud leader Ariel Sharon in September 28 2000. After descending from the Mount, Sharon said: "The Temple Mount is in our hands and will remain in our hands. It is the holiest site in Judaism and it is the right of every Jew to visit the Temple Mount."¹⁴ The visit took place two months after the end of the summit, three months before Barak's resignation (December 10 2000, and his decision to call for elections within 60 days, scheduled for February 6 2001) and four months before the marathon Taba talks (January 22–28 2001). Morris quotes Barak as saying that Agha and Malley:

...[L]eave their readers with the impression that the Sharon visit was what caused the Intifada. But Israeli intelligence (and the CIA, according to Barak) has strong evidence that the Palestinian Authority had planned the Intifada already in July 2000. In March 2001, for example, the PA's communications minister, Imad Faluji, told residents of the Ein al-Hilwe refugee camp outside Sidon: "Whoever thinks that the Intifada broke out because of the despised Sharon's

visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque is wrong, even if this visit was the straw that broke the back of the Palestinian people. This Intifada was planned in advance, ever since President Arafat's return from the Camp David negotiations, where he turned the table upside down on President Clinton" (*Al-Safir*, Lebanon, March 3 2001) (*M and B II*, par. 206).

However, Barak omits to mention that Faluji is one of Arafat's opponents and that his words were therefore intentionally directed against Arafat. Indeed, Arafat has denied such allegations in several of his speeches. A'imad Faluji, an elected member of the Palestinian Council, was also a member of Hamas and a cofounder of the Izz al-Din al-Qasam Brigades.¹⁵ Barak is therefore exploiting (understandably from his point of view), the discrepancies between the different factions within the Palestinian leadership. In fact, Faluji played into Barak's hands. The most Machiavellian among the Palestinians assert that Hamas was created by the Israelis in order to give them an excuse to remain in the territories.¹⁶ But we may add that if this were the case, and Israel did encourage the growth of Hamas, then this explanation is highly unconvincing. Israel never annexed the territories, and there was never even serious discussion about doing so, which is an indication that Israeli leaders never intended to take such an action.

Barak also asserts that Sharon's visit was directed against him and coordinated with Jibril Rajoub, "to show that the Likud cared more about Jerusalem than I did" (*M and B I*, par. 106).¹⁷

In asserting that Sharon's Temple Mount visit was less a provocation toward the Palestinians, and more a demonstration against him, Barak purposefully disregards the fact that Sharon's visit can be used as a pretext for a violent reaction. However, it takes two sides to make a provocation successful. If Arafat had been opposed to a violent reaction, Madeleine Albright pointed out that he could have used "the incident to demonstrate Palestinian maturity in the face of Sharon's provocative act,"¹⁸ and could have said that responding to the provocation would be to fall into Sharon's trap. Clinton advanced the same idea:

I and others on our team had urged Arafat to prevent violence. It was a great opportunity for the Palestinians, for once, to refuse to be provoked. I thought Sharon should have been greeted with flowers by Palestinian children and told that when the Temple Mount was un-

der Palestinian control, he would be welcomed anytime. But as Abba Eban had said long ago, the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.¹⁹

This would be the obvious stance in response to a perceived provocation—unless he wanted to use it to respond precisely the manner in which he wished anyway. Provocations are deeds or words intended to coerce someone to act differently from how he/she would have acted if he/she were not provoked. They are ineffective *acts* without a *re-action*; namely, the reaction is not controlled by the act. In this case, Arafat reacted by enlarging the intifada, saying “this is a dangerous process conducted by Sharon against Islamic sacred places.”²⁰ The Speaker of the Palestine Legislative Council Ah’mad Qureia’ (aka Abu Ala) said that Sharon’s visit was a “clear expression of the Israeli designs to eliminate the Islamic and Arab features of the Temple Mount.”²¹ Morris quotes Barak as saying:

We know, from hard intelligence, that Arafat [after Camp David] intended to unleash a violent confrontation, terrorism. [Sharon’s visit and the riots that followed] fell into his hands like an excellent excuse, a pretext. As agreed, Sharon had made no statement and had refrained from entering the Islamic shrines in the compound in the course of the visit. But rioting broke out nonetheless. The Intifada, says Barak, “was preplanned, pre-prepared. I don’t mean that Arafat knew that on a certain day in September [it would be unleashed]. ... It wasn’t accurate, like computer engineering. But it was definitely on the level of planning, of a grand plan (*M and B I*, par. 106–107).

Regarding the argument that the Palestinians were dragooned into coming to Camp David unprepared, Barak said that they had enough time, eight years since 1993 ...to prepare their positions and fall-back positions, demands and red lines, and a full year since he [Clinton] had been elected to office and made clear his intention to go for a final settlement (*M and B I*, par. 111).

Two points here need clarification: First, the full political meaning of the visit, and second, the fact that Barak refrains from condemning Sharon’s visit. He could have condemned both, Sharon’s visit and Arafat’s reaction.

Concerning the first, Sharon’s initiative in visiting the Mount, it is not only astounding to believe that Sharon took it to provoke Arafat, but it is

also difficult to believe that Sharon was unaware of how dangerous a game he was playing and that the reactions he provoked were fiercer than one would expect. Let me summarize four apparent inconsistencies in the matter:

1. Barak could have prevented the bloodshed by following the lead of previous Israeli leaders who stopped Knesset members from visiting East Jerusalem at politically volatile moments. But Barak refused to postpone Sharon's visit; thus, operatively, he supported it. Moreover, after prayers on Friday, the day after Sharon's visit, Shlomo Ben Ami who was Foreign Minister and also Minister of Internal Security, ordered a massive police and military presence at the mosque. According to the Mitchell Report, Sharon's visit "was poorly timed and the provocative effect should have been foreseen; indeed, it was foreseen by those who urged that the visit be prohibited."²² This only increases the astonishment regarding Barak's attitude.²³ If the effect of the visit should have been foreseen and if indeed, it was foreseen, then Barak preferred to allow the visit for an as-yet, unclarified reason. In addition, Barak reacted mildly to the provocation and he did not even criticize it.
2. Jibril Rajoub, one of the bitterest opponents of Arafat's policy, before the visit said that it "would pose no problem as long as he did not enter the mosques,"²⁴ "...meaning he might walk around the Haram ... but not do more than that."²⁵ He warned however, "that he would not act to quell any violence should it erupt and spread through the territories as a result of the visit."²⁶
3. The visit had been authorized by Israel Police Inspector-General Yehuda Wilk, despite being entitled to recommend postponing it.²⁷
4. The riots started in Nezarim, in the Gaza Strip, and spread through deliberate incitement (before the visit) by the Tanzim (the armed militia of Arafat's Fatah organization).²⁸ On September 15 2000, Arafat instructed the Tanzim to escalate the riots, though without the visit, the spark would not have been over the

Temple Mount, the central issue after which the war (“al-Aqsa intifada”) was named.

All of this indicates that the visit did not take place by chance, and it is implausible to assume that Sharon, Barak and Rajoub did not understand the far-reaching consequences. Two things are clear: the visit was not an unintentional move, nor was it a move taken within the framework of the competition for the leadership of the Likud party which was attempting to pander to the fundamentalists, who were trying to create further disagreement between Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu, as Hanan Ashrawi alleged.²⁹ For that Sharon would have needed only words, not deeds that could endanger the security situation. Moreover, Netanyahu never tried to accrue profits, at Sharon’s expense, from the event. As regards Sharon, any such deliberate move would have damaged his image as a moderate leader, an image that had been instrumental in his victory in the imminent elections. His election campaign slogan was: “Only Sharon will bring peace.”

To understand this move, we need to uncover the missing piece of the puzzle. A political move has to be understood within the context of the direct relationship that it has on the immediate events it attempts to change. The immediate event were the talks that had been conducted in Washington since September 26 between the sides as part of preparations for putting a proposal by President Clinton that Sharon interpreted as a recipe for the division of the city which had at its heart, a final sovereignty arrangement for the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, on the table. Gilad Sher and Shlomo Ben Ami were the negotiators on the Israeli side, Saeb A’reikat, Mohammad Dahlan, and Akram Haniya on the Palestinian side, and Dennis Ross represented the Americans. Sharon’s visit to the site was planned to occur on the second day of the talks.

Sharon’s original plan however, suffered a reversal. He certainly succeeded in preventing Clinton from putting the proposal on the table. However, he was escorted by a massive police contingent of approximately 1,000 police officers.

Ross however, tried to dissuade Ben Ami from providing such a provocative show of forces, without success. Ben Ami told him that these forces were intended to prevent Sharon from entering the mosques, as he

had promised Jibril Rajoub. Sharon disliked the idea, but Ben Ami ordered the provision of the forces.

The Background

The background of the events can be characterized in three points.

1. Barak's government lost its parliamentary majority on the eve of Barak's departure for *Camp David II*. The result of the Camp David summit weakened Barak's position further, thus reinforcing in his party rivals' capacity to control the decision-making process. In August 2000, he appointed two of his opponents to vacant ministries—Justice Minister Yossi Beilin was made acting Religious Affairs Minister and Shlomo Ben Ami became active Foreign Minister.³⁰ Both focused immediately in the issue of Jerusalem.
2. Some Palestinian leaders' responses played into Sharon's hands. This was true in the case of Jibril Rajoub, A'imad Faluji, Hanan Ashrawi and Marwan Barghouti, the Secretary-General of the Tanzim, who said, "The Intifada did not start because of Sharon's visit."³¹
3. The imminent end of Clinton's second term without success having been achieved at Camp David rejuvenated the influence of the European Union in the region in the subsequent months. Politics deplores a vacuum more than nature does. Consequently, there was the threat of an impending European proposal, or a new proposal of the US administration, the content of which would conflict with Sharon's agenda.

From the beginning of the month until Sharon's visit on September 28 2000, the holy places in Jerusalem became the central issue in formal, informal, and secret negotiations. This was also the issue, at least officially, that led to the ending of the *Camp David II* summit without an agreement. As was stated on many different occasions by King Hussein, to concentrate on Jerusalem, the most difficult issue under dispute is the best way to prevent a peace agreement. Despite King Hussein's reasoning, or because of it, Ben Ami and Beilin renewed their efforts to gain supporters for their program of attaining peace by dividing the city. In

order to advance their proposals, Ben Ami traveled to Egypt and Jordan, and Beilin to the Vatican.³² Beilin tried to advance his so called “Beilin-Abu-Mazen agreement” and Ben Ami tried to set favorable preconditions for an international intervention. For this purpose, two weeks before Sharon’s visit, Beilin leaked his paper, written in 1995, on September 16 2000, to *Newsweek* magazine.³³

It remains an enigma as to why Jerusalem became so vital, and an even more crucial issue than refugees, borders, security or the economy. It was a trap set for those who preferred to postpone the negotiations on Jerusalem until the end of the conflict. Even to argue for their stand implied an agreement to play by the rules of the game imposed by their opponents, namely, to hold talks on Jerusalem. For those who preferred to postpone the negotiations on Jerusalem, the alternative was either to enter the negotiations or to create the conditions that would make them obsolete. Entering the negotiations meant that any proposal, made under the conflictive situation, was in one way or another, designed to either lead to the division of the city, or—what amounted to the same thing—to hold extreme positions that resulted in advancing international intervention. Sharon opted for the second alternative—to make the negotiations obsolete.

The idea under discussion in Israel during September 2000 was to place control or sovereignty of the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount under UN supervision, or under the supervision of a combination of UN soldiers and three Islamic Conference states. UN special peace coordinator Terje Larsen and Secretary-General Kofi Annan became very active on the issue.³⁴

Political and religious circles on both sides attempted to create a favorable atmosphere for such a design and Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount put an end to their expectations. The Palestinian reaction was an undeclared war hoping for international intervention, which were Ben Ami’s lesser evil and Arafat’s long-cherished dream.

Since the end of the *Camp David II* summit, there has been pressure put on the Chief Rabbinate of Israel to discuss the establishment of a synagogue on the Temple Mount, which is regarded by the vast majority of great *Halachic* experts throughout the generations, as a forbidden place for formal prayers/praying.³⁵

Mixing up religious and political issues, the Islamic Waqf Council reiterated its position that al-Aqsa Mosque is an Islamic place for Muslims only.³⁶

The Palestinian National Authority established a committee to protect Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.³⁷ At the same time, Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, the Mufti of Jerusalem, reiterated the religious prohibition against Palestinian Jerusalemites accepting Israeli citizenship (*ibid.*). It was his response to the Mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, who called on the Palestinian Jerusalemites to apply for full Israeli citizenship.³⁸

At the end of August, Arafat told the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, meeting in Agadir, Morocco, that no concessions could be made on the future status of Jerusalem.³⁹ The Committee called on all of the world's countries to recognize the Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital as soon as it is declared and requested that no countries move their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.⁴⁰ The United States asked Arab countries not to issue declarations about Jerusalem that might hamper diplomatic efforts underway in the hopes of jump-starting negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority.⁴¹

On September 6 2000, Arafat told the U.N. Millennium Summit that he is committed to establishing, unilaterally, a Palestinian state with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital. He told over 150 world leaders gathered at the summit, "we remain committed to our national rights over East Jerusalem, capital of our state and shelter of our sacred sites, as well as our rights on the Christian and Islamic holy sites."⁴² Also speaking at the summit, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak reiterated the importance of Jerusalem to the Jewish people, but also acknowledged that the city is "cherished by our Palestinian neighbors" (*ibid.*).

In a meeting with President Clinton in New York after the Millennium Summit, Yasser Arafat rejected U.S. compromise proposals on Jerusalem. He also rejected to conclude a partial peace agreement that again delays a resolution to the Jerusalem issue. Clinton also urged Arafat to postpone the declaration of an independent state that was scheduled unilaterally for September 13 2000.

On September 14, Palestinian Culture and Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo warned Israel that any attempt to violate the sanctity of al-Aqsa Mosque would set off a protracted religious war. He pointed

out that the Palestinian leadership is seriously considering a proposal to place the al-Aqsa Mosque under the sovereignty of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; the Palestinians would have the right of sovereign jurisdiction, and the right to raise their flag over it.⁴³

On September 17, it became public that the U.S. had proposed handing sovereignty over the al-Aqsa Mosque to the UN Security Council, to Israeli negotiators. The Palestinians would retain administrative responsibility over the holy sites in al-Aqsa while Israel would retain control over the Western Wall and the surrounding area. Ehud Barak rejected the idea of unilateral Islamic sovereignty over the al-Aqsa Mosque.⁴⁴

On September 24, Palestinian officials rejected the U.S. proposal to conclude a partial agreement that would delay negotiations concerning final status arrangements in Jerusalem. Earlier in the week, Ehud Barak had said that he was open to postpone the final solution of the Jerusalem issue to a later date including a clause in the proposal declaring the “end of the conflict.”⁴⁵

On September 25, the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee endorsed The Basic Law: Jerusalem, the Capital of Israel for second and third readings. The purpose of the law is to “secure” Jerusalem’s current border by requiring a majority of 61 Knesset members before any authority in Jerusalem can be handed over to the Palestinian National Authority with the purpose of divide the city (*ibid.*).

On September 26, the new round of talks under U.S. sponsorship started in Washington. Each side held separate talks with the U.S. administration.

Those were the circumstances in which Sharon decided to visit the Temple Mount.

The Tactical Maneuvers

At first, Ben Ami proposed that the Palestinians have “functional autonomy” over the Temple Mount, arguing that this would give “symbolic expression” to their desire for sovereignty over the area, “paving the way for an agreement.” However, he stressed, “there cannot be joint sovereignty,” and “Israel would not be prepared to give up sovereignty over Jerusalem and the holy places of Judaism.”⁴⁶

If *The Jerusalem Post* report is accurate, and Ben Ami's functional autonomy is his final proposal, the implication is that he is denying Palestinian sovereignty over the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount, and *a fortiori* "joint sovereignty." His declaration only makes sense if we recognize that "functional autonomy" is merely an interim proposal that would pave the way for a final agreement in which there will be no joint sovereignty. Moreover, since Israel would not agree with less than shared sovereignty, Ben Ami's offer expects a symmetrical Palestinian counter-proposal. He explicitly makes a distinction between Jerusalem and the holy places, hinting that the same can be said about the entire city. The counter-proposal that can be expected is a Palestinian demand for sovereignty over the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount and functional autonomy for the Israelis over their holy places, and demanding that the Jews renounce sole sovereignty over the city.

The rationale of such a proposal with its expected counter-proposal is to show, that at the end of the game, the coexistence in Jerusalem is full of pitfalls and obstacles that are so great that the sides are unable to find a way out of them in order to start working together, particularly regarding the holy places.

My interpretation is in line with reports from Jerusalem by Suzanne Goldenberg, published three days before Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. She says that the Government of Israel [i.e., Ben Ami on behalf of the GOI]:

...[I]s strenuously promoting an idea once unthinkable: entrusting Judaism's holiest site to United Nations control ... The acting foreign minister, Shlomo Ben Ami, leaves for Cairo today, where he is to sound out Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak, on a proposal to transfer sovereignty of the Temple Mount, or Haram al-Sharif—86 hectares of hallowed ground on the most fiercely contested hilltop in the Middle East—to the supervision of the five permanent members of the UN security council. He is also due to talk later in the week with King Abdullah of Jordan ... The idea is believed to have resurfaced now as an attempt by Israel to *counter a proposal* [my italics] by the Palestinians earlier this month, to lodge sovereignty for the site with the Jerusalem committee of the Organization of Islamic Countries.⁴⁷

Ben Ami's proposal was not intended to be an alternative to the former Palestinian counter-proposal; rather they were viewed as complementing each other.⁴⁸ The result was clear for all to see—the sides are unable to resolve their longstanding conflict by themselves. We also have some hints from other sources. Before his departure from Egypt, Ben Ami said that “even if no agreement is reached” and the parties are unable “to control the situation ... they also need some degree of mutual understanding.”⁴⁹ The operative meaning behind this understanding of each other is that while being unable to solve their problem, they need to request external help, whether they are UN forces or other types of international intervention, which in turn means the division of the city.

In its context, Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount three days later makes political sense—after his visit to the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount, an agreement not to agree on Jerusalem is no longer a viable option. The political meaning of his visit seems to be, as I have already said, to postpone an agreement intended to divide and sub-divide the city.⁵⁰

Ben Ami's ideas met resistance from the Egyptians, obviously from Sharon, and even from Barak and his supporters. Although he never spoke openly about it, there was much discussion around the issue. To speak openly about it, in the same way as to openly explain Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount, would be tantamount to breaking *les règles du Jeu*.

On the day of Ben Ami's departure for Egypt, Barak's Cabinet Secretary Isaac Herzog revealed the inner struggle in the cabinet when he declared: “One option that Israel is weighing positively would be to continue discussions on everything *but Jerusalem, which would be dealt with in the future*” [my italics].⁵¹ This was Herzog's way of preventing Ben Ami from offering his proposal to the Egyptians in name of the Israeli Government, and of ensuring that he was bound by the official position.

Zalman Shoval, head of the Likud's foreign relations department, without revealing Ben Ami's name, characterized the proposal to submit the Temple Mount to the sovereignty of the UN Security Council as:

...[A]nother wild idea ... which would then bestow custodianship on the Palestinians ... this proves once again that our present government is totally disconnected from Jewish sensibilities and international political realities. Israel's history with the UN Security Council—and with the UN as a whole, with its Arab and Moslem predominance—is not a very happy one, and relinquishing sovereignty over the Tem-

ple Mount means handing the keys to the Jewish people's holiest site to a body from which we cannot usually expect much sympathy or consideration ... getting the UN involved with Jerusalem could lead to a revival of the UN's 1947 partition plan that called for the internationalization of Jerusalem (*ibid.*).

Further evidence comes from other interviews and the press conference Ben Ami held in Egypt. In a debate between Ben Ami and Egypt's Foreign Affairs Minister Amr Moussa, Ben Ami appeared to try to foment his proposal by accentuating differences between Israel and Egypt. He elected to bring up historical disagreements, asserting that the 1967 war was fought in self-defense, and that Jerusalem has always been the capital of the Jewish people. Moussa replied by noting that such allegations are pure historical fallacies. "The 1967 war was an [act of Israeli] aggression," he stated, but he urged Ben Ami "to engage in discussions aiming at building peace, not talking about the past and going back to history."⁵² As an answer to Ben Ami's intention to focus the negotiations upon the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount, Moussa tried to diminish the issue in order to facilitate negotiations, emphasizing that "Differences are not only related to sovereignty over Haram al-Sharif. There are other issues such as coexistence, interaction between East and West Jerusalem, the notion of an open city, refugees, security and water" (*ibid.*). Hinting at Ben Ami's proposal for UN intervention in Jerusalem, he also cautioned against "deciding the fate of Jerusalem outside the framework of negotiations," and said, "this would put off the peace process, thus making settlement inconceivable" (*ibid.*). It is quite clear that Moussa, in contrast to Ben Ami, attempted to alleviate the tone and proposed to discuss only those issues upon which they could agree. In Ben Ami's search for controversy, he even attempted to cast doubt on whether Egypt civilization goes back seven thousand years. Moussa "pointed out the Pyramids, the Sphinx and pharaonic monuments all attest to Egyptian civilization and history" (*ibid.*).

From this discussion, it is clear that Ben Ami's intention in flying to Egypt, on September 25, was to widen the gap between the parties' positions. He insistently proposed a framework agreement, an idea that was rejected by Moussa. Ben Ami persisted in claiming, "We are now speaking of a framework agreement that would cover *all raised core issues* [my

italics]” (*ibid.*). Asked whether a transitional agreement had been reached and the contentious issues deferred to a later stage, Ben Ami said:

This was not true because Israel is well aware that the main issue in this regard is to reach a comprehensive agreement on all issues ... Israel does not rule out the possibility of deferring an issue or two if it could not reach agreement on all raised issues, but this is not on the agenda so far ... What is on the agenda right now is to exert genuine efforts on our part and on the part of the Palestinian side to exhaust all prospects for reaching agreement on all pending issues.⁵³

Egypt’s President Hosni Mubarak’s Political Advisor Osama El-Baz, in response to Ben Ami’s proposal for a framework agreement that called for the transfer of sovereignty over the Temple Mount to the UN Security Council, said, “a UN mandate over Jerusalem is out of question” (*ibid.*). He added that sovereignty could only be exercised by the parties concerned.⁵⁴ Most astoundingly, he pointed out that while an agreement on the issue of refugees, borders and water was possible, the question of the Temple Mount should be postponed: “Arabs did not expect that al-Haram al-Sharif would pose such a *casus belli*. The status quo in al-Haram al-Sharif reflects real Palestinian control in spite of the Israeli occupation.”⁵⁵

Indeed, it is possible that Ben Ami went to Egypt with Barak’s mandate to discuss a framework agreement. However, if this is so, it appears that he interpreted it narrowly. Barak’s conception about a framework agreement is similar to his position regarding final agreements. They are indeed regulative ideals, although if it is possible to:

...[I]dentify those parts on which we can, in principle, reach agreement, and those parts that will require long interim agreements, or those for which we can see the permanent status but which require a long time to arrive at—we will have done the right thing.⁵⁶

Beilin flew to Rome for negotiations on the same issue. His visit was intended “to discuss informally how the Catholic Church might be affected by the permanent agreement.”⁵⁷ The negotiations and “contacts” on Jerusalem were the “hot” issue among Barak’s opponents.

But after Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount, a final proposal for a framework agreement on Jerusalem was no longer a viable option. Therefore, as proposed by Herzog and El-Baz, his visit brought about the

postponing of the negotiations on Jerusalem. Sid-Ahmad, going much farther, wrote, "One is entitled to ask whether Sharon acted alone or in collusion with Barak."⁵⁸ Beilin's negotiations in Rome failed to bring any agreement. This interpretation is assisted by Beilin words:

For Sharon ... timing was everything. At that moment, when the Temple Mount was the focus of argument in the anticipation of an historic rapprochement between Israel and the Palestinians, the visit was like a bomb dropped on the negotiators.⁵⁹

Herzog said that Israel was proposing to postpone the negotiations over the Temple Mount, whereas Ben Ami and Beilin put the issue at the top of their agenda. Barak's position was more in agreement with Mubarak, Sharon, Moussa and El-Baz than with some of his own ministers. PA Minister for Planning Nabil Sha'ath said on September 12 that the dispute over the Haram al-Sharif "has held all the other issues hostage."⁶⁰ On September 28, Sharon let all these other issues loose, but at a heavy price. The choices were between the spread of the already existing violence, postponing the issue of Jerusalem to the last stages of the peace process, as proposed by King Hussein (and Barak and Clinton at Camp David), and an agreement not to agree, dividing the city and transferring authority over the city out of the hands of both sides, as preferred by Arafat and Ben Ami.⁶¹ In that case, there would be no need for mutual understanding and decision-making to resolve the conflict. Of course, it would be easier to bring in UN forces to control Jerusalem than to remove them at a later stage and Jerusalem would hardly then be a "city of peace." If the goal were to share the city and to cooperate in running it, rather than to carve it up between the sides, the best available way forward would be to delay negotiations on Jerusalem until all other issues are resolved in a spirit of reconciliation.⁶²

To conclude, Sharon's visit was not only intended as an alternative to Ben Ami's visit to Egypt, or to Beilin's intended negotiations with the Vatican, or to the negotiations in Washington, but also to the attempts of Arafat and the Israeli extreme right to divide the city. Its operative message was that it would be better to postpone negotiations over Jerusalem than to deal with the consequences of their failure. According to this strategy, any proposal of premature negotiations on the issue of Jerusalem, or on other issues that had little prospect of success, should be re-

jected and the focus should instead be put on areas where the parties *could* reach agreement. Such a strategy calls for interim understandings that set aside explosive issues like control of Jerusalem, particularly of its holy places,⁶³ but also regarding the very division of the city.

Sharon was more concerned with the separation of authority between God and Caesar, than with the religious problem of the sovereignty over the Temple Mount. According to Efraim Inbar, Jerusalem is an essential component in Israel's defensive posture. It requires a rapid movement of troops from the coast, eastward to the Jordan Valley. Inbar stresses that with this purpose in mind Israel "has built the Trans-Samaria Highway, in addition to the highways to Jerusalem that continue via Ma'aleh Adumim to the Jordan Valley."⁶⁴ He adds:

Even if Israel holds on to the right of access to the Jordan Valley through Palestinian territory, in times of emergency, violent Palestinian opposition might hinder the exercise of this right. The only lateral axis from the coast to the Jordan Valley, which is populated by Jews in great numbers and therefore more defensible, is via Jerusalem. The only area along the crest of the mountains at the center of the Land of Israel, which is heavily populated by Jews, is Jerusalem and its surroundings. These facts increase the strategic importance of the city, as well as the need to control its environs (*ibid.*).⁶⁵

However, a successful democratization of Iraq and of the Palestinian state is likely to put an end to the so called "Eastern Front" without the need for Inbar's concerns. In this case, the unity of Jerusalem would be the last step in a peace to be achieved based upon the model of the European Union, or some more advanced mode of regional federative or confederative regime, as a guide. If those solutions are not in sight, then for many years to come, Jerusalem is likely to remain an active memory of past fears and suffering, and a source of hope for tolerance and reconciliation.

Settlements

Barak argues as follows about the settlements:

... [D]uring my premiership we established no new settlements and, in fact, dismantled many illegal, unauthorized ones. Immediately after I took office I promised Arafat: No new settlements—but I also

told him that we would continue to honor the previous government's commitments, and contracts in the pipeline, concerning the expansion of existing settlements. The courts would force us to honor existing contracts, I said. But I also offered a substantive argument. I want to reach peace during the next sixteen months. What was now being built would either remain within territory that you, the Palestinians, agree should remain ours—and therefore it shouldn't matter to you—or would be in territory that would soon come under Palestinian sovereignty, and therefore would add to the housing available for returning refugees. So you can't lose (*M and B I*, par. 114).

Barak was willing to withdraw from the territories and to transfer the settlers' houses to the Palestinians as an Israeli contribution to the solution of the problem of the refugees.⁶⁶ It can be argued that this is simply a sophisticated justification for the expansion of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territory. However, operatively, this specific "justification," whatever its motivation, would have contributed to the (partial) solution of the refugee problem, at least at the stage that conditions become suitable.

Barak was not ready to take unilateral steps against the settlers. He wanted their future to be decided within the framework of the negotiations for a final agreement. This may explain why Barak as well as former left-wing Israeli governments have supported, or at least never threatened, the settlements. Left wing governments may have openly censured the settlements' enterprise, but they have taken no steps to dismantle them unilaterally. Jewish settlers can be obstacle to peace, but also hostages for peace. However, many Jewish settlers have not attempted to foster cooperative relationships with the Palestinian population over the years; they have often behaved in a provocative way, to show, intentionally or unintentionally, that Jews and Arabs cannot live together. Many of them, mainly in Hebron, encouraged by political leaders who were against or at least did not believe in coexistence, have an arrogant attitude towards the Palestinians. If they are eventually evacuated from heavily populated Palestinian areas, it will in part be consequence of their attitudes and behavior. In their practical attitudes, these settlers themselves created the situation that they complain about and the demands for their evacuation. Originally, however, many of them were "hostages" for an integrative solution of open frontiers. Ideologically, many of them over

the years have emphasized the Jews' *historical* right to live anywhere within the territory they designate the "Land of Israel." However, they have confused the notions of "historical rights" and "political" rights. Political rights are determined by peace agreements, wars or negotiations. Historical rights are not negotiable. The State of Israel is a political concept, and the Land of Israel is an historical concept. Indeed no one has ever confused "Eretz Israel ha Shlema" (The Land of Israel in its entirety) with the State of Israel; no one ever refers to the "State of Israel in its entirety." This distinction was intended to allow certain Jews to decide between politics and history when the time comes to make an historical compromise with the Palestinians. Many of them, in an atmosphere of real peace, are likely to decide for history and be ready to live under Palestinian sovereignty as Palestinians citizens. With their presence there, they could be hostages for a peace of open frontiers. It is easier to open ethnic and national frontiers when nationally mixed populations become an irreversible fact. A Palestinian state without Jewish citizens and an Israeli state without Arab citizen would go hand-in-hand with closed frontiers.

However, given the circumstances, Barak was ready to make territorial concessions, to consider the evacuation and re-location of settlements. When asked why the Palestinians "lie" about Barak's proposals (he proposed giving back only non-contiguous cantons or "Bantustans," they contend, and not 91% of the land conquered in 1967), Barak says he has no explanation. However, Barak's pretence at ignorance merely emphasizes the Palestinian's refusal to admit the true extent of what they were offered.

As to Agha and Malley's argument that Barak's position was one of "take it or leave it," Barak states, "Everything proposed was open to continued negotiations. They could have raised counter-proposals. But they never did" (*M and B I*, par. 119). Arafat's refusal to make any proposals, a point that Agha and Malley also admit, only confirms that Arafat was against an agreement and was ready to assume all the consequences of that position.⁶⁷

Barak also contends that Agha and Malley's articles are misleading, because they ignore Clinton's December 2000 proposal (endorsed by Israel) and the new Taba proposals. Barak even admits that in the proposals made after *Camp David II*, Israel's territorial offers went further than

those made at Camp David. According to Benny Morris, Barak was more generous at the time of the Taba talks, when

Israel had agreed to Washington's proposal that it withdraw from about 95 percent of the West Bank with substantial territorial compensation for the Palestinians from Israel proper, and that the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem would become sovereign Palestinian territory. The Israelis also agreed to an international force at least temporarily controlling the Jordan River line between the West Bank and the Kingdom of Jordan instead of the IDF. (But on the refugee issue, which Barak sees as "existential," Israel had continued to stand firm: "We cannot allow even one refugee back on the basis of the 'right of return'," says Barak. "And we cannot accept historical responsibility for the creation of the problem") (*M and B I*, par. 121).⁶⁸

Here, Barak takes responsibility for the conduct of the Taba talks, an issue I will discuss in more detail.

Camp David II versus Taba

The Taba talks are a seminal point to understand the internal struggle on the Israeli side. The concessions Morris refers to at Taba are different in essence to, rather than enlargements upon, Barak's original offer, so that *these proposals are not an extension but an alternative to those made at Camp David II*. It is hard to argue that the Israelis offered more of the same at Taba. There are three essential differences (among other less crucial ones) between them. The Taba proposal states:⁶⁹

1. The Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem and the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount will become sovereign Palestinian territory. Jerusalem will become a city divided into three: the Palestinian city, the Israeli city and an "open city."⁷⁰
2. Israel proposed (or was willing to accept) a six years *time-based* plan of withdrawal of its military forces from the Jordan Valley, in conjunction with an international force. Israel agreed to establish two military emergency locations in the Jordan River to be run by international forces.⁷¹
3. A formula was proposed, according to which Israel would *not* accept the "right of return" and the Palestinians would *not* re-

nounce the “right of return,” leaving the problem of the refugees open for further negotiations.⁷²

At Camp David, Barak was ready to consider what it was not prepared to discuss at Taba—and vice versa. At Camp David,

1. Barak was not ready to accept a physical division of Jerusalem; instead, he proposed a functional division in order to preserve the unity of the city by means of a common administration, and his last proposal, which was his preferred choice, was to postpone negotiations on the city for two years and negotiations on the Temple Mount for 10 years.
2. Barak proposed a security-based military presence of Israeli forces would remain along the Jordan River, which would be leased for a term of 99 years, and the Jordan Valley would remain the defensible eastern border of Israel.
3. Barak was ready to consider the return of about 100,000 refugees, but not to recognize the “right of return.”⁷³

The shift in Barak’s offer at Camp David and the proposals that were advanced at the Taba talks indicate two different notions of peace.

Jerusalem

At Camp David, it was proposed either that the issue of Jerusalem should not be decided upon and should be left open for future negotiations, or that the Palestinians should be granted *limited* autonomy over parts of Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty and a kind of custodianship over the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount. In both these cases, Israel was unwilling to discuss the division of Jerusalem into two cities, but was prepared to accept a functional division by means of tunnels and free routes.⁷⁴

By the time the negotiations reached a dead end, it became clear that Barak was not intent on the idea that a final agreement must be achieved at any cost, but was willing to make some advances in the direction of partial agreements, in order to prevent a future explosion of violence. At this critical point in the discussions, Clinton proposed postponing all negotiations on Jerusalem for one or two years, and the negotiations on the Old City for five years. Madeleine Albright proposed to the Palestinians to declare the State without including sovereignty over Jerusalem as

the first step.⁷⁵ Barak went farther, and proposed postponing negotiations on the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount for ten years: “Let’s keep the situation,” he said, “as it is today. Each side will be able to claim what it wants to. You, the Palestinians, will rule de-facto over the prayers on the top [of the Temple Mount], and the Israelis will say that they have the sovereignty.”⁷⁶

This was a proposal of choice, not of necessity. Barak could have simply agreed with Clinton. His proposal shows, however, that his intention in proposing a final agreement was not because he was utterly committed to the proposal itself, but because it was a means with which to exert pressure on Arafat to change his mind. He preferred a gradual process in which negotiations were promoted whatever could be agreed upon, leaving controversial issues for later stages, when an atmosphere of cooperation will have been created, so that the problem of Jerusalem will then appear less irresolvable than it currently appeared under the prevailing pressure of violence.

Sovereignty and co-existence in Jerusalem are two horns of the same dilemma. With the resolution of the one horn, comes increased damage to the other horn. In an attempt to bring the parts directly to think on the co-existence in Jerusalem even before (or to avoid) solving the symbolic problems of sovereignty, Clinton proposed, on July 14 2004, at the fourth day of the negotiations, as follows:

Do me a favor. Each of you assume that you get the sovereignty outcome you want. Go over what life looks like in Jerusalem. How do things function, what is life like, how will things actually work? You know we cannot solve the question of sovereignty right now, but you also know there are powers and functions in the city. Develop such a list and go over it together without reference to sovereignty—assuming you have it.⁷⁷

This tactical move shows better than anything else what Clinton’s understanding of a solution was.⁷⁸

In Taba, things followed another course. Miguel Angel Moratinos (the official representative of the European Union for the Middle East Peace Process) wrote a Nonpaper, which is the most authoritative document on the negotiations. According to it, Israel proposed, or accepted a proposal, to divide Jerusalem into three cities, and to share the sovereignty over the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount.⁷⁹ The city would be split into East

Jerusalem (al-Quds), which would serve as the capital of Palestine; West Jerusalem (Yerushalaim), the capital of Israel; and the Old City, which would remain an “open city.” The negotiators even discussed a special police force for the “open city.” Israel suggested creating a special authority or “some form of internationalization for the entire area or a joint regime with special cooperation and coordination.”⁸⁰ The parties discussed practical arrangements regarding “evacuations, building and public order” in the area of the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount. Moratinos adds:

An informal suggestion was raised that for an agreed period such as three years, Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount would be under international sovereignty of the P5 plus Morocco (or other Islamic presence), whereby the Palestinians would be the “Guardian/Custodians” during this period. At the end of this period, either the parties would agree on a new solution or agree to extend the existing arrangement.⁸¹

Needles to say, a peace treaty that begins with the division of Jerusalem, is a peace based upon tension, reminiscent of the division of Berlin, Belfast and Nicosia, non of which were ever paradigms for peace but rather ways to manage confrontation or maintain conflicts. The most striking proposal discussed at Taba was the creation of the so-called “open city,” a name that is pure Orwellian “doublespeak” for a closed city, which would be administrated in a way that was sure to discourage anyone from entering the city. It was to include internal demarcations, Palestinian gates, Israeli gates, special passes and licenses to enter the city, and to be under the supervision of international forces (see *Chapter Eight*).⁸² The main aspect that proves the separatist intention behind such an agreement is that freedom of entrance and movement within the Old City was much greater before the creating of this “open city” than it would have been afterwards. Clinton in contrast, referred to an open and undivided city as a condition for any agreement.

There are further indications of the operative meaning behind Ben Ami’s proposal on the *Camp David II* summit itself, on September and in Taba, and behind Sharon’s visit to the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount. They come from Yossi Beilin’s response at the time he was asked on Israel Radio about Sharon’s planned visit. He pointed out: “...Every citizen and tourist has the right to visit the Temple Mount ... But if he

goes, he will see that we are not really the sovereign power there, and that the Wakf is in essence running things at the site.”⁸³

Beilin frequently presents facts in a way that makes them suggest the kind of decisions he believes ought to be taken. And if they are not at his disposal—he presents his own wish as if it were a fact. This makes him rely too heavily on certain favorable facts and too heavily on his wishes. Over-dependence on facts grants the existing situation too much power compared with the alternative “counter-facts” (those that did not take place because of the implement of the former) a situation that gives the facts the final word. As well, over-dependence on wishes grants them too much power compared with the facts that do not support them.

In a review of a book about Jerusalem, instead of describing an actual and pragmatic struggle on the issue, Beilin asserts that the “pragmatic wing” of the Zionist movement had already renounced Jerusalem in 1937.⁸⁴ Indeed, this was his proposal at Taba, and the statement quoted above is how he chose to pave the way for such concession.

It is not clear if Clinton’s bridge proposals were of real importance in Taba. Clinton delivered his proposals in a round of negotiations at the White House on December 23 2000 and repeated them in New York before the Israel Policy Forum on January 7 2001. However, the proposals in Washington were delivered verbally, and since then many different, unofficial written versions had been published.⁸⁵ Besides, the talk took place during the first week of Bush’s Administration.

Be that as it may, it is clear enough that the European Union had a dominant role in Taba; Moratinos was present while there was no American representative. The European Union took the chance to fill the vacuum. At the end of the summit, the sides “forgot” to mention the contribution of the United States and of Bill Clinton in particular; instead, they expressed their gratitude to President Hosni Mubarak and their thanks to the European Union for their role in supporting the talks.⁸⁶ It was an opportunity to shift the sponsorship of the negotiations towards the EU; this move, together with the content of the proposals, make it difficult to believe that Barak or the United States had any role there. The main negotiators at Taba were Barak’s political rivals: then-Active Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben Ami, Yossi Beilin and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. Clinton ended his term and George W. Bush entered the

White House, a fact that is expressed in the nonpaper written by Moratinos in which he summarizes the talks.

The Taba talks appear to be the result of pressures exerted on Barak by opponents in his inner circle. At the beginning of January 2001, the discrepancies between Barak and his opponents became to a climax. The so called “peace cabinet,” probably an initiative of Shimon Peres, started to become active just at the time Barak was ready to the war with the Palestinian Authority understanding that it is impossible to reach a peace agreement with Arafat. Raviv Drucker calls it “a strange body.” He reports that this cabinet undermined Barak’s intentions.⁸⁷ It decided to continue with the negotiations, and Taba was the direct result of their initiatives. Since formally the intention of the peace cabinet was to unify the left for the coming elections, Barak had little power to oppose their decisions. Yossef Bodansky says that Barak was “being threatened not only by Sharon ... but also by a drive to replace him with Peres as the peace camp’s candidate. To survive this challenge, Barak had to outperform Peres on the peace front; hence, his gamble on Taba.”⁸⁸

The beginning of the Barak’s weakening in his own government, started immediately after *Camp David II*. It was influenced by Arafat’s policy of violence. When Dennis Ross refers to the Paris talks (cf. *M and B I*, par. 98–100), he adds that Barak announced a forty-eight-hour ultimatum:

If we don’t see a change in the patterns of violence in the next two days, we will regard this as a cessation by Arafat of the peace process. And we will order the army... to use all means at their disposal to halt the violence.⁸⁹

Ross believed that according to the ultimatum, Arafat began to understand that violence does not pay, and was ready to give orders to the Tanzim to stop the violence. However, he adds:

This might have been a genuine moment to stop the violence if Barak and our administration had stuck to their guns. But Barak came under pressure from his cabinet-dominated by the left—not to suspend the negotiations. Europe echoed this. ... Under pressure from the Europeans—and at least implicitly us—at the end of the forty-eight hours Barak extended the deadline to give the international community time to work on Arafat to get him to perform ...

Having declared an ultimatum, Barak should not have backed off. Arafat was scared and ready to perform (*ibid*: 737–8).

To refer, as Ross does, to “the left” as opposed to Barak adds more confusion. If we have left and right in his government, we should also assume left and right on the right-wing of the Israeli politics, resulting in a perplexing political map that includes two opposite lefts on the left, and two opposite rights on the right. Instead, I prefer to refer to those who, whether belonging to the left or to the right, supported his policy against Arafat and those who opposed it, from either inside or outside Barak’s government.

I do not find a satisfactory explanation for Barak’s surrender here, and Ross does not provide an adequate explanation. However, I must admit it as being a fact. As for the shortcoming of the explanations that are generally offered, first, as for winning the elections, Barak does not need to unify the left nor does he need the Taba talks. On the contrary, his efforts should be oriented towards gaining the votes of the center and moderate right. The left, regardless of what happens, will not vote for Sharon. We would need the full naiveté of a good journalist to believe that those who supported Taba believed they could reach an agreement with Arafat at the last minute. It was clear to all that Sharon’s victory was Arafat’s lesser evil. Since Barak did not intend to commit hara-kiri, someone else intended to put an end to his political career with the excuse that the Taba talks were intended to reach a peace agreement. The failure of the talks was the real aim. After the elections, Sharon announced that his preference was for a national unity government with Barak. For this purpose, Sharon preferred not to have a clear victory. For Sharon, a defeated Barak would mean the need to surrender to his worst choice—a coalition with a party under the leadership of Shimon Peres.

It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the parties in Taba simply used the opportunity to state their agreement to continue negotiations under terror, along with promises of good will. They wanted to impose their understandings as an obligatory starting-point for Sharon and Bush policies.⁹⁰

Barak was not really engaged in the negotiations, although he sent one of his assistants, Gilead Sher, to Taba as a watchdog. Judging by Barak’s words, he was following the meeting as an observer. He pointed out that:

The chances of achieving a far-reaching agreement there are very low, I would even say scant ... What will happen there is some contribution to decreasing the level of violence, and some understandings on what the sides agree and disagree upon so that we can continue the talks after the elections.⁹¹

He also went on to point out that, "...as prime minister I will not sign any document which hands over sovereignty on the Temple Mount to the Palestinians" (*ibid.*).⁹² Symptomatic of the inner-struggle between factions in the government was Ben Ami statement that "both sides had never been so near."⁹³ This did not prevent him, after Taba, to say, "Negotiations would never work."⁹⁴ These declarations are but the expression of the same policy—to negotiate in order to show that no agreement can be reached. Peres, regarded by some sources as the mentor of the Taba talks, said, "What we learned in Taba was that we have a partner in the Palestinians and we hope the Palestinians learned they have a partner in Israel" (*ibid.*).

This expresses the irreconcilable differences between Peres and Barak. According to this statement, Barak was not really a partner at Camp David; the Palestinians had a partner only at Taba, just at the time Barak decided that Arafat is not a partner.⁹⁵ A result of this internal struggle is that by the end of the talks at Taba, as stated in a declaration quoted by Agha and Malley, "...The two sides declare that they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged with the resumption of negotiations following the Israeli elections" (*A and M III*, par. 177).

Barak authorized this declaration, as Agha and Malley take care to point out in their previous paragraph (Cf. *A and M III*, par. 176). One may wonder why Agha and Malley feel it necessary to include this explicit reference to Barak's *authorization*. This is not something to which one usually refers, nor is it what we normally expect, so there seem to be little reason to refer to it here, unless it is assumed that Barak was likely to be against it, and thus the authors (and by extension, the readers) find it surprising that he should support the declaration.⁹⁶

Ultimately, the outcome of the *Camp David II* summit reinforced the key role of the EU. Judging by the difference between the Taba and Camp David proposals, we may conclude that Barak was, before the elections, under pressure (exerted by the EU and his internal opponents)

to accept going to the Taba talks. They were the preamble for future negotiations to be held under fire.

Contrary to Barak and Sharon, Arafat like Peres, Beilin and Ben Ami, was interested in continuing to negotiate. He said that he was ready for talks and that the sides had made progress at the negotiations in Taba.⁹⁷ On January 28, on the very day that the Taba talks ended with the agreement not to agree, Arafat started his “campaign” for the election of Sharon and of Peres as the head of the Labor Party. He was speaking in Davos, Switzerland, reading in Arabic from a prepared text, against

...[T]he policy of economic strangulations, closures and siege, as well as starvation and collective punishment against our Palestinian people ... [waging] a savage and barbaric war, as well as a blatant and fascist military aggression against our Palestinian people ... using internationally prohibited weapons and ammunitions that include in their construction depleted uranium.⁹⁸

Barak, understanding Arafat’s intentions, both regarding the elections and the inner struggle in his party, reacted by calling for an immediate halt of the negotiations until after the election on February 6, and suspended attempts to arrange a summit with Arafat in Sweden.⁹⁹ He chose to take this course; he could have reacted otherwise, as for example, Peres did when having optimistically called for moderation, he shook hands with Arafat after Arafat’s verbal bombardments in Davos. Or might we conclude that only Barak was concerned with the upcoming elections?

Peres, while trying to gain power to his faction in the party, started a campaign against Barak that endured until the last minutes leading up to Election Day. The goal to discredit Barak’s reputation came at the cost of losing more votes than expected.¹⁰⁰ Barak’s defeat in the elections, held in the shadow of terrorist attacks, turned into a rout (Sharon received a vast majority of 62.5 percent of the votes compared to Barak’s 37.4 percent) obliging him to take a break from political life.¹⁰¹

In the Arab sector, there was a struggle between those who preferred Barak’s defeat and those who preferred to vote for him in an attempt to prevent Sharon’s solid victory. However, since according to Arab public opinion it was very difficult, actually impossible, to support Barak’s candidacy (because of a boycott that has been called to protest at the deaths of 13 Israeli-Arabs, killed in clashes with police last October), the con-

frontation took the form of a struggle between those who “did everything they could in order to prevent Arab voters from reaching the polling stations,” and those conducted by “*Hadash* (a Jewish-Arab left-wing party) and the party headed by Arab MK Ahmad Tibi, proposing that voters cast a blank ballot.”¹⁰² The difference is clear. If people could reach the polling stations and stand alone behind the ballot booth in the voting room, and are away from the pressure of public opinion to cast a blank ballot, many of them will probably vote Barak whatsoever to prevent Sharon’s victory. However, Beilin, who was in charge of the Arab sector, believed that to bring them to the ballot booth “was an impossible mission” (*ibid*: 219).

The final result was that Barak, by calling for early elections, and Sharon, by visiting the Temple Mount, prevented the irreversible division of Jerusalem, while Arafat effectively voted in Sharon as Prime Minister, and manipulated Peres into neutralizing Barak and sent him into political exile.

Jordan River

At Camp David, Barak’s first proposal was to lease the Jordan Valley for a term of 99 years and to insist upon the principle of “no second army between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea; and the perpetuation of the Jordan Valley as Israel’s de facto eastern security border.”¹⁰³ Ah’mad Qureia’ (aka Abu Ala) immediately rejected his first proposal. On June 13, Clinton presented his own proposal. Finally, Barak reluctantly accepted that an international force would temporarily control the border between the Palestinian state and the Jordanian kingdom. The withdrawal, however, would be implemented according to security concerns about regional developments. According to reports, Clinton’s proposal after the summit and before Taba, was that

...[T]he Israeli presence would remain in fixed locations in the Jordan Valley under the authority of the international force for another 36 months. This period could be reduced in the event of favorable regional developments that diminish the threat to Israel.

On early warning stations, Israel should maintain three facilities in the West Bank with a Palestinian liaison presence. The stations will be subject to review every 10 years with any changes in the status to

be mutually agreed. (According to the Israeli version of the minutes, Clinton said the stations would be subject to review after 10 years).¹⁰⁴

Agha and Malley, while trying to explain the symmetry of the proposals, state:

On security issues, the essentials are the nonmilitarization of the Palestinian State and the introduction of an international force—led by the United States and initially including an Israeli presence—stationed on Palestinian territory in the Jordan Valley and along the border with Israel. This force would serve as a political deterrent to any attack, thereby enhancing both sides' sense of security. The fact that it would be an international force would meet Palestinian concerns, while the fact that it would, at first, include an Israeli component would help assuage Israeli fears.¹⁰⁵

Clinton's words take into account Barak's concerns regarding an Israeli military presence along the Jordan River. According to his strategic conception, this presence is needed insofar as there is a strategic conventional threat from its eastern border, a presence to be reconsidered only in light of political developments in the Middle East, apart and beyond the negotiations with the Palestinians.

At Taba, Israel agreed to the Palestinian proposal, that such an international force would replace the IDF's control of the border for three years, and that this would be prolonged for another three years.¹⁰⁶

Taba is therefore a time-based proposal, whereas Clinton proposed a performance-based proposal. As stated in Moratinos's Nonpaper, Israel renounced its presence along the Jordan River and was ready to dismantle the settlements along the Jordan Valley. Israel also agreed to the deployment of two "emergency locations" to be run only by the international presence.¹⁰⁷ This agreement is reinforced by the words of the Palestinian Authority Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Nabil Sha'ath, who revealed that the state of Palestine "planned to absorb the 'displaced' [the refugees] Palestinians in new communities that would be built in the Jordan Valley."¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Ben Ami recognized that Israel "dropped the demand for sovereignty in the Jordan Rift Valley."¹⁰⁹

The operative meaning of this time-based proposal is the loss, at the conventional military level, of Israel's strategic depth. The Jordan River issue has always been a source of controversy mainly for security reasons. Sharon and Barak were not ready to withdraw the IDF presence along

the river, while Peres has always been ready to agree to it. This dispute is connected with the discussion between those who support the idea of basing Israel's security on a nuclear option, and those who prefer to base it on conventional superiority. The latter believe that an Israeli military presence along the Jordan River maintains strategic depth without the need for nuclear deterrence.¹¹⁰

Those who support conceding the Jordan Valley hold that in an era of medium and long-range missiles, expanding the Navy and equipping it with nuclear submarines can compensate the loss of this valley. The Chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Yuval Steinitz, as reported by O'Sullivan, believes that "the strengthening of Israel's depth through a powerful navy would actually aid peace efforts, reasoning it would 'make it easier' to consider territorial compromises."¹¹¹

This policy seems not to take account of three issues.

First, naval strategic depth would encourage the destabilization of the Jordan Kingdom by leaving its western borders indefensible against a Palestinian insurgence (there are more than 2 million Palestinians in Jordan today), thus, facilitating the creation of a militarized Palestinian State on both sides of the Jordan River.

Second, the danger of a nuclear policy, for both sides, lies in the fact that nuclear weapons are unable to deter conventional wars and, whatever may be said about their intended purpose, they are likely to be used in a conflict. Although proponents of nuclear weapons' strategy declare that they are not intended to be used, a nuclear policy implies two insurmountable strategic deficiencies: 1) the dependency of one's country on the will and on the rationality of the other side, and 2) the inherent paradox of nuclear deterrence. If nuclear weapons are not to be used, and if the other side believes that they will not be used, they will not be a deterrent. Thus, in order to serve as a deterrent, they must be used, contradicting their original intent.

The issue of basing Israel's security on nuclear deterrence is a crucial issue that has barely been discussed publicly in Israel. However, the policy of "nuclear ambiguity" is so unambiguous, that it seems instead to be a type of compromise between those strategists and policymakers like Shimon Peres, who support basing Israel's security on nuclear weapons, and those who oppose it, such as Ariel Sharon. Peres believes that nuclear

balance will overcome hostility in the region, and that the peace process is the result of the suspicion of the existence of Israeli nuclear weapons (“The suspicion is a deterrent.”¹¹²) Sharon, on the contrary, says: “I could never understand the people in Israel who talked about the desirability of achieving a ‘balance of horror’ in the Middle East. ... In my opinion the concept of a balance of nuclear terrorism has been a terrible mistake even for the great powers.”¹¹³

Peres and Sharon are not ambiguous and ambiguity can hardly be a policy. Besides, since nobody believes in the ambiguity, nobody is deterred. Even the Israeli public does not believe in it. Therefore, the chance that decision makers will believe it becomes even less likely to happen. As was in the case of the “fog of battle,” or the “fog of war” (a term supposed to be coined by Carl von Clausewitz though not found in his works), it is incorrectly assumed that it means either the confusion of the enemy regarding your true positions and intentions (it is called also VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous), or your own confusion. In any event, “fog of battle” is not a metaphor coined for making recommendations in decision-making. It only accounts for the uncertainty inherent in any decision that is taken in real time.

There is nothing more dangerous to the success of military actions than both kinds of fog, whether it is your own disconcert, or the other side’s lack of clear information about your capabilities and intentions. If his ideas about either your tactics or strategic plans are unclear, then the other side’s confusion will also led to your own confusion about what is required by the situation. The other side will prepare itself for any eventuality, and not just the one you would “like.” For *the sake of your* efficiency and safety, therefore, it is imperative to have clear ideas about your intentions and the deployment of your forces, especially under a necessary condition: that those ideas should be *exactly* wrong and not vague or confused ones.¹¹⁴ it is unclear as to how nuclear ambiguity can be a successful strategic policy.

Third, an international military presence along the Jordan River, as proposed in Taba (and in December 1 2003 by the *Geneva Accord*), would make Israel’s security reliant on international guaranties. Yigal Allon, former Israeli Foreign Affairs minister, wrote in 1976:

Without detracting from the value of such guaranties, I would not suggest that any country make its very existence dependent upon

guaranties of any kind in this changing world. If the reference is to diplomatic guaranties only, these are devoid of any real deterrent value; they are lacking in teeth. And should Israel's enemies be tempted to attack it anew, such guaranties would be of little value in their considerations. Military guaranties, however, can be of some value, but to rely exclusively upon them would be a critical error. Not only might the effectiveness of such a military guaranty prove to be short-lived, but the guaranty itself might hand over almost totally to the guarantor the recipient's power of independent action.¹¹⁵

Allon wrote this words before the peace agreement signed between Israel and Jordan, and before the US invasion of Iraq. Nevertheless, even prior to a clearer regional stability, he recognized that if Israel conceded its presence along the Jordan River, it would be obliged to base its security on its nuclear capability. In this "changing world," as Allon points out, once granted—diplomatic recognition can always be withdrawn. Breaking diplomatic relations is a "recognized diplomatic tool," said Henry Kissinger arguing against the abandonment of a security position along the Jordan River.¹¹⁶ This is the fundamental difference between Barak's proposals at Camp David and the proposals of his rivals at Taba: Israel's military presence on the Jordan Valley allows for the future relinquishment of its nuclear capabilities, while the Taba proposal ensures (or provokes) the perpetuation of a nuclear-based security policy that may easily encourage a nuclear-balanced Middle East.

Bruce Riedel's account of the US-Israeli parallel negotiations conducted behind the scenes at *Camp David II* on security matters provides confirmation of the existence of this alternative, anti-nuclear policy. "It is important to understand these discussions to better assess the proposals Barak put on the table in their full perspective and to understand the kind of peace agreement he and President Clinton were trying to build."¹¹⁷ The Israeli negotiators were Barak's chief of staff, Danny Yatom, and his foreign policy advisor, Zvi Shtaub. The Israeli proposal included a nuclear umbrella commitment by the US, which included "an American promise to respond to a nuclear attack on Israel with American nuclear forces" (*ibid.*), and the reinforcement of the Israeli conventional capabilities. The intention of this proposal is to facilitate a situation where, in the future, within the framework of regional peace negotiations with the Arab countries that do not have common borders with Israel,

since Israelis will no longer need their own nuclear defensive systems, they will be able to make concessions. In addition, concerned with the reinforcement of Israeli conventional military capabilities, Barak asked “for Israeli access to some of America’s most advanced defense technology; in particular the Tomahawk cruise missile and the F-22 advanced fighter aircraft” (*ibid.*).

Return of Refugees

At Camp David, Clinton proposed absorbing about 100,000 Palestinians over several years (about 15,000 per year), within a family reunification scheme, without recognizing the “right of return.”¹¹⁸ This proposal was part of what was referred to as a “Marshall Plan for the Middle East.”¹¹⁹ In contrast, at Taba the Israel position changed dramatically.

It is difficult to get an accurate understanding of the negotiations. We have only bits of information about the mutual offers, which were made by means of non-existent papers. Evidence of their existence is provided by leaks, innuendoes, and verbal reactions. The notion of a ‘non-paper’—which is a paper that does not officially exist—is indicative of the topsy-turvy world of political negotiations. Therefore, the proofs of their existence is provided by there not being what they are and by being what they are not.

This should not dishearten. In 2002, *Ha’aretz* journalist Ari Shavit revealed part of one of these nonexistent papers.¹²⁰ He claimed that Beilin had written a ‘nonpaper’ in which he recognizes the “right of return” of the Palestinian refugees from the 1948 war. The paper, according to Shavit, was submitted to the official Palestinian negotiators on January 23 2001. Article 7 of Beilin’s paper states:

Since 1948, the Palestinian yearning has been enshrined in the twin principles of the “Right of Return” and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State deriving its basis from International Law. The realization of the aspirations of the Palestinian people, as recognized in this agreement, includes the exercise of their right to self-determination and a comprehensive and just solution for the Palestinian refugees, based on UNGAR 194, providing for their return and guaranteeing the future welfare and wellbeing of the refugees, thereby addressing the refugee problem in all its aspects.

That is to say, the document recognizes the principle of return as it is stated in UN Resolution 194. Article 11 of this resolution, states:

11. [The General Assembly] *Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.¹²¹

According to Shavit, Beilin believed that:

...[H]e neutralized the device through two other formulations that appear in the document he drafted. Article 5 of the non-paper clarifies that “the desire to return will be implemented in such a way that will confirm to the existence of the state of Israel and the homeland of the Jewish people.”

Article 8 says that the return to Israel “will be limited to an agreed number of refugees.” Thus, seemingly, the dramatic document says one thing and its opposite. On the one hand, it gives the right of return to the refugees wherever they are, some 4 million people, a sweeping right of return (which includes Israel inside the Green Line boundaries) and on the other hand, it proposes mechanisms for immigration that will not allow more than a few tens of thousands to actually come.¹²²

He considers that Beilin’s proposal

...[T]urns UNGAR 194 from a sleepy recommendation by the UN to a relevant decision that makes a commitment and is founded in international law. At the same time, Beilin’s document denies Israel the safety net that the Clinton Framework offered: an explicit declaration that the right of return does not extend to Israel proper. The former Israeli minister makes a whole series of proposals on critical issues that endanger Israel far more than do the former American president’s [proposals] (*ibid.*).

According to *Ha’aretz*’s Palestinian sources, at the meeting of Israeli and Palestinian representatives at the White House on December 23 2000, President Clinton’s proposal was as follows:

[I believe you]...We need to adopt a formulation on the right of return that will make clear that there is no specific right of return to Is-

rael itself but that does not negate the aspiration of the Palestinian people [of Palestinian refugees] to return to the area.

I propose two alternatives:

1. Both sides recognize the right of Palestinian refugees to return to historic Palestine, or

2. Both sides recognize the right of Palestinian refugees *to return* [skipped] to their [a] homeland.

The agreement will [would] define the implementation of this general right in a way that is consistent with the two-state solution. It would list the five possible homes for the refugees:

1. The State of Palestine
2. Areas in Israel being transferred to Palestine in the land swap
3. Rehabilitation in a host country
4. Resettlement in a third country
5. Admission to Israel

In listing these [five] options, the agreement will [you would] make clear that *the* [skipped] return to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and [or] the area acquired in the [through] land swap would be [a] right for all Palestinian refugees, while rehabilitation in [their] host countries, resettlement in third countries and [or] absorption into Israel will [would] depend upon the policies of those countries.

Israel could indicate in the agreement that it intends [intended] to establish a policy so that some the refugees would [could] be absorbed into Israel consistent with Israel's sovereign decision.

I believe that priority should be given to the refugee population in Lebanon.

[Taken together] The parties would agree that this [steps] implement[s] Resolution 194.¹²³

Firstly, we need to examine the difference between the Beilin and Clinton proposals. Initially, there seems little if no distinction, and even if we do detect some differences, this may at first glance appear to be a trivial and unnecessary search.

Thinking this way means to lack the wisdom of diplomats, who are gifted at doing things with words. To make declarations is a kind of performance. However, I do not assert, for instance, that when making a promise, we are actually performing the act of promising. This is obvious and even trivial. What is a promise if it is not performing the act of promising? Philosophical exaggerations aside, diplomats do have this capability to use words to make things happen, and J. L. Austin probably

drew his inspiration from this practice.¹²⁴ When writing their ‘non-papers,’ they try to generate a situation that will favor their goals. Therefore, once again, we need to look at the things that they attempted to construct using very precise words that were able to express fine shades of meaning.

The difference between Clinton and Beilin’s offers lies not only in their words, irrespective of the context in which they are used. The distinction lies in their different visions of the kind of peace they would like to see in the Middle East in the future, a future that they try to conjure up with words.

According to Clinton, UN Resolution 194 is subordinated to his proposal, while Beilin’s proposal subordinates it to the Resolution. Clinton says that the agreement “implements Resolution 194 and Beilin says that it “must lead to the implementation of UNGAR 194.”

Linguistics perhaps will assert that the distinction between “implements x” and “must lead to the implementation of x” is negligible. They will be supported by Agnes Heller, who asserts with bitterness that modern science has transformed Faust into a Sherlock Holmes.¹²⁵ Maybe we need the high-flying spirit of Faust combined with Sherlock Holmes’s passion to get in touch with the details.

Clinton’s stance is quite clear. He tries to close the doors to further demands after the peace agreements are concluded. He has to forestall any possibility of future demands in order to facilitate an atmosphere of cooperation between the parties.¹²⁶

As for Beilin, he states in his reply:

Since Shavit quotes from a document I wrote and that was never published, because it was an internal memo and part of an official negotiating process, I assume it would not have been too great a bother for him to ask me if the quote was accurate. I would have told him that the document he was given contained two distortions that greatly changed its meaning. Unfortunately, I am not at liberty to present the original document, but the one Shavit published was different from the original.¹²⁷

First, he confesses that he is the author of the nonpaper; second, he states that in Shavit’s version there are two distortions that greatly alter its meaning; and third, that he cannot tell the reader what those distortions actually were. The whole argument relies, therefore, on his alleged in-

ability to show the reader the original text. His only argument, and this is the key point, is that taking into consideration its content, he cannot be the author of such a paper. For this argument, he relies on the reader believing that he could not be the author of a document that “means an end to the Zionist vision, meaning the vision of a Jewish, democratic state” (*ibid.*).

One may wonder why Beilin cannot reveal the content of the nonpaper two years after the end of the Taba talks. Who or what could be damaged by revealing its content? Israeli security could not be endangered. After all, classified information included in the documents was disclosed at the very beginning, in Taba, to the Palestinian negotiators. Would it perhaps harm the Palestinian negotiators? They could always claim, however, that this was not their proposal, but an Israeli one.

Since the document in question has been leaked in its entirety to the *L'Monde Diplomatique*, we now know that in fact Shavit quoted the document exactly as it was written; we also now realize that nothing in that document justifies such secrecy. We are therefore forced to conclude that Beilin denies the text because it is true.

In his reply, Beilin goes on to analyze UN Resolution 194, though not in order to show that the quotation from his document was distorted, as one would expect. It was to show that if his proposal “were recognized as an implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 194,” it would be harmless, because anyway the resolution “refers to Palestinian refugees ‘wishing to return,’ and not to their right to do so” (*ibid.*).

However, this was exactly what Shavit quoted from the Resolution. Thus, Beilin is not arguing with Shavit; rather, by fragmenting the text of the Resolution, he is omitting that it refers to the wish to return “to their homes ... *at the earliest practicable date.*”¹²⁸ Beilin’s interpretation by omission is important, because by fragmenting the Resolution he modifies its original meaning. In Resolution 194, the wish to return is not an abstract wish, but a wish that is to be implemented as soon as possible. Moreover, the return is not referred to there as merely a “right” of return, but as an actual and true return. Clinton tried to bestow on the right to return a different meaning. Namely, he wanted to accept the right but not its realization. Insofar as Beilin agrees with the Resolution, he accepts the realization and not the right, further complicating matters just as Shavit suspected.

Beilin, in order to shore up his argument, adds that his proposal does not differ from that of Clinton. If this were so, why did he not use Clinton's own text?

Beilin, however, says that Clinton said the same as he did, "The sides will agree that *this is an implementation* of UN General Assembly Resolution 194." Now Beilin changes meanings yet again, doing exactly what he accuses Shavit of doing to him—distorting the meaning to the extent of making Clinton say precisely the opposite of what he meant. Clinton in fact said, "The parties would agree that *this implements* Resolution 194."¹²⁹

It may be objected that I am splitting hairs. However, faithful to my conviction that politicians do things with words, I will try to explain the difference between the two statements. First, I would agree that out of context, the difference becomes blurred. But it is still apparent. For according to Clinton's words, the agreement comes *instead* of the resolution, so that it becomes obsolete. For Beilin, however, the agreement is proof of the actual living validity of Resolution 194.

As evidence that policymakers bear in mind such minutia, en route to Camp David, Barak said in accordance with Clinton and in disagreement with Beilin that any agreement must replace UN Resolutions 242, 338 and 194:

The words "end of the conflict" or "end of demands" are unimportant. The main point is that the agreement should be signed as a replacement of 242 or 338, 194 and 181. Then we can go to the international bodies and tell them that the agreements are instead of these resolutions, according to the will of both parties. The implementation of the decisions is written here, and there are no further demands on either party. Then Arafat will need to go to his people and tell them in Arabic that he has abandoned the claim to the right of return.¹³⁰

Resolution 194 and the agreement are not the same, but the later supersedes the first. Thus, Clinton and Barak need the resolution to fade away, while Beilin needs it to remain alive.

Does he want this in order to implement it? Is Beilin, contrary to his own declaration, interested in the actual mass return of refugees? He is not, mainly because he is practical. But precisely because of his practical wisdom, it is clear that he needs an agreement with *lacunae*, open to different interpretations, and the more possible interpretations there are, the

better the agreement will serve his stand. Clinton and Barak, on the contrary, prefer unambiguous statements. Opposing interpretations, either of Resolution 194 or of Beilin's proposals, serve to keep alive the dispute on the refugees' problem, even in the name of ending it.

To agree not to agree on the issue of refugees was Beilin's best option. According to his policy, each side should remain with its narrative intact, each side should maintain its own interpretation. Once the controversy is clearly established, like a theological dispute, the next step is to invite an intervening force to settle the dispute, to solve the issues that they are unable to resolve by themselves. Resolution 194 provides a good platform upon which to internationalize the conflict. The parties themselves will not need to enter into each other's minds; they will not need to recognize each other. They will not need to live together. A peace agreement is, for Beilin, a divorce. If the divorce does not materialize, then let the words keep working until it does.

Taba at Camp David

It will be wrong to assert that the proposals at Taba were not present at *Camp David II*. Taba was the continuation of an acrid split within the Israeli team at *Camp David II* that each side prefer not to refer to because of the damage it would bring to its own policy for the eventual use the other side can made of it.

The change of policy at Taba is the result of the always present split. For this reason I refer to it as Barak's opponents offer and not the Israeli offer. Dennis Ross describes the split by means of a kind of equation:

[W]hile Barak might have been angry ... about us getting out front of him on Jerusalem and swaps, his guys went beyond our ideas on sovereignty over the neighborhoods in East Jerusalem; they went very far on the Old City; and for the first time they gave most of the border with Jordan to the Palestinians.¹³¹

This is by no means an Israeli preplanned tune-up of their position. As I previously explained, the "good cop/bad cop" or Mutt and Jeff routine as a negotiating tactic here is nonsense in the same way as the popular interpretation of "fog of war," is nonsense (see *Chapter Four*.) What is the real benefit of getting your negotiating partner confused by opposite proposals? Dennis Ross reports about Barak's fast and furious reaction at

Camp David II after being informed about the negotiations he did not authorize, in which Ben Ami proposed to divide the city and to renounce the need for a presence of Israeli forces along the Jordan Valley. It was perhaps the most critical confrontation inside the Israeli delegation. It provoked Barak to write a note, in which, after a quick first reading, seems to blame Arafat and some members of the American team, while after a second, more careful reading, reveals blame on Ben Ami and Gilad Sher. In his note, Barak states:

I took the report of Shlomo Ben-Ami and Gilad Sher of last night's discussion very badly. This is not negotiations. This is a manipulative attempt to pull us to a position we will never be able to accept without the Palestinians moving one inch. Yasir Arafat would not dare to do it without believing that in the U S. delegation there is a strong bias amongst many of the American team for his positions. The President is of course objective but... the American team is not objective. . I have taken upon myself unprecedented risks on the way to the summit and even the positions... presented by our people last night... which I heard about after the fact and even though they are not my positions, they represent additional risks. There are people in my delegation who strongly oppose these moves. ... I will not be able to live with the situation that was created last night. When the people of Israel will understand how far we were ready to go we will have the power to stand together unified in such a struggle, however tough it will become, even if we will be forced to confront the entire world. There is no power in the world that can force on us collective national suicide (*ibid*: 677).

Barak's note is full of contradictions. It was purposefully made in an attempt to avoid giving full expression to the split within the Israeli delegation, a split on the core issues of Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, originated in conflicting conceptions of peace. Judging from what Ross said about Shlomo Ben Ami's and Gilead Sher's proposals—that they even went beyond the American ideas, in proposing to divide the city of Jerusalem and the conceding of the border with Jordan to the Palestinians—Ben-Ami's and Sher's report is not just a report about other's positions, but about the positions of their own.¹³² Therefore, they are target of Barak's accusations. The manipulative attempt, to which Barak refers, can easily be interpreted as having been made by the members of his own delegation against his policy and without his authorization, rather than

by others. Explicitly and openly however, he blames some members of the American team. But in order to add, that the proposals he rejects were made by his representatives. He admits that the positions presented by the members of the Israeli delegation were heard by him only “after the fact” and that those are not his positions because they represent additional risks that he is not ready to take. He also refers to people in his delegation who strongly oppose these moves, which implies that there are others in it, that do not only do not oppose them but even *are proposing* them. The most striking statements appear at the end, when he says two contradictory things:

1) “The people of Israel will understand how far we were ready to go” and that “we will have the power to stand together unified in such a struggle”... 2) “even if we will be forced to confront the entire world. There is no power in the world that can force on us collective suicide.”

Unbelievable as it might be, all this is said in a single sentence, meaning that either Barak is unable to express himself or that the “suicidal” proposals were made by Israelis enforcing a policy of accomplished facts against him. Ross seems to have misunderstood the message, when he wrote that, “The language of this message reflected a man not just anguished but in personal crisis.”¹³³

Syria First

Finally, I would like to add some words about Barak’s “Syria first” policy, which is regarded by Agha and Malley as an alternative path in order to refrain from sustaining talks with the Palestinians.

Morris says that Barak’s “Syria First” policy taxed the Palestinians’ goodwill and patience (cf. *M and B I*, 123). Barak contends that well before negotiations with the Palestinians began, he was always in favor of talks with Syria, in view of the greater threat posed by Syria with its conventional and non-conventional (chemical and biological) capabilities and its possession of the missiles needed to deliver such warheads. Under certain conditions, that capability poses an existential threat to Israel. In addition, peace with Syria would mean that peace with Lebanon could be brokered almost immediately afterward. Moreover, reaching a peace agreement with Syria may have had implications for peace with the Palestinians, in the sense that the latter would then be unable to widen the

conflict, if that was their intention. On the other hand, peace with the Palestinians would not reduce Syria's ability to pose an existential threat to Israel.

This was part of Rabin's legacy, and Barak told the Palestinians, at the very start of his premiership, that negotiations with Syria would not be held at the expense of seeking a peace deal with the PA. In this regard, Barak continued the policy of the former Prime Minister. Netanyahu had already held secret negotiations with Syria through an American businessman, Ronald Lauder, the president of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and George Nader, a former publisher of the Washington-based *Middle East Insight*.¹³⁴ In his meeting with President Clinton in Geneva, on March 26 2000, Hafez Al-Assad did not accept Barak's more generous concessions.¹³⁵ To Morris's question of whether Barak's "peace effort vis-à-vis the Palestinians was historically premature and foredoomed?" Barak replied: "No, as a responsible leader I had to give it a try" (*M and B I*, par. 137–138).

The operative meaning of this "responsibility" does not change Barak's conviction that there was no chance of an agreement even with his offers of concessions. Even so, however hypothetical his concessions might have been at the stage he proposed them, they give some indication as to the character of Israel's readiness to make concessions in a future agreement with another Palestinian leadership.



Chapter Five

The Destruction of Israel?

Agha and Malley's Response to Barak, 13 June 2002

Agha and Malley's tactics used in their reply to Barak is to minimize his attack on Arafat by broadening and diverting the issues on three specific points that extend far beyond Barak's actual words and intentions.

First, they contend that Barak believes (Agha and Malley interpret Barak's words to mean that he believes) that Arafat's resort to terrorism was part of a larger agenda that denies Israel's right to existence. Agha and Malley attribute to Barak the idea that "*Arafat and the rest of the Palestinian leaders* [my italics] must be supplanted before a meaningful peace process can resume, since they are the ones who rejected the offer" (*A and M III*, par. 150) to Barak.

Second, they contend that Barak alleges that the violence is not a means for ending the occupation, since it could be ended through negotiations.

Finally, they contend that Barak maintains that Israel "must crush the Palestinians—'badly beat them' in the words of Prime Minister Sharon—if an agreement is ever to be reached.

Barak neither used the word "crush" nor said that the Palestinians should be "badly beaten." Those are words used by Sharon.¹ Barak speaks specifically of Arafat's policy and its supporters; he does not refer to Palestinian leadership as a whole. Barak hints at the possibility of the Israelis putting pressure on some Palestinian leaders and while favoring others. Instead, Agha and Malley represent this as implying a general rejection of all Palestinian leaders, including Arafat's internal opposition. Of course Barak would be in trouble if he were pushed to name the persons he

found to be most cooperative within the Palestinian leadership. If he named Arafat's opponents, who were expected to act according to Arafat's dictates, he would cause irreparable damage to them and their policies. For this reason, he must avoid names and refer to any of these tendencies in the abstract.²

The restrictions that this imposes upon Barak's freedom to explain what happened at Camp David are exploited very well by Agha and Malley. In particular, they make very efficient use of Barak's argument that Arafat seeks Israel's demise. Arafat would not attempt to accomplish what is politically and pragmatically impossible. Moreover, even if he were not realistic, the consequences of pursuing his waking dreams instead of making decisions would have genuine consequences, because he operates in a real world that determines what can actually be implemented and what remains a dream. What we dream of is often not what we are able to realize. Within the scope and limits it permits, reality imposes its own rigid boundaries. However, it is more expedient for Barak to posit such an argument than to allege something that is less credible but more accurate, that is, that Arafat did not want a cooperative, peaceful deal, but either preferred the continuation of violence or a peace imposed from the outside without agreement. Faced with the choice between perceiving Arafat as a warrior or as a dreamer, public opinion tends to see him as a dreamer, and Arafat did his utmost in order to maintain this convenient image.

The restrictions placed upon Barak's capability to freely express his perceptions make Agha and Malley's task even easier. They turn to the official Palestinian position, which Barak pretends to regard as an expression of Arafat's desire to destroy the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. The official Palestinian position refers to a Palestinian state at the pre-June 4 1967 borders.

Unlike this "clear" position on the borders of their future state, the Palestinians stance regarding the refugee question is unclear:

First, they [the Palestinians] insisted on the need to recognize the refugees' right of return, lest the agreement lose all legitimacy with the vast refugee constituency—roughly half the entire Palestinian population. Second, they acknowledged that Israel's demographic interests had to be recognized and taken into account. Barak draws from this the conclusion that the refugees are the "main demo-

graphic-political tool for subverting the Jewish state.” The Palestinian leadership’s insistence on a right of return demonstrates, in his account, that their conception of a two-state solution is one state for the Palestinians in Palestine and another in Israel. But the facts suggest that the Palestinians are trying (to date, unsuccessfully) to reconcile these two competing imperatives—the demographic imperative and the right of return” (*A and M III*, par. 156).

On this issue, Agha and Malley admit that the Palestinians only presented a “set of principles” and not a real, operative proposal for a solution. However, they do not draw the operative conclusions from this inoperativeness. Not only dreams, but each and every idea, as much as it is expressed, is also subject to the forces at work in the world; no concept can remain isolated, with its content unaffected by given circumstances. Each concept has a practical force, determined by its interaction with reality, which is the connection between the text and its context. In this practical sense (and for the moment disregarding their motives), Arafat and his supporters, in the name of principles, refrain from offering practical solutions, thereby moving any solution even further away.

Agha and Malley explain the problem as a genuine conflict between two issues that the Palestinians must embrace: their understanding of the demographic repercussions for Israel, and their support of the Palestinian right of return.

If this was really the problem, then a useful distinction could be made between the right of return as a “right,” and the practical return as an “event.” If this distinction was stated clearly, then a real solution to the problem could be found. The passive reiteration of principles, rather than the offering of active proposals for solutions to the problems, causes the avoidance of making decisions. The following is one example of Arafat’s “passive” policy. Agha and Malley reveal that in one of his last pre-*Camp David II* meetings with Clinton, he asked him for a reasonable deal on the refugees question, “and then see”—said Arafat—“how to present it as not betraying the right of return” (*A and M III*, par. 156).

Which person will be the one who will “then see how to present it?” Will it be Arafat, Clinton or the Palestinian people? In this context, what does it mean to “then see?” This is confusing and vague, or maybe deliberately obscure; and more significantly, as Agha and Malley concede, there is still no sign of a Palestinian proposal. They remain vague when

trying to advocate for Arafat's policy on this issue, often attempting to conceal their own finding that the Palestinians did not propose any direct solution. If the reference here is to the Palestinian people, then Agha and Malley never even mention Clinton's "Marshall Plan." Indeed, it would be embarrassing to mention the fact that a real proposal was made, one that not only offered a solution to the refugee problem, but also may have even gone far beyond it, a solution that would deprive Arafat's stand of convincing explanation. Morris notes that:

Barak, like Agha and Malley, also resorts to the reiteration of principles, and asserts that Israel cannot assume any responsibility for the refugees. However, unlike Agha and Malley, he offered...a return of refugees to the prospective Palestinian State though with no "right of return" to Israel proper; and the organization by the international community of a massive aid program to facilitate the refugees' rehabilitation (*M and B I*, par. 90).

Furthermore, Barak stated that if a stable peace agreement were achieved, Israel would be ready to accept about 20,000 refugees. But under the guise of "sticking to principles," Arafat did even not consider the practical solution proposed by Barak, though it was certainly discussed by his internal challengers, including Sari Nusseibeh.³ Even Ariel Sharon stated, in a rare interview broadcast on Israeli Television's Channel 1, on December 16 1987, that in internal discussions in the past and now for the first time publicly how he had proposed many times, that Israel should assume some responsibility for the refugee problem, and discussed the need to rehabilitate about 30,000 Palestinian refugees *inside* the Green Line (the line of cease fire after the Six Day War of 1967). He specifically proposed to resettle them in Nazareth, Akko and Haifa.⁴ He also wrote that "autonomy will lead to an Israeli-Palestinian federation or confederation on the banks of the Jordan River," namely a Jordanian, Palestinian-Israeli federation.⁵

Therefore, when Agha and Malley say that the Palestinians did not present detailed meaningful proposals, they implicitly concede that abstract, vague, or over-generalized proposals do have actual operational uses, even though they do not explain what those uses might be.

Agha and Malley say that facts do not validate Barak's claim, that, "the Palestinian position was tantamount to a denial of Israel's right to exist and to seeking its destruction" (*A and M III*, par. 160). The question is

not whether or not this is the Palestinian position, but rather why Barak would assert something that obviously has no connection with a practical policy, even if it is, perhaps, an aspect of Arafat's wishful thinking. Barak uses this as an explanation of Arafat's behavior, and given the patterns of thought of his readers, it is likely to sound convincing. It is a convincing argument, whether or not (I would say probably not) it is true. Barak does not explain how the destruction of Israel can be carried out, with what means, or under what probable circumstances. The fact that he does not pause to offer us so much as a single idea of how such destruction could be implemented, clearly indicates that this is mere rhetoric, rather than truly a belief. But Agha and Malley believe—or pretend to believe—that Barak believes that the Palestinians believe that Israel can be destroyed in some mysterious way.

Barak was in fact more practical than this implies and according to Agha and Malley, he actually said "Israel is too strong at the moment to defeat, so [the Palestinians] formally recognize it. But their game plan is to establish a Palestinian State while always leaving an opening for further 'legitimate' demands down the road" (*A and M III* quoting Barak, par. 162).

In other words, Barak is not accusing the Palestinians of planning the destruction of Israel but of seeking the continuation of the conflict. Hence, we can understand why Arafat did not behave as one might expect him to have if he had wanted the destruction of Israel. Indeed, Agha and Malley do state:

Barak contradicts himself. For if that were the case [that Arafat wanted the destruction of Israel], the logical course of action for Arafat would have been to accept Clinton's proposals at Camp David, and even more so on December 23. He would then have had over 90 percent of the land and much of East Jerusalem, while awaiting, as Barak would have it, the opportunity to violate the agreement and stake out a claim for more. Whatever else one may think of Arafat's behavior throughout the talks, it clearly offers little to substantiate Barak's theory (*A and M III*, par. 162).

Agha and Malley assume too much here by asserting that he would have accepted only to have 90% of the territory. On the contrary, if Arafat's intention were to perpetuate the conflict, it would be preferable for the issue to remain open, especially if Arafat was not considered responsible

for the failure to arrive at a peaceful settlement. Thus, as we already saw, Sharon rather than Barak was Arafat's favorite candidate to win the imminent elections in Israel; Sharon's election would serve as a persuasive argument that Israel's policy, not Arafat's intransigence, was to blame for the lack of an agreement. Indeed, Sharon's name has achieved a mythical status in world politics. To hear and to pronounce the sounds of his name are themselves arguments against his policy. His name is automatically linked with the Sabra and Shatila massacre. Though the Kahan commission made Sharon, who was Minister of Defense at the time, only "indirectly responsible," he is portrayed as knowing nothing but force.⁶

This agenda may also include the deterioration of both the Israeli and the Palestinian Authority's economies. Agha and Malley are not ready to draw such conclusions. They believe, contrary to all of the evidence, that this is not Arafat's agenda, a belief not even shared by some of his internal adversaries.

Agha and Malley also contend:

When [Barak] took office he chose to renegotiate the agreement on withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank signed by Benjamin Netanyahu rather than implement it. He continued and even intensified construction of settlements. He delayed talks on the Palestinian track while he concentrated on Syria. He did not release Palestinian prisoners detained for acts committed prior to the signing of the Oslo agreement. He failed to carry out his commitments to implement the third territorial redeployment of Israeli troops and the transfer of the three Jerusalem villages (*A and M III*, par. 163).

All of this makes it appear as if Barak were actually more hawkish than former Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu was. This impression is created by Agha and Malley's distorted description of Barak's policy. It ignores the Palestinian behavior (especially Arafat's making terrorism appear virtuous and the suicide-bombers' attacks on Israel's civilian population) that brought about such measures, including the appeal to Syria as a compelling factor to encourage the Palestinians to fight terrorism in case they may want to negotiate a peace agreement before an agreement with Syria could be reached.

Agha and Malley's distorted account of Barak's statements also becomes clear from their following assertion:

Barak is equally dismissive of the importance of his holding a substantive meeting with Arafat at Camp David—though here one cannot help but be struck by the contradiction between Barak’s justification for that decision (namely that “the right time for a meeting between us was when things were ready for a decision by the leaders”) and his conviction that a leaders’ summit was necessary. If he felt things were not ready for a decision by the leaders meeting together, why insist on convening a leaders’ summit in the first place (*A and M III*, par. 164)?

In the first place, Agha and Malley see a contradiction, through which we may understand that they are unable or unwilling to explain something. However, why introduce a contradiction? What is its function in this context? Agha and Malley may be hinting that it was Barak, rather than Arafat, who did not want to reach an agreement? If this was so, then why he did not want an agreement? What might such a reason be? All of the questions that we have raised concerning Arafat’s behavior would now equally apply to Barak’s behavior.

A more accurate explanation would emerge if no contradiction were assumed here. When Barak referred to a meeting of leaders, he was suggesting that it took place at the *Camp David II* summit, and not before or after it. Everything depended on how far the negotiations had advanced. A summit of leaders is a last resort for which all parties must be well prepared. In order to achieve a real peace, the failure of such a summit must be avoided—unless, of course, peace is not the final goal and therefore something other than the summit is “the last resort,” for instance, an intervention without and beyond the parties’ desire.

The strongest point for Agha and Malley’s thesis is their argument that Barak rejected the Palestinian proposals regarding talks before and after *Camp David II* as excuses:

The Palestinian leaders had called for negotiations on a comprehensive settlement between the two sides as early as the fall of 1999. They had asked for an initial round of secret talks between Israelis and Palestinians who were not officials in order to better prepare the ground. They had argued against holding the Camp David summit at the time proposed, claiming it was premature and would not lead to an agreement in view of the gaps between the two sides. They later asked for a series of summit meetings following Camp David so as to continue the talks (*A and M III*, par. 165).

Agha and Malley allege that these proposals were dismissed without full consideration: “But it is not clear why they should be taken any less seriously than the ones he [Barak] made, and on which he prevailed” (*A and M III*, par. 166).

The question that arises here is what are the criteria for deciding what may be regarded as being a serious proposal and what not. For Agha and Malley, the only valid criterion seems to be the mere declaration of the good will and honest intention of the negotiators. The way to prove the supposed good will of either side is to consider what the operative outcomes of the proposals would be. Agha and Malley’s account tries to allocate blame equally or at least to balance Barak’s accusations by showing that the Palestinian position was understandable and even justifiable. More than anything else, this attempt only proves that both parties can muster arguments that rationally fit their chosen position. This invalidates the attempt to give a rational account of the discussion. If two opposing arguments are made to appear equal to each other—rational arguments cannot be of help. As Buridan’s ass paradox already showed, rational arguments are not an indication of rational choices.⁷ On the contrary, there cannot be *rational* choices because arguments tend to neutralize each other. If a decision to be taken were the result of a rational deliberation, opposite plausible arguments would be seriously discussed. However, in politics, the rule is, contrariwise, that one of the arguments is disregarded in order to reinforce the power behind the decision to accept the other. This is the proof that in practical issues, reasons are not a reason and proofs can be nothing more at bottom than persuasion. What counts here is the primacy of value-stands that determine the reasons that are to be applied to each occasion and specific circumstance. In practical wisdom, arguments and contentions can be used in order to justify and support opposite policies with the same convincing logic and with the same force. Considering this, the conclusions that we can draw are about goals, not about logic. Everything rises and falls because of the goals.

Once arguments are neutralized, Agha and Malley’s question returns with its full force. Whether or not Barak dismissed Arafat’s proposals before the summit—becomes an irrelevant political question, although it is certainly interesting from an historical point of view. The political refutation of their question is now much simpler than it appears. The question may now be, at Camp David, why did Arafat not insist on re-

turning to the negotiations that started in 1999? If Arafat's preference were for a peace process instead of a final peace agreement, he was there at Camp David in order to propose it. He could have proposed to reach partial agreements on matters that are less crucial than those discussed at Camp David, that could have actually lead to an agreement between the parties. Since this was not the case, and Arafat insisted on discussing the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount solution, their entire line of argumentation fails, and only proves their real intention—to try to eliminate criticism of Arafat's policy.

A Strategy?

According to Agha and Malley, one of the tragedies of *Camp David II* was that

...[T]he cards Barak was saving to increase his room to maneuver during the negotiations were precisely those the Palestinians needed to expand their own room to maneuver. Ultimately, the Palestinian team that went to Camp David was suspected by many Palestinians and other Arabs of selling out—incapable of standing up to Israeli or American pressure (*A and M III*, par. 170).

If this were correct, it would mean that an agreement was impossible from the very beginning of the summit. If the gain for one side is widely perceived as being a loss for the other, if it is a win-loss negotiation, this very fact doomed the summit. The idea of successful negotiations is to present things in such a way that losses are presented as gains; the price each side pays, is to be offered to the relevant public, as much as possible, either emphasizing the gains, or even make the public to view them as positive gains. If the Palestinians, through the achievement of an agreement, wished to persuade their people about the benefits to them of such an agreement, they could do that, by building upon the suspicions that Agha and Malley refer to in their argument. If on the other hand, one endorses Agha and Malley's argument (namely, the suspicion of the selling out of Palestinian interests), then they are working against an agreement, but it does not mean that such an agreement is unattainable.

The zero-sum theory becomes invalid in this regard because what really count in political decisions are the goals and not the means. On the contrary, some theories of negotiation assume that the resolution of conflicts

is only a question of means, and therefore tend to propose techniques designed to minimize both the duration and the costs of conflicts; such theories also assume that if policymakers would read them carefully, they would change their minds and conflicts would be neatly resolved.⁸

Consequently, anyone who acts against this alleged “common interest” is considered mistaken or irrational. According to such theories, we simply need policymakers that are more reasonable in order to live in a world that is better than the real one, which is by no means the best of all possible worlds. Such assumption simplifies events. The only obstacle that now remains in the way of achieving stable peace and security, is teaching policymakers how to become reasonable and to understand their “true interest,” which of course is what the theorist, not the policymaker, understands that interest to be. If, on the contrary we realize that the disputes among policymakers are based upon different values and goals, then game theories cannot be very helpful. Their sole use may be to convince those who are already convinced, which is not very useful.

However, how to “sell” an agreement to the public, remains a problem, but only a secondary one. Ultimately, it is a question concerned with its manipulation, and is not, as Agha and Malley seem to believe, a question of principles. The problem, for both the Palestinians and Barak, is not with the “cards” that Barak was, as it were, unready to offer and the Palestinians wanted to get. With proper arguments, almost everything can be “sold.” Therefore, the conclusion is that Arafat and Barak’s policies were indeed incompatible, a conclusion that does not require the excuses that Agha and Malley were trying to offer.

Their differences can be summarized by stating that Barak was, operationally, against the assumption that at the end of the negotiations a powerful side designed to win, and a weaker side likely to lose. This would mean that a reconciliatory solution to the conflict might not be found. Barak rejected and Arafat accepted the assumption that both powerful and weaker sides in the conflict serve a necessary purpose. The powerful side can clearly recognize that it needs a powerful partner, as was recognized by the allies after their victory in the Second World War, but it also can clearly recognize that it needs a weaker partner, as was recognized by the winners after their victory in the First World War.

Those two models were active in *Camp David II*. The difference between my conclusion and that of Agha and Malley is that I am trying to

explain the real alternatives that were there in real time, whereas their intention is to show that an agreement was unattainable in accordance with the powerful-weaker model.

Clinton's Proposals and the Taba Talks

Although the operative meaning of the following assertions were already discussed, I will add some general remarks that refer specifically to the text that is the basis of Agha and Malley's contentions.

They analyze the stands of those who contend that Arafat stood his ground in his intention to avoid an agreement when he rejected President Clinton's proposal of 23 December 2000, and during the Taba negotiations on January 22–28 2001. Agha and Malley admit that although Clinton's parameters were accepted by Israel, "Arafat took his time, waiting ten days before offering his response—a costly delay considering the fact that only thirty days remained in Clinton's presidency" (*A and M III*, par. 173).

They also admit that Arafat's response was not positive, that he had many reservations—and that this was just a month before elections in both the United States and Israel. As I already tried to demonstrate, it can be seen from this alone, that Arafat had decided to contribute to Barak's defeat in the upcoming elections, therefore propelling Sharon into power.⁹

Agha and Malley, trying to advocate for Arafat's position write:

The Palestinians undoubtedly were not satisfied with Clinton's parameters, which they wanted to renegotiate. They were not responding with the same sense of urgency as the Americans or as Barak, who was facing elections and knew the fate of the peace process could decide them (*A and M III*, par. 176).

At best, this might be a good description of Arafat's position, but without providing an explanation for his actions. Such an explanation would need to point to the operative results of such a policy, which Arafat could not have been able to foresee. If Arafat anticipated those outcomes—specifically, the impending elections—he must have either desired such an outcome, or at the very least, he was not prepared to do anything to prevent it. Both the Americans and Barak's sense of urgency cannot be regarded as their own business. They cannot hold a monopoly over this

sense when the other side has a decisive role to play in the events. It is implausible to assert, therefore, that Arafat was unconcerned with Barak and Clinton's concerns.

Arafat's Initiative?

Agha and Malley also reject Barak's argument that the second intifada was the result of Arafat's own initiative; a move intended to scuttle negotiations and to carry out violence treating it as a normal instrument to achieve his goals. However, the gap between the positions is not as wide as it would seem. Agha and Malley admit that the Palestinians did not attempt to stop the uprising, and that they even initiated acts of violence, by trying to kill as many civilians as possible. The difference between the two sides lies in their accounting of the causes of the intifada. Agha and Malley maintain that the uprising was a reaction to the Israeli Army's excessive use of force and that it was not a Palestinian initiative, contrary to what was explicitly stated in the Mitchell Report of April 30 2001.

Regarding the visit of Sharon to the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount, Agha and Malley state:

Barak entirely rejects the notion that Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif on September 28, 2000, played any part in setting off the subsequent clashes. To support his case, he asserts that the visit was coordinated with Palestinian security officials. But that is hardly the point. The point is that when we consider the context in which the visit was taking place—the intense focus on the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif at Camp David and the general climate among Palestinians—its impact was predictable. As Dennis Ross, Clinton's special Middle East envoy, said: "I can think of a lot of bad ideas, but I can't think of a worse one" (*A and M III*, par. 181).

First, let us discuss a secondary point regarding this matter. If the impact of Sharon's visit was predictable, then why was Arafat unable to foresee how the results of the elections in Israel were actually a result of his policy? This illustrates the strange type of bias Agha and Malley were subjected to in their article.

As for Sharon's visit, the timing is indeed the right issue. Albright added voice against Sharon's visit:

Why did Sharon do it? Presumably he went to assert Israel's claims to sovereignty and establish a political advantage over Barak. Did he have a right to visit the Temple Mount? Yes, but for him to exercise that right at that particular time was like throwing a lighted match into a gasoline can with all the children in the neighborhood standing by. There will always be those who applaud such gestures. History, however, does not.¹⁰

However, Albright considers Arafat's response whereas Agha and Malley ignore it:

History will also show that Arafat made the worst of yet another opportunity. Instead of using the incident to demonstrate Palestinian maturity in the face of Sharon's provocative act, he reminded the world why even the most open-minded Israelis have misgivings about a Palestinian state ... Whether violence was already planned or Arafat ordered it now or merely failed to restrain it, the results were the same. Palestinians began heaving stones, bottles, pipe bombs, and gasoline bombs at Israeli soldiers. The soldiers fought back with tear gas and gunfire. Palestinian television showed footage of the 1989 intifada and played patriotic songs. Arafat closed the schools and students rushed into the streets. A twelve-year-old Palestinian boy was caught in a cross fire and killed, and the image of his frightened face was shown over and over again on televisions around the globe. Palestinian funerals stirred emotions that overflowed into violence, prompting reprisals that led to more funerals (*ibid*: 496).

We have here two inter-connected facts, Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount, and Arafat's response, alongside two conflicting accounts of what happened, Agha and Malley's one-sided account, and Albright's balanced account. Sharon could decide not to visit the Temple Mount, and Arafat could decide to "demonstrate Palestinian maturity."

Agha and Malley say that it would be "curious"—they use words such as "contradictory," "paradoxical," and "curious" in order to describe things that they cannot, or do not wish to, explain—if it were true "that Arafat had planned as his response to the *Camp David II* summit a campaign of violent terror" (*A and M III*, par. 185), as Barak contended. They find it "curious," because the Palestinians had asserted that the parties were not ready for a summit. Therefore, they wanted to postpone it, or at least treat it as the first of a series of meetings, something that as it were, contradicts the response of violent terror. Their intention, how-

ever, is yet unclear. Their position becomes clearer when they stop asserting that the whole situation is rather out of control. Violence, they choose to argue, was an *undesirable consequence* of the situation:

At a tactical level, the Palestinians may have seen some advantage to a short-lived confrontation to show the Israelis they could not be taken for granted. The Israeli security forces, for their part, were still affected by the bloody experiences of September 1996 and of May 2000, during which Palestinian policemen confronted Israelis. They were determined to stop any uprising at the outset, using far greater force to subdue the enemy. Hence the Israeli decision to use lethal weapons, and hence the very heavy (and almost entirely Palestinian) toll of death and grave injury in the early days of the Intifada. That, in turn, made it, if not impossible, at least very difficult for the Palestinian leadership to bring things under control; rather, it increased pressure to respond in kind. Some among the Palestinian leaders may have hoped that the uprising would last a few days. The Israelis expected their strong reaction to stop it in its tracks. Instead, in this tragic game, in which both sides were reading from different scripts, the combination of the two may have led to an outcome that neither ever intended (*A and M III*, par. 187).

The scenario they describe here is one of a situation that is out of control on both sides; they also add that a “wise” response to the violence would be the continuation of negotiations:

The question, however, is not whether Israel should respond, but how. One might have hoped for a wise response—one that combined strong security measures with a genuine attempt to end the conflict—and that Ariel Sharon would have imitated his predecessor in continuing the political talks (*A and M III*, par. 191).

There are two arguments here that fit together, that the conflict is out of control and political talks may be conducted under fire. Like Agha and Malley, Yossi Beilin maintains that terror is rewarded precisely if you do *not* negotiate under fire. Not to negotiate under fire means, in his words, to “give the right of a veto to the last of the terrorists.”¹¹

The question whether to negotiate under fire—is not about the means but about the ends. Negotiations under fire are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion that incites or encourages extremist proposals and demonstrates a lack of readiness to make compromises. Moreover,

the Palestinian negotiators may arise terror-backed demands, not precisely to be accepted by the Israeli side. In short, this is the surest recipe for the “failure” of talks. At best, they might have led to a unilateral separation or to the intervention of international forces, with their associated consequence—an imposed settlement with closed frontiers. Talks conducted without the threat or use of violence, in contrast, may create an atmosphere of good will and credibility that creates or motivates moderate proposals and a readiness to make concessions. In short, this is the best recipe for guaranteeing agreements that lead to cooperation with their expected result—open frontiers.

On the other hand, the conclusion that the conflict is out of control and that it cannot actually be under the control of the parties—Agha and Malley provided arguments that, by justifying each side’s concerns, only helps to validate their conclusions—illustrates even better than the previous argument. It leads to the conclusion that some external factor must be introduced if the resolution of the conflict is intended.

With this distinction in mind, we can now begin to see signs of what Agha and Malley are advocating through their use of specific types of arguments. They continue with their arguments by saying:

The Camp David process was the victim of failings on the Palestinian side; but it was also, and importantly, the victim of failings on Israel’s (and the United States’) part as well. By refusing to admit this, Barak continues to obscure the debate and elude fundamental questions about where the quest for peace ought to go now (*A and M III*, par. 195).

Agha and Malley are trying again to be balanced in their description. I do not dispute the arguments themselves, but I am again trying to understand the significance of their *choosing* them. They try to lead the reader to support their proposal, as if it were the natural outcome of their arguments. Their proposal is that an acceptable deal may yet be achieved by a “far greater involvement (and pressure) by the international community” (*A and M III*, par. 196). At the end of their reply, the policy that dictates their entire line of reasoning becomes clear: They are advocating an imposed, not directly negotiated, peace. Here is the deal they propose by the above description of the events:

Such a deal, we suggest, would include a sovereign, nonmilitarized Palestinian State with borders based on the 1967 lines, with an equal exchange of land to accommodate demographic realities, and with contiguous territory on the West Bank. Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel and Arab neighborhoods would be the capital of Palestine. Palestinians would rule over the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount), Israeli would rule over the Kotel (Wailing Wall), with strict, internationally backed guarantees regarding excavation. A strong international force could provide security and monitor implementation of the agreement. A solution to the problem of the refugees would recognize their desire to return while preserving Israel's demographic balance—for example by allowing unrestricted return to that part of 1948 land that would then be included in the land swap and fall under Palestinian sovereignty (*A and M III*, par. 196).

If we compare this suggestion to other proposals that were made by Israel, the Palestinian Authority or by the international community, the differences appear to be minimal. In his reply of June 27 2002, even Barak recognizes that Clinton's 2000 proposal was the same as his own. The main point under dispute however, is the Americans request for a "strong international force" that "could provide security and monitor implementation of the agreement" (*A and M III*, par. 196).

This indicates that the discrepancies between the proposals touch upon the core of the conflict. If they were not different, the conflict would have been resolved long ago. Yet the conflict remains very much alive, even if Agha and Malley detect a strong will towards peace on both sides. We can identify the differences in the various positions by honing in on them by not only examining the texts themselves, but also examining the manner, timing, and circumstances in which these "similar" proposals were formulated. An examination of the texts and circumstances would give us insight into the negotiating tactics, which is a key to understanding the respective political stands. We may conclude that *some* leaders on both sides were not interested in an agreement although sounding the notes of a peace accord. As Orwell pointed out, wars are waged in its name. This is not, as Agha and Malley put it, "a tragedy of errors," nor is it a question of one's wisdom against the other's folly. Again, the choice appears to be either reconciliation or partition. Agha and Malley take a

side in support of partition, where an understandable violence exerted by both sides constitutes the preamble for international intervention.

Some Schools of Thought Regarding *Camp David II's* Failure

For two reasons *Camp David II* was not a failure. First, the word “failure” introduces a value-judgment that prevent the question whether it was the intention of one of the sides, or of all of them, to bring to its result. If it was the actual intention, then “failure” becomes “victory.” Secondly, “failure” and “victory” are not explanations. Even the term “end-game” is an inappropriate way to characterize the meaning of negotiations, because they are not intended to create a final status, but a *modus vivendi*.

In addition to Agha and Malley’s narrative approach, there is another less politically engaged approach that is worthy of being mentioned—Itamar Rabinovich’s “Schools of Thought.”

He explains that there are four “schools of thought” regarding the “account of the collapse of the peace process and the ensuing violence:”¹² They are orthodoxes, revisionists, determinists and eclectics.

Orthodoxes (pp. 160–6) are those who blame Arafat for both the collapse and the ensuing violence (Clinton, Ross, Barak and Prince Bandar bin Sultan¹³ belong to this “school”).

Revisionists (pp. 166–70) are those who blame Barak and Clinton (Agha and Malley, many Palestinians and some of the Israeli left, Shimon Peres, Uri Savir¹⁴ and mainly Ron Pundak belong to this “school”¹⁵).

Determinists (pp. 171–5) are those who believe that the Oslo accords were flawed; that the collapse is the direct result of those accords, and that the process was predictable and inevitable (This school’s members come from the right wing of both Israel and America, mainly Norman Podhoretz,¹⁶ Amos Gilad, Shaul Mofaz, Gen. Moshe Ya’alom and Henry Kissinger).

Eclectics (pp. 175–6) are those who fall into a kind of trashcan for those schools that do not fit anyone from the former three categories or who fall into more than one of them. The main representatives of this “school” are Beilin, Menachem Klein¹⁷ and Gilead Sher.

The value of this classification lies in that it cuts across both left-right and national identities’ classifications, making clear their irrelevance for

the analysis of practical issues. Rabinovich correctly does not make a distinction between political scientists' and politicians' schools of thought because the scientists he quotes are themselves stating practical proposals, although on behalf of science. Its shortcoming however, is that if we, as the authors of the classification, call those cases that do not fit our own classification, "eclectic," then we are recognizing, although in a round-about way, that our categorization is inadequate for the intention to which it was designed (to include all the schools of thought.) In this case, our categorization is not disjunctive, as it should be a coordinated system of alternative approaches. Rabinovich's classification makes room for the possibility that one case may fall under more than one "school," and even it may be unable to be included in any category. My alternative classification of stances is disjunctive in nature. It looks at the operative meaning, under specific circumstances, of each case. In principle at least, a case cannot be suitable for the advancement of reconciliation and for the advancement of further tension, at the same time. In addition, it cannot be a case that does not play for either side.

Furthermore, Rabinovich's classification makes room for the following combinations: According to Agha and Malley, the Palestinians were looking for an interim accord; which, according to Kissinger is the only viable solution. Therefore, Kissinger, classified as a member of the deterministic approach, becomes a revisionist. In addition, since Barak, under certain conditions, was also ready for interim accords, the orthodox school becomes identical with the deterministic and the revisionist. The result is that the three positions are but one—their members can be classified, at least temporarily, under every one of them. Matters become more complicated when we realize that at the time Barak supported a gradual resolution, Arafat was against it, and when Arafat supported it, Barak rejected it. This does not mean that each one purposefully and childishly looked at the other's proposal in order to take the opposite stand. Instead, it is a result of the perseverance of each side on remaining focused on its aim under changing circumstances. The stands taken when circumstances satisfy a peace of reconciliation, either gradual or final, will change totally if circumstances also change totally.



Chapter Six

Arafat and Barak—The Bottom Line

Barak's Reply on June 27 2002

In his reply, Benny Morris attempts to offer another perspective on the facts. However, I will only address the few points in his answer that have some cognitive value. His argumentative tactic lies in emphasizing an idea that Agha and Malley introduced only in order to appear as if they were neutral in their description, and as if they were being as fair as they could. Morris wrote:

They concede that Barak's offer at Camp David was "unprecedented" and that the upgraded (Clinton) proposals offered the Palestinians 94–96 percent of the West Bank, 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, a sovereign Palestinian State, an end to the occupation, the uprooting of most of the settlements, and sovereignty over Arab East Jerusalem—and Arafat and his aides still rejected the deal and pressed on with their terroristic onslaught (*M and B II*, par. 198).

Morris states that even though Agha and Malley continue to censure others for the Palestinian's misfortune ("Ottoman Turks, British Mandate officials, Zionists, Americans, anyone but themselves" —*M and B II*, par. 199–). Agha and Malley indeed disregard the fact that the IDF's April 2002 *Defensive Shield* operation was "a reprisal for the murder by Palestinian suicide bombers of some one hundred Israeli civilians during the previous weeks" (*M and B II*, par. 200).¹ They also asserted that Israel's actions were indiscriminate, while in Barak's opinion:

...No military has ever been more discriminating and gone to such lengths to avoid inflicting civilian casualties... The Palestinian gunmen, as in Jenin's refugee camp, were operating from among and behind a civilian "shield" ... *Human Rights Watch* and other groups subsequently concluded that there was no evidence that the IDF had "massacred" anyone in the Jenin camp. Indeed, the only "indiscriminate massacres" that have taken place over the past few months have been of Israeli women, children, and the old by Palestinian suicide bombers, many of them belonging to Arafat's own Fatah organization, in cafés, malls, and buses (*M and B II*, par. 201).

Morris and Barak's main point is that they invariably refer to what "Arafat's negotiators" said or accepted or proposed—never to Arafat's own views and actions (Cf. *M and B II*, par. 202). This indeed is not mere a happenstance. They lack other direct support for Agha and Malley's idea of Arafat's own preferences. Moreover:

Arafat himself has never affirmed Israel's right to exist or its legitimacy, and has never waived the Palestinian refugees' "right of return"—and what his underlings "offer" or "accept" can always be denied or repudiated. This is the Arafat method, and Malley/Agha enter the game with gusto, while pretending to their readers that what "Arafat's negotiators" said or did carried the old man's imprimatur (*M and B II*, par. 202).

As we noted before, in their first article (August 9 2001) Agha and Malley recognized that the Palestinians "were unable either to say yes to the American ideas or to present a cogent and specific counterproposal of their own (*A and M I*, par. 46). And in their second paper (June 13 2002):

The new Agha and Malley are busy watering this down. Arafat, they now say, did not reject Clinton's December 23, 2000, proposals; he merely "took his time" in responding. And both Barak and the Palestinians wanted to "renegotiate" the parameters, they say (*M and B II*, par. 203).

Morris and Barak point to two kinds of Agha and Malley, the old ones of August 9 2001, and the new ones of June 13 2002, six months later. The new ones try to accommodate the facts for the sake of balance: This portrayal of a balance or symmetry between the two sides is false, Morris as-

serts. The Palestinians did not accept Clinton's parameters while the Israeli cabinet did accept them.

Barak accuses Arafat of "doublespeak" regarding the right of return. On the one hand, he contends, when speaking in Arabic, the Palestinians "...Affirm the unreserved, uncurtailed 'right of return' to Israel proper of the 1948 refugees and their descendants, of whom there are today close to four million on UN rolls" (*M and B II*, par. 204).

On the other hand, when facing westward, the implementation of the right of return will, according to Agha and Malley, "take account of Israel's demographic concerns" (*M and B II*, par. 204). Agha and Malley choose, arbitrarily in Barak's eyes, to decide that the true position is the second, and they proceed to assert that "all" agree that there can be no massive return of refugees to Israel. It is very probable that Arafat uses "doublespeak" out of preference for the first meaning, not for the second, contrary to what Agha and Malley prefer.

Arafat's real position can only be determined by an examination of factors other than his declarations. Declarations and statements tell us neither what happened nor what were the intentions of the one who makes them but what its author wanted us to believe, or wanted to believe himself. Barak's line of reasoning, as he declares it, is to assume that the Palestinians want the destruction of the State of Israel as a Jewish state, and that this is the goal of the right of return demand. This argument was already analyzed in *Chapter Four*; now, let us consider it from the point of view of its practical meaning. By presenting it in such a manner, Barak turns the issue of the right of return into a means of pressuring Arafat and his aides to present a clear position on the matter. This way, they could no longer remain vague about their demands, and could thus no longer use the issue of the right to return as an excuse to allow the continuation of the conflict. Instead, as we have already seen, real proposals for return were discussed, and Israel hypothetically accepted the return of Palestinians to Israeli territory, inside the Green Line after the signing of a peace agreement. Barak's condition—to sign a peace agreement—was intended to put an end to further Palestinian demands regarding the right of return.²

A Note on Value-Judgment as Explanation

At this point, the discussion between Morris/Barak and Agha/Malley appears to become a discussion between narratives that reached a deadlock. It seems that in the eyes of each side the discussion became a matter of “heads I win—Tails you lose.” Each side seeks refuge in its own cause, thereby creating convincing creative arguments for use against the other.

For political science, such impasse should become a source of cognitive benefits. In order to understand the discussion we should make a prior distinction between: 1) The way everyday thought understands policy-making, 2) Political practical knowledge, and 3) Political science.

For political science, such impasse should become a source of cognitive benefits. In order to understand the discussion we should make a prior distinction between: 1) How “ordinary” thought understands policy-making, 2) Political practical knowledge, and 3) Political science.

1. Everyday thought understands that politics tends to confuse cognition with taking value-stands.³ For this kind of thought, to explain a political event already means to take a value-stand for or against it. Cognition and values are bound together in a way that makes it almost impossible to distinguish between them. If we ask a common-sense type of explanation if it is about facts or a stand taken for or against the facts—it will not be an answer. Philosophy and ancient science (until the Renaissance) shared this character of everyday thought and they were really its most clear expression. Aristotle’s theory of natural teleology is a good example. It mixes up cognition and valuation because knowledge implies the knowledge of the end, and the end is not only an explanation of facts, but also is an “ought.” For Aristotle, things are what they are and at the same time, what they should be.
2. Practical (or instrumental) politics is a synthesis between knowledge of facts and valuations where the two components are consciously distinguished from one another. For practical knowledge, cognition is a means to an end. The ends are a translation of values in order to implement them following out a plan. It is knowledge intended to know what to do in given situations under the guidance of values. Relevant examples of

practical activities are political strategies and decisions. The work of intelligence services and military activities are, at least in principle, means for the implementation of political aims. They are neutral in this sense—they provide information and technical solutions to the aims established at the political level. They offer up instrumental information that is based upon the distinction between means as knowledge of facts and ends as values.

3. Political science is not intended to be practical and as a result, is not attached to values. It is “value-neutral.” Of course, the results of scientific knowledge can be used by politics, and in this sense, it may be useful, and therefore not value-neutral. However, its usefulness does not affect its essence, which is to relate to its object without taking a stand.

Political declarations, including the articles analyzed here, function as a kind of bridge between the field of practical political thinking and everyday way of knowledge. As a product of the mind of practical politicians, they imply the awareness for the distinction between values and cognition. However, in order to be effective in persuading everyday thinking, the arguments are arranged according to the patterns found in this way of thought. The result is a mixing-up of values and cognitions that is itself instrumental and practical. They occur in order to support political stands. The function of political science is to decipher those texts in order to reveal the political stands they purport to serve.

This is a direct result of the practical use of knowledge of facts as a means for achieving value-determined ends. For this task, politicians do not necessarily distort facts (unless it is useful for the achievement of their goals.) Practical thinking in politics has two opposite aspects that should be synthesized for the sake of efficacy. It is the implementation of values about known facts in order to modify them, and it is the turning to other minds in order to convince them that those values are, on the contrary, the outcome of their “correct” analysis of the facts. This is the root of the distinction to be made in political analysis between motivations and reasons. Reasons are not the explanations of motivations—they are their substitutes.

The outcome, the political discourse, becomes a discourse in which the distinction between the knowledge of facts and the application of values can hardly be distinguished.

The role of political science is to disengage values from the recognition of facts by placing each in its appropriate place. This mission is accomplished by looking for the operative meaning of the discourse.

The practical meaning lies beyond and by means of the contents under discussion in those texts. It is beyond and by means of what was said at *Camp David II*, and of what was said in public declarations about who accepted and who rejected “reasonable” proposals for solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (I am distinguishing between what was said and what we are told that was said).

Such analysis, by taking into account the impasse created by the arguments, reveals that the contention that there was *an effort made to find a solution* to the main issues (refugees, territories, security arrangements, co-existence and the rule over Jerusalem) was an unfounded conclusion. Instead of referring to a deadlock or to a tragedy of errors, the negotiations at *Camp David II* reveal a struggle between opposite values that cross over the lines drawn by the delegations. For each proposal made by the negotiators, we should ask: Was it intended to be accepted or maybe to be rejected? The expectation of the other side’s response is part of the proposal’s game. As a result, the intention is already not clear from the mere understanding of the explicit words stated by the proposal. This is the case even if a proposal (apparently) appears only to show that the other side is not ready for an agreement (as contended in Israel, that Barak “pulled the mask off Arafat’s face to discover the Palestinian plot to eliminate the Zionist entity”⁴). Even though the proposal appears to be devoid of operative meaning and seems as if it only happens in order to assign the other side with the responsibility for the outcome. This case also has operative meaning, and its analysis therefore offers an opportunity to gain some cognitive insights. At least in principle, we can learn about the intentions of both sides. It is made by someone that has the relevant knowledge about the values and intentions of the other side. However, this is not an easy task. There should be two different categories of operative meanings: such a declaration either comes in order not to reach an agreement seeking after an address for the responsibility of the resulting failure,⁵ or to compel concessions from the other side

expecting that it will not want to appear as responsible for the eventual unpopular consequences of its intransigency.

In other words, we will remain unable to penetrate, to explain, and to understand a policy if we disregard the very specific circumstances in which a declaration that serves it is made. The core subject matters of political science are concrete individual thoughts, aims and decisions. Understanding Barak, Arafat and Clinton means a reconstruction in thought of their tactics and decisions without taking a stand on whether they were right or wrong. Each one of them supports his own perspective and denounces that of his opponent(s). To judge them, to applaud or condemn their behavior, adds nothing to understand their stances. Significantly, taking a stand comes instead of understanding and instead of formulating tentative hypotheses that, limited as they may be, are not devoid of cognitive value.

The actual state of political science makes matters more complicated. On the one hand, political scientists recognize the damage of tying their values together with the analysis of events, while on the other hand, hoping to act and influence the events, or at least believing that they actually influence them—they grow impatient with their own commitment with science.

The result is an ideological discourse that combines a well-paying use of the almost unquestioning acceptance of, and acquiescence to, the authority and respect for a political scientist with a discourse that appears to be based on an expert knowledge of the facts. But, the discourse is actually arranged according to the values of the writer, and presented according to the values of the reader, namely, the patterns of everyday thought.

On behalf of such expert knowledge, we frequently find “explanations” that praise and criticize what should originally have been their object of analysis. Scientists refer to the mistakes, miscalculations and mismanagement of their objects of analysis, policymakers, yet believing that they proceed this way on behalf of a neutral knowledge of facts, as if those words were a substitute for value-judgments. Actually such an approach is just a dark cloud concealing the insistent use of values, that now appears cloaked as statements about the understanding of facts.

An extreme, and relevant, example of kind is the account of Ron Pundak of the “collapse” of the peace process at *Camp David II*. He contends

that peace was possible but it was squandered through miscalculations and mismanagement of the entire process by both sides, although mainly from the side of Barak.⁶ According to Pundak, Barak's main failure was that he did not notice that there are two negotiators at his disposal "who had gained vast experience since the beginning of the Oslo process," (*ibid*: 43) Yossi Beilin and Shimon Peres, and therefore he never asked for their services.⁷ And, when Barak discovered that they were waiting there in order to be called to serve the nation and provide their much-needed assistance—it was too late.

Barak also "failed to understand" that the only way to stop the Palestinian violence was through the implementation of the third redeployment, which "represented the single most important element in the Interim Agreement" (*ibid*: 32). If Pundak's words are to be taken as though they were made by a policymaker, then they are understandable as part of a political tactic. However, if they are to be taken as if they were made by a policy-analyst, then he is contradicting himself. Because according to his own words, the fact is that the third redeployment was *not* the "most important element" in the Interim Agreement for Barak. Pundak's mission should be to explain Barak's stance, not to blame him for it. Barak did not believe that undertaking a third deployment, while the Palestinians had turned to violence as a means for obtaining further concessions from Israel, was a good tactic. Therefore, we can learn two different things from Pundak's words: First, that Barak's policy was just the opposite of what Pundak contends. This is a conclusion learned from Pundak's own words. I only substituted the words "failed to understand" for "do not believe." When in our analysis of his statements, we remove his valuations of Barak's policy (which are attributed to what he says about Barak's deeds) the remaining result contradicts his intention. Second, we learn what Pundak's real political agenda was.

In the absence of an explanation of Barak's policy, Pundak turns to a psychological description of the inner conflict between his emotional sympathy for the settler's movement (the result of his 35 years in the military) and his rational belonging to the "left-wing" (*ibid*: 37). This conflict, that can perfectly be described, but no less arbitrarily, in many and even opposite ways (referring for instance to Barak's emotional sympathy for the left and rational commitment to the right) explains nothing and either are excuses to cover ignorance or to cover Barak's real aims

that Pundak politically rejects.

The Palestinians, for their part, continues Pundak, “tended to underestimate the painful significance for Israel of the murderous terrorist attacks by Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, which intensified following the signing of the Oslo Agreement” (*ibid*: 33). The error, on the part of the Palestinian Authority was that “it attempted to coordinate counter-terrorist activities with the Israelis while presenting a conciliatory face in its dealings with the terrorist leadership and activists,” instead of “demonstrating a 100% commitment to fighting terrorism and its infrastructure” (*ibid*: 33). As was the case in his analysis of Barak, instead of understanding the events, he now proposes to change history, by proposing an alternative to the agenda that the Palestinians eventually adopted. Again, all of this comes instead of an analysis and an explanation of this sui-generis Palestinian approach of coordinating counter-terrorist activities with Israel, without fighting terror. The most puzzling issues still remain unexplained. It is quite clear that Pundak does not have an explanation, for either Barak’s stance or for the Palestinian stance. After promising to offer an explanation, he ends by again stating his own agenda. However, similar to Barak’s case, if we remove Pundak’s valuations from the text, thanks to his fair and accurate report of the events and despite of his conclusion, we can have an insight into the Palestinian’s policy.

The way to accord some cognitive value to Pundak’s article is quite easy. Each place where he places the blame against one of his objects of analysis, we can counter-transfer it onto Pundak’s own stand (if we are to use psychoanalytical terminology). Once his work is kept clean of value-judgments, we can start learning about the events he was supposed to analyze. If we apply this hermeneutical technique disregarding the intentions of the writer, almost every political text can be loaded with cognitive gains. Pundak’s keywords for the purpose of discovering his transferences, which at the same time are a sign of his disapproval of ongoing policies revealing his own agenda, include *miscalculations*, *mismanagement*, *insufficient preparation*, *amateur conduct*, *extremely significant mistakes*, *legitimate claims*, *unhelpful tactics*, *insensitivity*, *destructive effects*, *immature*, *negligent*, *unprofessional manners*, *painful concessions*, *frustration*, *devastating effects*, *failure*, and the list goes on.

I am not against the use of those value-charged terms for a descriptive explanation of politics. It is impossible to avoid their use. However, we

should distinguish between using them in order to describe feelings, emotions and values of policymakers, and using them, as Pundak does, in order to judge them as if he were describing and explaining. In this second case, those words express the values of Pundak himself.

Pundak ends his paper saying, "If the two sides can recognize and learn from their mistakes, it should be possible to renew the negotiations and to reach a Permanent Status Agreement" (*ibid*: 45). This means, that the sides should recognize that Pundak's proposals are what the sides wanted but ignored their own wishes that are but Pundak's wishes and dreams.



Chapter Seven

Contradictions as Arguments

Agha and Malley's Reply: June 27 2002

In the same issue of the *NYRB*, Agha and Malley reply to Barak's allegations. They return to their initial argument in the discussion: their key contention is that Barak's position is "pernicious and damaging to the future of both the Israeli and Palestinian people" (*A and M IV*, par. 211). Again, the question is not if they are right or wrong in their understanding of events, but if their interpretation of events is harmful and destructive, or beneficial for both sides. Accepting, for the sake of the analysis, this line of thought, the question now is whether it was indeed pernicious or whether it was perhaps beneficial to have revealed Arafat's political game. The whole discussion can be decided according to the answer to this question. The answer is not theoretical, but practical: if Barak's position is pernicious to Arafat's policy, Agha and Malley's conclusion is pernicious to Barak's policy. There are no further *decisive* arguments in the discussion, since it is not a theoretical discussion, but a value-struggle in the guise of an intellectual debate.

When Agha and Malley assert that Barak "set in motion the process of delegitimizing the Palestinians and the peace process" (*A and M IV*, par. 211), their operative meaning is that Barak sought to delegitimize Arafat's leadership, not the Palestinians as a whole. And, which is much the same, that he sought to delegitimize the kind of peace process that Arafat wanted, namely, a peace relying heavily on conflict and on unresolved issues. On the other side, when asserting that Arafat's aim is the destruction of Israel, Barak also employs instrumental arguments (as all politicians do). Barak makes this assertion because he opposes one kind of peace, so he seeks to invalidate it by raising the specter of the destruc-

tion of the State of Israel. In other declarations made in other contexts, he asserts that Israel's existence is not under threat. Thus, he must recognize that the Palestinians cannot intend such destruction. Just as Barak uses the words of one of Arafat's opponents, Faluji, against Arafat, so Malley uses the words of one of Barak's rivals, Shimon Peres, in order to criticize his policy ("Barak is making an ideology out of his failure" [*A and M IV*, par. 211]).

Malley and Agha assert that "It is time he [Barak] dealt with the failure, put aside the ideology, and let Israelis and Palestinians return to the far more urgent and serious task of peacemaking" (*A and M IV*, par. 211). Again, they talk on behalf of the peace process—a process as they (and Arafat) understand it—a process going in the opposite direction of the one proposed by their rivals on both sides. When they say that ideology must be put aside, they mean other people's ideology, but not theirs. In fact, both sides use ideology and cannot help using it. This is how political language operates. The question is how ideology is used as a practical device and for what ends it is deployed.

As a corollary to the analysis of the Taba talks, we have in this reply more indications of the role that Barak did not play in those talks.

Agha and Malley reveal an important point regarding the Taba talks. Barak, they say, "both declined to give his negotiators specific instructions during the Taba talks and asked not to be fully briefed by them" (*A and M IV*, par. 212).

Let us assume that this assertion is correct. What might it mean? If taken at face value, it would raise the question of what Barak's reason was for participating in the talks in the first place, since such behavior suggests that he was unwilling either to reach an agreement or to sign a treaty. Let us suppose that while appearing to want to participate in the negotiations, Barak secretly wanted them to fail, and he wished to blame the failure on the Palestinian side. In this case, it may have served his intentions to issue the instructions that Agha and Malley describe, because they would almost inevitably lead to the failure of the summit, which according to their assumption is what he wanted.

It is more likely to conclude, so far as I can see, that he did not decline to give instructions to his negotiators, but that he was unable to give them at all, as I showed in the analysis of the main differences between Taba and Camp David in *Chapter Four*.

Agha and Malley's following criticism of Barak runs contrary their conclusions in the same paragraph:

What is clear from his reply and other recent statements is Barak's utter lack of self-doubt. Yet, by the time he was defeated by Ariel Sharon, less than two years after coming into office, he had antagonized both the religious right and the secular left, not for the sake of high principle but through poor management. His governing coalition had disintegrated. Arab-Israelis had lost all confidence in him. His own Labor Party was adrift and strongly critical of him. He was unable to reach an agreement with Syria. And relations with much of the Arab world were at a lower point than they had been under his hard-line predecessor. The Palestinians, in short, were only one on a lengthy list of people whom he successfully managed to alienate or had failed to deal with successfully. In view of this record, might there not be room to wonder whether Barak's tactics, approach, and cast of mind had at least something to do with the breakdown of the peace process? (*A and M IV*, par. 215).

This picture does not begin to address Barak's policy. They have nothing to say about it, as they themselves recognize at the end of their reply. Instead, they refer to Barak's tactics. They simply list an inventory of issues on which Barak failed, as if he alone was responsible for his bitter fate. Such a picture would lead us to conclude either that Barak caused his own downfall or that others deliberately targeted him. However, the questions of why Barak was defeated by Sharon and why Netanyahu, his hard-line predecessor, had better relations with the Arab world than Barak did, can also be answered by reference to Arafat's policy, which favored a hard-line prime minister in Israel; if Sharon or Netanyahu were in power, it would provide the necessary justification and legitimacy for a policy of tension and violence. As I discussed earlier, a hard-line Israeli leader, regardless what his policy would be, would make it relatively easy to excuse and accuse the Israelis of provoking precisely the conflict that Arafat himself fomented.

Why would we favor this version of events, and not the opposite one—namely, that Arafat wanted reconciliation but Barak blocked it? As I tried to make clear, the reason lies in an analysis of what Arafat and Barak did and said—and did *not* do and did *not* say—in specific contexts and in particular circumstances.

The problem with positions that are taken at face value is that once they are detached from the context and circumstances in which they were instrumentally applied, they are easily used, under those other circumstances and context, as if they were declarations of principles and not contextual expressions with an instrumental and concrete meaning. Barak stated before the elections that he was close to reaching an agreement, a claim that he made as part of his election campaign and as an expression of his agenda. Agha and Malley quoted his words in another context and treated them literary, as if he actually had meant what he said.

Contradiction and its Meanings

The most remarkable passage in their reply is that Barak “likes to tell the left that he went further than everyone else and the right that he gave less than anyone else” (*A and M IV*, par. 218). Here it is condensed the spirit of their reply—it is to show Barak’s contradictions.

From a strictly logical point of view, Barak does not contradict himself. He would contradict himself if he would say, without further specifications, “I went further than everyone else and I don’t go further than everyone else.” However, according to Agha and Malley, Barak says one thing to the left, and another, contradictory thing to the right. Specifically, he says different things in depending upon the relationship. From this perspective, he is rather consistent. If we believe that he intends to use his words in a non-instrumental, straight and sincere sense, we can say that he has no policy, since he says to each one what he or she wants to hear from him. However, his discourse, as any other political discourse, is instrumental. On behalf of his words to both sides, he intends to advance a policy that cannot be grasped at their face value. Is it believable that Malley and Agha believe that Barak lacks a policy? I do not believe so. Their own words are also not the result of a straight and sincere judgment. Agha and Malley use Barak’s, apparent contradictions, in the best possible way to instrumentally contradict his arguments. They are trying to win a dispute and not to engage in a sincere discussion in which to lose a discussion means to gain good arguments, either for or against one’s own stance.

However, from the point of view of the “ordinary” way of thinking—toward which their words are addressed—they are right. Barak is contra-

dicting himself, since common-sense understands words abstractly, without considering their context.

I referred to the use of contradictions as a polemical device in order to defeat an intellectual disputant. This is commonly the use of contradictions as arguments, and this is the sense used by Agha and Malley. To say that someone contradicts (either him/herself or others), is a device used in order to find a misuse of rational thinking. It is, therefore, a normative use of the concept in order to disvalue an argument. The other (or ourselves, mostly the other) does not think as the disputant (or we, mostly he or she) should think.

Contradictions, however, can be used yet in another sense, as devices in political science for cognitive purposes. This is a non-normative use. In this sense, discovering a contradiction may be of help to understand the consistency of a thought, and by its means its operative meaning in a political conflict. It serves as Ariadne's ball of thread, to mark our path and thus, to reach additional knowledge escaping the labyrinths of political rhetoric and polemical discourse.

In *Chapter One*, I already said something about the use of contradictions as cognitive devices. Here I would like to explain the issue a little clearer.

For the sake of the analysis, let me define contradiction as asserting that "A is thought at the same time and from the same point of view, as A and not-A." Specifically, a contradiction consists of two sentences that each one affirms exactly what the other denies.

This utterance is generally regarded as contradicting a law or a principle of thought, the "principle of non-contradiction." The principle says that "A is not, and cannot be thought at the same time and from the same point of view, as A and not-A."

However, it is not clear, if the principle states that we do not, and cannot think of contradictions, or if we ought not to think them. It is unclear if it is a normative recommendation (a maxim,) or if it describes our way of thought. In this second case, it means that despite all our efforts and attempts we cannot think contradictions. In the first case, it is said that although we can think contradictions, to even think them is wrong and therefore, not recommendable. In short, the question is whether it is a maxim or a law.

Both meanings respond to different questions and are stated at different levels. The first one is formulated at the normative level, and the definition expresses a stand: we ought to avoid contradictions.

The second one is about the character of our thinking and is formulated at a meta-normative level. In this case, the statement neither condemns nor approves contradictions, but states that we never think contradictions.

The intention of the statement is not to say that since we are, as a matter of principle, unable to think contradictions, we are advised not to think them. I mean, there is not an asserted derivation of one out of the other. The assertion is also not that since it is an empirical finding that we do not think contradictions we should avoid them. Nor is it obviously that since we ought to avoid contradictions, therefore we do not think them. In the law or maxim of contradiction, there is merely a confused mixture of two meanings, the factual and the normative meaning. They are mixed together in a way that they cannot be distinguished from one another.

This apparently simple statement seems to be paradoxical: if a non-contradiction is recommended, it cannot be a law, since the very possibility of recommending it assumes that we may, if we wish, think differently to what is recommended. On the other hand, if it is a law of human thought, it is unnecessary to recommend it, since laws (in the scientific sense and not in the sense of legislated laws) cannot be transgressed.

The paradox is a result of believing that both meanings of non-contradiction are one and at the same level. In actuality, they are stated at different levels. At the cognitive or meta-normative level, it asserts that human thinking does not contradict itself, and at the normative level, it condemns thinking that contradicts itself and applauds thoughts that avoid them. At the meta-normative level, the assertion is that nobody makes contradictions (or, more abstractly stated, that thinking does not contradict itself). At the normative level, it may be asserted that even if it happens that people contradict themselves, they should not do that. In the first case, there is no room for contradiction, while in the second case there is a place for it, although it is not recommended for it to occur.

As for the normative approach, there are two alternative ways to cope with those who make contradictions: 1) to assert that those who apparently make them are not actually contradicting themselves and we should

try to find the coherence of their (apparent) “contradictory” thoughts; and 2) to assert that they make contradictions and therefore they should be taught how to think properly—they are merely wrong.

As for the non-normative approach, it is sufficient to show one example in which people contradict themselves in order to invalidate the law. Laws do not accept exceptions. This means, that if the law is non-normative, a contradiction will not be a valid argument in a discussion. Instead, it would be nonsense.

The law (or maxim) of non-contradiction is made into an answer to two quite different questions.

First question: Do human beings not contradict themselves? If the answer is positive, namely, as a matter of facts “nobody makes contradictions,” then this is a meta-normative statement that does not imply a recommendation about how to think properly. For a philosopher, any one who offers such a positive answer is a potential partner for the discussion of an issue. He could faultlessly maintain the idea that human beings do not contradict themselves and, for this very reason, simultaneously, applaud them for that. He could also remain value-neutral and attached only to the facts. Therefore, the thesis that non-contradiction determines what we shall think is indifferent to the normative judgment that people should not make contradictions and they should think only identities, similarities or diversities.

The argument that people do not make contradictions may be considered as either true or false. In order to refute it, be enough a case where people do contradict themselves.

Second question: Should human beings not contradict themselves? If the answer is positive, this it is a normative statement that recommends people how to think properly. For a philosopher, this is not a partner for a discussion, since this is a proposal or a recommendation about how to think properly. The recommendation against thinking contradictions is neither true nor false. On the contrary, it is a proposal that requires a standard of thinking, or a norm.

To take a stand for or against a kind of thought is already to going a step beyond it by means of turning to a norm or a criterion that allows to judge that something is right or wrong. Wrong may be something that, by definition, is not in accordance with a norm, and right, is what agrees with it.

From the non-normative point of view, the fact that we can understand contradictions in terms (at least as contradictions,) is proof that it is a form of thought. As such, contradictions are neither true nor false. A contradiction is not a sign of falsity, just as a non-contradiction is not a sign of truth.

As such, we can think contradictions, in the same way as we can think absurdities, and therefore we understand what we are thinking. Some may believe that they are unusual ways of thinking, while others believe that they are the normal situation. (According to Hegel, any relationship between a subject and a predicate is a contradiction.¹) In both cases, they are something that we cannot accept without being pushed to ask more questions. Specifically, they are not thoughts that we can accept. There are two “tactics” in face of contradictions. Either they are rejected without further thinking, which is the case when we are asking for coherence, or they are an opportunity for further inquiry. In the final case, contradictions provoke a discontent that leads to thinking about them in an effort to try to explain them.

A contradiction that is explained, is no less a contradiction than if it is left unexplained. However, nobody intends to contradict him/herself. The goal-directed political discourse is a good example of this type of unintended contradiction. In this specific case, the speaker does not speak for the sake of truth but instead, speaks for the sake of efficiency. And, if the explicit content is efficient, then only strict logicians will regard it as a contradiction. Barak’s contradiction is intended to convince the left-wing on the one hand and the right-wing on the other hand.

From the cognitive point of view, the revealing of contradictions in other people’s minds can be not used against him/her, but serves as a warning sign that encourages the interpreter to find an appropriate perspective for its explanation. It is a matter of principle, that even when someone makes contradictory arguments, even though they are under different circumstances, these arguments may not be regarded as contradicting each other. An extreme case of an alleged contradiction is that of two declarations made under circumstances that are not only different, but that are also completely opposite in nature. In this case, since the declarations change in concert with the corresponding change in the circumstances in which they are made, they may be expressly regarded as being clear cases of consistency. In short, to put it in Jonas Cohn words,

“contradictions arising in thinking about reality are a means of advancing to a better knowledge of reality.”²

Where contradictions remain unexplained, curiosity remains unquenchable.



Chapter Eight

International Intervention and Malley's *Geneva Accord*

Agha and Malley: The Last Negotiation

Finally, I will analyze a paper that appeared in *Foreign Affairs* (FA) that may be regarded as a corollary to the discussion.¹ It may articulate the seminal part of my argument, since it reveals the pre-suppositions that were at work behind all of the explicitly stated arguments.

Indeed, this paper does portray the fundamental ideas behind all of the other positions, namely, the proposal for a foreign intervention for the solution of the conflict, that Agha and Malley previously presented in the *NYRB*, in their supposed descriptions and explanations of the Camp David events. Here Agha and Malley explicitly take a stand, whereas in their various articles in the *NYRB*, they explicitly offered only an account of events. My desire here is to demonstrate that their order of events may be inverted: the stand they disclose in *FA*, although presented as a conclusion deduced out of their neutral analysis of events in the *NYRB*, may be interpreted as the true motivation underlying their analysis. Agha and Malley's values, in this case, were imposed on their theoretical account, so that the analysis, instead of offering an account of events, becomes a justificatory ideology for the political values they supported beforehand, even without it. Consequently, even if they had not come to the conclusions drawn from their "analysis" in the *NYRB* series of articles, they would still support the views they fomented in their *FA* paper. The essence of this last paper—and of their position throughout the entire debate—lies in their statement that "...The time has come for an effort

that is neither top-down nor bottom-up, but outside-in: the forceful presentation by external actors of a comprehensive, fair and lasting deal” (*ibid.*: 18).

The word “forceful” is crucial here: it indicates a peace deal that is not negotiated by the sides themselves. By contrast, a “negotiated” peace implies that each side attempts to understand the needs of the other in order to reach an agreement that is based on mutual recognition. Agha and Malley’s proposal bypasses the need for mutual recognition. This is the practical meaning of a forceful peace, which is the aspiration of those who support the internationalization of the conflict.² When a third party becomes the decisive force, both sides must try to present their cases in the most extreme way possible, causing their positions to become increasingly distant from each other. In the process, instead of being brought closer together, the two parties are forced further apart from each other. A real and lasting reconciliation cannot be reached in this manner. At this point, it is worth noting that Agha and Malley, in the name of being committed to ending the conflict, are actually committed to its perpetuation. They believe (or rather, they assert that they believe) that a forced peace will bring about a resolution of the conflict.

In support of their position, they argue that there are two opposite alternatives to their proposal, both of which have failed to bring peace: the policy of interim steps, and the policy of a stable final solution. “Everything Israelis and Palestinians have tried since 1993”—Agha and Malley contend—“has been of the interim sort—whether the Oslo accords themselves, the 1995 Interim accords, the 1997 Hebron agreement, or the 1998 Wye memorandum” (*ibid.*: 10).

Consequently, they describe the peace negotiations as an impossible task, since

Lacking a clear and distinct vision of where they were heading, both sides treated the interim period not as a time to prepare for an ultimate agreement but as a mere warm-up to the final negotiations; not as a chance to build trust, but as an opportunity to optimize their bargaining positions. As a result, each side was determined to hold on to its assets until the endgame. Palestinians were loath to confiscate weapons or clamp down on radical groups; Israelis were reluctant to return territory or halt settlement construction. Grudging behavior by one side fueled grudging behavior by the other, leading to a vicious

cycle of skirted obligations, clear-cut violations, and mutual recriminations (*ibid.*: 10–1).

How can we ascertain the accuracy of this description of the process? It presents the outcome as being unchangeable, as a tragic and inevitable product of the implementation of the interim method of negotiations. In order to reveal the inaccuracies implicit in this account, I will begin by quoting Agha and Malley and then I will try to build an argument that negates Agha and Malley's assertions. I will proceed in this direction without the intention of criticizing their argument, but in order to reveal the role that arguments generally play in Agha and Malley's political proposals, and particularly play in their peace proposal. I will try to substantiate that the way in which arguments are arranged may serve as a clue to the understanding of the goals they serve. Arguments that appear committed only to a cognitive interest may be found to be more committed to the implementation of certain policies or values. Moreover, these arguments will have more effectiveness if they appear as part of a neutral analysis. Herein lies the usefulness of instrumental discourses.

Agha and Malley's argument runs as follows:

By multiplying the number of obligations each side agreed to, the successive interim accords increased the potential for missteps and missed deadlines. Each interim commitment became the focal point for the next dispute and a microcosm for the overall conflict, leading to endless renegotiations and diminished respect for the text of the signed agreements themselves. Steps that might have been easy to win support for domestically if packaged as part of a final agreement were condemned as unwarranted concessions when carried out in isolation. Increasingly beleaguered political leaderships on both sides thus were tempted to take compensatory actions: incendiary speeches by Palestinians, building more settlements by Israelis, and from the two parties, a general reluctance to prepare their people for the ultimate compromises. Designed to placate angry constituents, these moves had the unintended consequence of alienating the other side, making a final deal all the more difficult to achieve. Finally, the succession of piecemeal, incremental agreements made it more difficult to mobilize the support of other countries.

Yet another interim agreement could not cure ills that are inherent in the culture of interim agreements. It would not rebuild trust, it would not lead to a durable political agreement, and it would use up

considerable local and international energy in the process. The same defects plague plans that call for the immediate establishment of a Palestinian State with negotiations to follow over its size, prerogatives, and other final-status issues. As for the notion of unilateral Israeli withdrawal from parts of the West Bank and Gaza, such a gesture would only add to these problems the real risk of emboldening those Palestinians who believe that Israel can be forced by violence to pull out. As all of these factors suggest, the current confrontation is not an argument in favor of acting small, but rather a call to start thinking big (*ibid.*: 11).

I will now launch a contrary assertion, while paraphrasing their words above, but using those words to prove the opposite:

By multiplying the number of accords and mutual obligations agreed to by both sides, each subsequent accord increases the potential of further constructive steps. All of these steps rely upon the basis of determining deadlines and they are built on the trust achieved by the gradual implementation of previous accords. Each interim commitment becomes the ground for the next agreement, so that there is no need to renegotiate old agreements. The benefits obtained by the implementation of previous agreements, and the damage caused to the side that breaches them, provide incentives for each step. These kinds of agreements, supported by sanctions for failing to fulfill them and by incentives for complying with them, increase respect for the text of the signed agreements. The public will support steps, as a *modus vivendi*, if packaged as part of a final agreement (such as avoiding final decisions on sovereignty over the holy places in Jerusalem). Such steps will not be condemned as unwarranted concessions unless they are carried out as part of a final and definitive accord. Such steps will reduce the pressure placed upon beleaguered political leaderships on both sides who are not tempted to take compensatory actions such as inflammatory speeches by the Palestinians or violations of human rights by the Israelis. Both parties can develop a general positive disposition in their respective public opinion for the ultimate compromises, based upon potential benefits of the experience of cooperation and economic development, joint tourism projects, shared industry and economic accords that may include shared percentages of VAT, and taxes. As the cooperation between the sides continues, there is

a noticeable improvement of the quality of life on both sides. Consequently, the other side is not alienated; there are no angry constituents to placate; and, most importantly, a final deal becomes a common goal of not just the politicians, but also of the constituents, which makes compromises more palatable and the final agreement easier to achieve. Finally, the succession of piecemeal, incremental agreements makes it easier to mobilize the support of other countries. The succession of interim agreements could cure the tendencies inherent in a culture of seeking final overall solutions of all or nothing, black and white. Interim agreements build trust, and lead to an enduring and peaceful economic and political atmosphere of welfare. Additionally, they do not require the expending of local and international energy in the process. After years of wars and violence, the time has come for agreements to be reached on issues that are relatively simple to agree upon, since they can steer clear of the large, fervent national and historical problems, and deal instead with simpler matters such as VAT, business investments, and sources of labor. These domestic and economic concerns create opportunities for cooperation and detailed discussion, while not focusing solely upon the interaction between the two leaders. Consequently, they represent the best way to bring peace to the area. In short, the current confrontation must not be used as a pretext for those who prefer to call in external help, rather than trying to create an atmosphere in which Palestinians and Israelis can live close together as good neighbors, instead of as far apart as possible, as enemies do.

Interestingly enough, both arguments, when read independently of the other, are even convincing to the same reader. The reader is invited to test them out on friends and see if they are persuaded by both them. Disregarding the order, their doubts will probably arise only after reading the second argument.

The last line of reasoning is not more logical or plausible than Agha and Malley's alternative. It only illustrates that by examining the far-reaching consequences of the logic of their argumentation, that the question is not one of logical reasoning and rationality, but of values. The logic underlying both arguments is the same despite the differences that exist between the positions presented. Agha and Malley's arguments support a coerced peace that, upon the behest of others, leaves the sides sepa-

rated and isolated from each other, whereas the alternative proposal promotes a peace of mutual benefit encouraging the discussion of mutually beneficial issues in order to insure cooperation between the two sides. A peace of segregation and exclusion, where whatever the other side gets represents a loss, or a peace of integration and inclusion: this is the real issue, one that is masked by words that present the discussion as if it were about final versus interim agreements.

Agha and Malley's position is that of coerced decisions from without, whereas the alternative is that of holding direct negotiations. The first alternative tries to manage the conflict, whereas the second attempts to resolve it. However, it is true that an imposed settlement might, in time bring a change in both sides' patterns of thought, and in so doing might bring a resolution of the conflict, whereas holding direct negotiations could result in the deepening of the conflict. Even so, imposed settlements are better suited to management of the conflict while holding direct negotiations are better suited for reaching a cooperative-reconciliatory peace. If this difference did not exist, we would not find policymakers giving strong support to a specific policy or tactic, while at the same time disparaging the other side's policy. We see how consistently politicians maintain their stand on this matter. Kissinger's proposal to define the coexistence instead of asking for a final agreement is an example in kind. According to him, there is no alternative, but the alternatives are the way in which this coexistence will be reached: either through negotiations or by further tests of confrontation.³ Obviously, he tries to convince us that the best choice is negotiations and he is warning against further cycles of violence. Moreover, he adds, "After an agreement, the two peoples must continue to live together on a daily basis in a very limited space" (*ibid.*: 174).

An example taken from the ideological level may be of assistance here. One of the most difficult tasks in political analysis is the translation of declarations into their operative meaning. A good example in the Middle East conflict are the slogans "Two states for two people" and "Land for peace," both of which stand for very different concepts from what the words appear to indicate.

"Two states for two people" might mean one state with a Jewish majority and another with a Palestinian majority. It might similarly mean a state where it will be forbidden for Jews be citizens and another state

where it will be forbidden for Palestinians to be citizens. Alternatively, it could mean two states with or without open frontiers, or commercial ties. In fact, the slogan tells us absolutely nothing, leaving it open to the interpreter to devise a suitable (and expedient) meaning for it.

The same may be said about the other slogan, "Land for peace." Does it mean permanent concessions in exchange of revocable declarations of peaceful intent and recognition? Or, as Rabin proposed, that the depth of withdrawal was proportional to the extent of the commitment to peace?⁴ On the one hand, without further specifications this may be interpreted in the first way, as "tangible assets in exchange for empty promises."⁵ On the other hand, it may mean (and this is indeed what Rabin intended) to withdraw under a full cooperative and comprehensive peace. For this reason he spoke in terms of "a piece of peace for a piece of land."⁶

As with these two slogans, any declaration can be interpreted according to its operative meaning, a meaning that can be revealed by comparing a declaration with its alternative, and creatively constructing the situation that the declaration would create if it were implemented. This can lead to confusion, because political declarations often pretend to be based upon an analysis of facts, whereas in reality, they are actually based upon political stands. However, which alternative—an inclusionist or an exclusionist peace—is the best, is another question, one that cannot be answered, since its answer depends on practical value-attitudes, and not by appealing to plausible cognitive arguments. Arguments used in their operative function are attached to values and serve as means. Neutral reasoning is a task suited to philosophy or scientific theories, but not to practical wisdom.

Agha and Malley continue their line of argumentation by asserting that history has demonstrated that the incremental method of interim agreements has failed.

History cannot demonstrate anything, or, to put it positively, it might be used to demonstrate almost everything. It "may be used and misused in support of all conceivable views"—said Jacques Barzun.⁷ One simply has to select the facts or to provide an explanation of facts that fits one's practical goals—those for which the historical "analysis" were employed. The point has to be stated carefully. It does not mean that history is not unequivocal. Properly understood, it is not open to a plethora of inter-

pretations. However, it can be manipulated insofar as it is recruited for the advancement of practical goals. It is a potent device for practical use. But then history becomes ideology. History as science cannot be a means. At the very moment that it becomes a means, it is clear that the past will be changed for the sake of either the present or future.⁸

Let us now turn to their contention that there were certain moves that the Palestinians took in order to placate their own constituents, but which had the unintended consequences of alienating the other side, thereby “making a final deal all the more difficult to achieve.”⁹ We should note that certain decisions are made solely in order to minimize unwanted and damaging consequences, while other decisions are not made precisely because they might have harmful consequences. Each decision depends upon a specific order of priorities. The very concept of “order of priorities” deserves separate and fuller treatment than is possible here, but only let me add that this concept is the result of the existence of value-conflicts, where one may be ready to sacrifice values of a lesser rank on one’s scale or “order of priorities” in order to achieve a certain desired outcome. Following this reasoning, it is difficult to believe that a policymaker who is aware of the high price (namely, the consequences) that his/her policy would incur might be ready to pay that price unless he/she was not prepared to accept those outcomes that Malley and Agha regard as “unintended consequences.” No politician pays such a price unless these “consequences” coincide with, or are deemed worth accepting for the sake of ensuring the success of his/her policy. Thus, if a policymaker decides to pursue a particular policy, *mostly* the consequences are the requested ones, or at the very least, acceptable. Such a reference to unwanted consequences is a rhetorical device to excuse an unpopular policy—it is simply intended as a palliative.

Assumptions as Hard Facts

Agha and Malley treat their assumptions as if they were facts, particularly when they assert that both sides suffered from the “erroneous belief” that “durable agreements can emerge only from direct negotiations” (*ibid*: 12.) They take the harsh view in a tone of patronizing sorrow for both parties’ mistaken faith in direct negotiations; actually, such a tone is merely a disguise for the fact that they are against a directly negotiated

peace. If they felt able to openly contend that an enforced peace would be more durable and stable than a cooperative and negotiated one is, they would do so enthusiastically. The agenda of this kind of reasoning is segregationism. They do not openly state that this is their intention; instead, they try to prove that peace was made because of historical circumstances—holding direct negotiations were an unachievable dream. As evidence to support their agenda, they assert that since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict, both sides have wanted to solve their problems alone, through the holding of direct negotiations, but they have never succeeded. This argument is the foundation of their argument—and yet it is clearly not true. In fact, since the beginning of the conflict, almost every kind of negotiation has been suggested by one side or another, and each, in turn, has been rejected by the other side. Similarly, whether or not direct negotiations are underway, some—Agha and Malley among them—try to undermine their chances of success not necessarily in an overt and direct way, but simply by undermining any belief in the possibility of a positive outcome of such talks.

In politics, belief and disbelief are not simply a matter of theory, speculation, or merely a matter of opinion. Beliefs acquire, by their very presence in the public's mind, a practical force. Furthermore, when policymakers work according to a set of beliefs and disbeliefs, these become real by virtue of the actions that such belief systems dictate. Disbelief in a specific policy will either hinder or completely prevent its implementation and will broaden the prospects for possible alternative; belief in a policy, on the contrary, encourages the believer to pursue it and to narrow the prospects for alternative policies he or she dislikes. Belief is an active power of mind, not a degree of knowledge. Human situations are, among other things, also the result of what people think about them.

Besides, if it is true that "Israelis and Palestinians have been reluctant to put forward or accept proposals that risk undermining their bargaining position absent the certainty of reaching a comprehensive deal" (*ibid.*).

Why, in the instance of an enforced agreement, would they now accept what they would not before? It is probable that they would not—after all, resistance from both of the sides involved is the general assumption of any imposed settlement. Therefore, the idea behind Agha and Malley's proposal is to take no account of the sides' positions at all. They propose that instead allowing both sides reach an agreement by themselves

through joint negotiations, where both sides would try to understand the needs of the other, an outside party would decide for them. Instead of a mutual recognition what they propose is to ignore the needs and wishes of the parties involved. In a conclusive and peremptory mood, they state that, "...[T]he time for negotiations has therefore ended. Instead, the parties must be presented with a full-fledged, non-negotiable final agreement" (*ibid.*).

They plainly and clearly propose not to negotiate, not to talk, not to seek reconciliation, and even not to compromise.¹⁰ This in essence was exactly how Arafat behaved and would serve as the foundation upon which proposals that Shlomo Ben Ami created after *Camp David's* failure were based. Arafat tried to show that he was not a transparent and reliable partner: he was reluctant to discuss, let alone accept, anything; he had no alternatives to propose; and he offered no programs. In short, the message he sent was that others would have to perform the necessary work involved in order to find a solution to the problems for the sides. This is not an attempt to avoid devising policy or actual decision-making; it itself is a specific policy that comprises a very clear agenda for the Middle East. It may, although not necessarily, lead to a peace that includes the seeds for future conflict, or designed to avoid a "hot" war while preserving a "cold" one. History offers plenty of examples of these types of agreements, whose actual function and outcome prepare the conditions for future hostilities. The Versailles Treaty of June 28 1919 is a good example.

Opposed Logic

I will now analyze Agha and Malley's logic from the viewpoint of the possible arguments that challengers of their policy might mount. Here are their assertions, made to prove the advantages of an enforced peace deal.

Argument 1

"...A permanent solution must await the building of trust between the two sides."¹¹

Waiting is a kind of decision-making. Not to decide or indecision are also different types of decisions that one makes. Intendently or not,

one's passivity is part of the chain of causes and therefore has immediate consequences no less than those coming from active decisions. The only way to build trust between the parties is by building upon it. It is to create it here and now.

On the other hand, those who under certain circumstances would support the use of interim accords argue that the peace settlement might be the logical outcome of a gradual building up of a mutual trust through those partial steps. They may even agree with Agha and Malley's argument that "...Mistrust, enmity, and suspicion are the consequences of the conflict, not its cause. A deal should not be made dependent on pre-existing mutual trust; the deal itself will create it" (*ibid.*).

As with many other cases, the same arguments, if properly arranged, can be used to support either position. Hence, if they believe strongly enough in their policy, Agha and Malley may transpose the relationship between their policy and the reasons used in their discussion. Motivated by the desire to foment their ultimate policy—in this case, a final non-negotiated solution—their "reasons" merely serve as justifications of their preferred policy. This policy is not and cannot be deduced from the arguments they put forward to support it.

Beyond all this, the question remains as to whether the conflict engenders mistrust, or mistrust engenders the conflict. Agha and Malley believe that the conflict engenders mistrust. They know however, that also the opposite is true. Conflict and trust are not the one the cause and the other its effect, but are mutually conditioned and, as such, one cannot separate them in order to determine which comes next. Even so, practically speaking, if one wants to resolve a conflict by considering the issue of trust, it is preferable to say that trust comes before conflict. If one wants to engender trust by resolving the conflict, it is preferable to say that the conflict comes before trust. Each of these two arguments is a rhetorical device to be employed according to one's desired goals. Therefore, by considering where each condition is placed in a pseudo-causal chain, we can learn a great deal about the intentions and goals of the arguer.

Argument 2

"Other skeptics point to the rightward move of the Israeli public in reaction to the Intifada and supposed Palestinian intransigence in 2000 and

2001 as an insuperable obstacle to the acceptance of a final-status deal anytime soon" (*ibid.*).

Agha and Malley's reply to such "skeptics" is that people move from right to left and from left to right, quickly.

Furthermore, just as one should not read too much into the Israeli public's frustration, it would also be a mistake to read too much into past Palestinian behavior. Quite remarkably, in the same paragraph, Agha and Malley provide two opposite arguments to support the same goal, clearly indicating, as I have already pointed out, that their stands do not depend upon the reasons they give. They have a predetermined goal and seek out arguments to support it. Having explained the need for a final agreement by stating that prior experience shows that interim agreements failed—they contradict themselves. Since, after providing arguments based in past facts in order to defend their cause, they argue now that past facts should not be used as an argument: "[It] would...be a mistake to read too much into past Palestinian behavior" (*ibid.*).

In principle, the argument that their "other skeptics" make can be used to support both the interim policy and the final policy. In fact, they employ it to support their final agreement policy, which is therefore not deduced from its arguments. Two conditions are necessary to make these ideological arguments convincing and helpful: (a) they should not be used for opposite goals at the same time and (b), they should be arranged according to the patterns of thought of the reader.

Argument 3

"Many argue ... that as a matter of principle, any political effort must await the end of the violence so as not to reward it" (*ibid.*).

This is not a "matter of principle" but a matter that determines the content and character of the negotiation itself. There is a difference between talks under fire and talks after fire. Talks under fire are convenient for reaching agreements on how to disagree rather than on how to cooperate. Arafat indeed attempted to reach such an agreement of how to disagree.

Negotiating under fire increases mutual hate and diminishes the ability to make concessions. If those who look for a stable peace of open frontiers are ready to negotiate under fire, they will find themselves negotiating in order to achieve a ceasefire, without agree on other issues. Agha

and Malley, on the contrary, assert that violence cannot be divorced from negotiations, and that violence will remain until a resolution of the conflict occurs.

They add that Barak's version of the *Camp David II* talks endangered the peace process. "It would be an historical anomaly for a conflict between two fundamentally unequal antagonists to be resolved without violence," they say (*ibid.*: 12–3.) One may well reply that there is nothing more dangerous for the peace process than the legitimization of violence.

It is a well-known historical truth that every conflict was resolved after violence, or it was not resolved at all. However, Agha and Malley add: "Israel believes it cannot negotiate under fire, and the Palestinians fear that, absent fire, the Israelis will have no incentive to negotiate" (*ibid.*). First, it is worth remarking that Agha and Malley admit here that the Palestinians did use violence as a semi-official tactic, contrary to what Arafat openly states in English. Secondly, this argument is only an excuse, and not a reason for continuing with the violence. They know perfectly well that successive Israeli governments have been prepared to make concessions, even on territorial and security matters, as a result of talks and not because of violence. At the time Sadat visited Jerusalem in 1977, he succeeded in persuading Israel to withdraw from the whole of the Sinai Peninsula. After Oslo accords and because of the absence of violence, Israel withdrew from the West Bank according to the agreements, and only reoccupied it after the beginning of violence, and not before it. If Agha and Malley really wanted a test-case of Israel's intentions, why do they not propose implementing what has already been agreed to—the cessation of violence as a tool for political achievements? Israeli governments (and Israeli public opinion also supports this) tend to relinquish assets during negotiations more readily than they are willing to admit. If such concessions are required, it would at the very least, be worthwhile to put them to the test.

Agha and Malley, intentionally or not, do not really believe in a reconciliatory and cooperative peace agreement. Instead, they try to devise an agreement that, as a result, will establish a *modus vivendi* relying on closed frontiers, economic separation, and even a perpetual fight against terrorism. The "ideal" they have in mind is a way of life of permanent conflict, with all its economic, political and social consequences.

Indeed, Agha and Malley go on to propose a kind of imposed “deal that protect both sides’ core interests without breaching either party’s ‘redlines” (*ibid.*). They affirm some principles of dignity, equality, freedom and security for both sides including “the perpetuation of the Jordan Valley as Israel’s de facto eastern security border” (*ibid.*), and a demilitarized Palestinian state, so that “no second army [will be deployed] between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea” (*ibid.*).

If we compare these suggestions with what was proposed at Camp David, no substantial differences can be found. Furthermore, even a superficial perusal of the *Camp David II* discussions demonstrates that both sides have already in the past, acknowledged each other’s needs, which clearly means that *this is not the problem*.

Camp David II and the Road Map vs. Taba and the Geneva Accord

The differences between Barak’s proposals at *Camp David II* and the Israeli proposals at Taba, are like the later differences between the *Road Map* and the *Geneva Accord*.¹² The *Road Map* was written under the auspices of the “Quartet” (the United States, European Union, United Nations, and Russia). It was based on George W. Bush’s speech of June 24 2002 and was welcomed in July 16 2002 and September 17 2002 by the Quartet Ministerial statements. The first draft of the *Geneva Accord*, signed on December 1 2003 between negotiators led by Yossi Beilin and the former Palestinian Information and Culture Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo, was written by Malley himself.¹³ For this reason, it should be analyzed together with the *FA*’s article.

The *Road Map* includes some contradictions that result from it being a compromise between Bush and the French position. For the sake of comparing it with the *Geneva Accord*, I will not enter into this detail and will take it as if it were written solely under the spirit of Bush’s speech.¹⁴

The difference between the proposals emerges in the details. The most striking feature of their stand is that “relying on the intentions of Israeli or Palestinian leaders is a strategy with scant chance of success.”¹⁵ They add:

What is needed to overcome this deadlock is a novel process, a means of waging diplomacy that is independent of the will and whims of the parties’ leaderships, one that does not cater to their immediate prefer-

ences and that bypasses their immediate constraints. Achieving such a deal will require the forceful intervention of outside actors who can present a package that resonates with both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples, addressing their fears and concerns and showing that some way out of the impasse is actually possible (*ibid.*: 17).

This point of view favors patronage and assumes that the people living in the Middle East are incapable of managing their own situation and as a result, only “outside actors” can make these decisions for them. This lack of trust in the ability of the people in the region to make democratic choices regarding their own destinies is just a defense of Arafat’s agenda. The preservation or the destruction of democratic processes is not a formal or procedural matter alone, but is a crucial factor in determining the quality of any future peace. A democratic peace and a dictatorial one, are in fact two opposing processes, mainly regarding the outcomes that each implies. Dictatorial rule creates a context in which terror can thrive, whereas democratic regimes create a context in which terrorist groups can lay down their arms and become legitimate participants in the political process. In a democratic system, factions cannot use a party’s political weight after elections to behave more autocratically and neither can they resort to arms when a particular policy does not suit their wishes. In the Palestinian Authority specifically, Arafat’s regime has created a situation in which it is very difficult to build a real opposition. It is very dangerous to be, or to be seen to be, his opponent; supporting him means becoming implicated in corruption and cronyism; while being weary and indifferent, or attempting to stay out of the political quagmire means accepting the appalling situation. Signing a peace deal with such a Palestinian regime would undermine any chance that it might change, and would ensure constant tension along the borders between Israel and the new state, since such tension would remain an effective way to perpetuate and justify the existing regime.

Malley remained faithful to this idea where in the *Geneva Accord* the word “democracy” does not appear as a precondition for reaching a peace agreement. In contrast, in the *Road Map*, the existence of a Palestinian democracy is a precondition for peace. Moreover, the suspicion that here there is an attempt to prevent it has hard evidence to the fact that the virtual *Geneva Accord* was not signed between the “Government of Israel” and the “Palestinian Authority,” but between the “Government of Israel”

and the "PLO." Looking at the context, we realize that at the time it was signed (and at the time that the *FA's* article was written) the Palestinian Legislative Council did not only include members of the PLO, but was also comprised of secular and religious independents. Instead of reinforcing these elements, or proposing the integration of additional political forces into the parliamentary system, it choose to leave them outside the system, thereby allowing them to continue with their choice to act as extra-parliamentarian and anti-democratic forces.

Unconcerned about democracy, the *Geneva Accord* is also unconcerned about the need for guarantees from the Palestinians to fight terrorism in the new Palestinian State. The *Road Map* demands that the Palestinians to fulfill their agreements to fight terrorism before receiving a State. According to the *Geneva Accord*, they will "get their state first and only later have to prove good faith."¹⁶ Even though the *Oslo Accords* were more cautious, the Palestinians continued using terrorism as an instrument for shaping the course of the negotiations.

This disregard for democracy (and also with the end of terrorism), may be linked to their proposal in the *FA's* article to separate contact between Israelis and Palestinians by means of the intervention of a third party:

Led by the United States, the effort should involve a broad coalition of European, Arab, and other countries and institutions capable of providing security, as well as economic and political support, to Israelis and Palestinians. The proposal should be sanctioned by a UN Security Council resolution and complemented by a number of third-party arrangements such as a U.S.-Israeli defense treaty, possible Israeli membership in NATO, a pledge by Arab nations to recognize Israel and move toward the normalization of their relations (a process that, to be completed, would also require a peace deal with Syria), American and European security guarantees to the Palestinian State, and a sizable aid package to help build the new state's economy (*ibid.*).

Here Agha and Malley are proposing the internationalization of the Middle East conflict. Barak and Ross contend that this was Arafat's intention behind the second intifada.¹⁷ It was the opposite position that led Sadat to decide to come to Jerusalem; he came precisely because he anticipated the dangers implied in a similar international summit in Geneva in 1973, which was held under the umbrella of the permanent members

of the UN Security Council. All of the superpowers were invited to Geneva, along with all of the countries that have common borders with Israel, including the PLO. Getting all of the parties to sit down together is a recipe for achieving nothing, or for achieving what Agha and Malley are proposing, namely, a coerced peace of separation fortified by the establishment of defense pacts. A peace of military pacts or alliances merely entrenches each party within its own ethos and fails to create an atmosphere conducive to facing the heart of the other's main positions, which is a necessary component when holding negotiations that seek common goals. According to the *Ha'aretz* analyst Aluf Benn, when Shimon Peres became Prime Minister (after Rabin's assassination in November 1995), he renewed the attempts to broker a US-Israeli alliance.¹⁸ Benn also reports that Rabin was against such an alliance,¹⁹ because he felt that defense treaties lead to a sense of complacency where the sides drift apart instead of working together to reach compromises and seeking cooperation. Defense pacts, alliances and military treaties either legitimize the creation of the other, opposite pact in the face of the first, or directly create the *vacuum* that must then be filled by a series of pacts and counter-pacts. It is in the nature of a defense pact to be against another party since a defense pact only makes sense if a real or potential enemy exists. A defense pact itself can create enemies. The alternative proposal would be the creation of a regional confederation between Jordan, Palestine and Israel, or at least a common market between Israel and Palestine as the first step toward a Middle Eastern Common Market. Moreover, if the peace process is, in any case, imposed from outside, as Agha and Malley would like, instead of military pacts, why not to impose such collaboration? The very fact that Agha and Malley do not propose it indicates their real political agenda.

In contrast, the *Geneva Accord*, in accordance with the *FA's* article, invites the deployment of international forces not only along the border between Israel and Palestine, including the deployment along the Jordan River, but also includes their deployment in the heart of Jerusalem. The proposed peace for the City of Peace makes all the necessary arrangements to transform the city into an unpleasant place to live in. The proposal is to divide the city into three parts: two sovereign areas, and the Old City as a third area under the jurisdiction of a "Old City Policing Unit," which would be an independent force comprised of both Pales-

tinian and Israeli police forces. The oppressive atmosphere created for Jerusalem under the *Geneva Accord*, is expressed in the statement that “in order to ensure the preservation of security in the Old City,” the “Old City Policy Unit” will monitor the “operation” of the entry points. This will certainly be a problematic “operation.” If a visitor to the city enters from the Israeli side, he/she will be forbidden from using the exits to the Palestinian side and vice versa. Each visitor will receive a pass upon entering the city (*Geneva Accord*, art. 6). All of this is intended, in Orwellian “newspeak,” to “facilitate” the movement into the Old City, namely, in order to discourage anyone from entering it. Instead of asking for a future opening of the borders, the *Geneva Accord* emphasizes that both sides will be allowed to hermetically seal them in the future. The Old City is only a mini-model of what is expected for the future. The city will then be super-divided. In order to prevent anyone from becoming confused and accidentally entering unauthorized areas, there will be a visible color-coding scheme to “be used in the Old City to denote the sovereign areas of the respective Parties” (Art. 6, § 7, 6, g).²⁰

The *Geneva Accord* also does not place trust on the success of excessive bilateral arrangements. It requires an American presence “that shall be established to facilitate this cooperation” (Art. 6 § 7, j, 2).

What is the rational behind these arrangements as they appear in both the *FA* article and in the *Geneva Accord*? It is a rational of narratives. Rather than applying a narrative theory in order to understand the conflict, Agha and Malley use it in order to propel their conclusions. Each side definitely maintains its own justified point of view. Therefore, there is room neither for negotiating nor for dialogue.

The rational behind their proposals, with the help of deterministically generated opposing narratives, is to prevent a real cooperative peace. On the contrary, their proposals have been conceived under the aegis of terrorism. Terrorism, a historical fact, becomes in their mind, a metaphysical event. Rather than serve as an answer to terrorism, their proposal is formulated under its influence. Terrorism, anticipating a reactive policy from the other side, tries to create, and certainly succeeds in realizing its dream, the necessary conditions to see this kind of agreement as the only feasible solution. It was the intention of terrorism to separate between the two peoples, and Agha and Malley’s proposals are its natural, desired result.

The *Road Map*, contrary to the *Geneva Accord* and the *FA* article, intends, first, to create an atmosphere where there will be no room for the threat of terrorism. Once cooperation on basic everyday issues is achieved—that will not involve the closing of borders and will be accompanied by a joint effort for economic improvement on both sides—the parties will make an effort to address what each side regards as the “essential” and extremely difficult and emotional questions. After the achievement of such everyday cooperation, it will be highly difficult to ask for separatist proposals.

For this very reason the *Road Map*, contrary also to Barak's proposal in Camp David, is purposefully vague regarding the main issues. According to the *Road Map*, only after testing conciliation, will the sides go onto a second phase where a Palestinian State within *provisional* borders, will be created. The final borders will be negotiated during the third and final stage. The *Road Map* intends to create the propitious conditions necessary for a collaborative kind of peace by beginning, here and now, with cooperation wherever it is possible, and where it is not, to postpone the issues to be negotiated until the creation of a wholly different atmosphere not threatened by violence. Therefore, it is not surprising that Agha and Malley criticized it in a later work.²¹

Since there are no gradual steps to be taken, the *Geneva Accord* totally lacks a mechanism for the conditioning of future steps upon previous ones. That this exclusionism is the intention of the *Geneva Accord*, is clearly stated by the writer Amos Oz, one of its authors, when he points out that during the negotiations that led to the accord, the Israelis and the Palestinians were “like a long-married couple in their divorce attorney's waiting room.”²²

...[S]ince the Six Day War, we are as close to the Palestinians as a jailer is to the prisoner handcuffed to him. A jailer cuffing his wrist to that of a prisoner for an hour or two is a matter of routine. But a jailer who cuffs himself to his prisoner for 36 long years is himself no longer a free man. The occupation has also robbed us of freedom. This conference was not meant to inaugurate a honeymoon between the two nations. Quite the opposite—it was aimed at, finally, attenuating this warped intimacy drafting a fair divorce agreement. A painful, complicated divorce, but also one that unlocks the handcuffs. They will live in their home and we will live in ours. The Land of Is-

rael will no longer be a prison, or a double bed. It will be a two-family house. The handcuffed link between the jailer and his prisoner will become a connection between neighbors who share a stairwell (*ibid.*).

This is a manipulative use of two analogies to force the transfer of the meanings of those relations, to change the meaning of the original relation—the Israeli Palestinian relationships. It was not obvious. If it were a non-controversial issue, Oz would not have to make the analogies. We make analogies in accordance with our intentions. Oz's attempts to persuade the reader that it is not only that Jews dislike Arabs and vice versa, but also that they *should* dislike each the other. In Oz's analogy indeed, I do not like to be the jailer that cuffs himself to the prisoner, and I do not like to be the couple waiting for my divorce-trial.

On the other hand, you can use the same analogy just in order to be able to reject it. Clinton also used the divorce-analogy. It was when he tried to address to the problem of restoring confidence, instead of a forceful peace proposal:

Can two peoples with this kind of present trouble and troubling history still conclude a genuine and lasting peace? I mean, if I gave you this as a soap opera, you would say they're going to divorce court. But they can't, because they share such a small piece of land with such a profound history of importance to more than a billion people around the world. So I believe with all my heart not only that they can, but that they must.²³

Clinton's answer to Oz is that Palestinians and Israelis cannot go to divorce court. Oz's problem is how to divorce while Clinton's problem is how to live together. For Oz conflict leads to divorce. For Clinton, as we well know from his personal life, this is an option of the last resort.

Oz's position is, nevertheless, understandable. His position is the victim of terrorism, and, with Malley and the rest of the authors of the *Geneva Accord*, he has been defeated by terrorism and played right into its hands.

Similar to the Oz and Malley's rationales, Beilin argues against the *Road Map*, saying, that as we have already seen, a gradual process in this case means that you become hostages to terror. If terrorists decide to undermine what was already agreed upon by creating a situation in which nothing can be implemented (because of the gradual kind of progress)—they can do it at any time.²⁴

Apparently, this is a convincing argument, unless that the same argument can be applied to the *Geneva Accord* and Agha and Malley's proposals. Because it can be argued that their proposals and the *Geneva Accord*, are also hostages of terror. They are also the result of violence and do not prevent it in the future. Furthermore, it can be argued that their stands are, more than the *Road Map* proposal, the very result of the desperate situation successfully created by terrorism. They assume that terrorism will never cease, and therefore should be fought continuously, whereas the *Road Map* and Barak's proposals demand that it must stop first.

A gradual peace process contradicts the "final agreement" solution, but it is also a kind of peace and, if managed well, can be more stable.²⁵ The constant invocation of unattainable goals will foster a general climate of irresponsibility. Step-by-step progress relieves tensions and builds confidence. Its one weakness is that since problems cannot be totally solved immediately, the possibility of opposing what has already been agreed upon can intensify. However, an armed conflict can be averted if the gradual process includes the promise to reach agreement on issues that are more central as a result of what was already sanctioned, without postponing them forever. The condition is necessary in order to ensure the continuation of the negotiations without triggering crises or setting unreasonable deadlines. Moreover, the danger of the resurgence of terror is more likely to occur within the framework of the final accord approach that lacks a safety net in the case of disagreement (except for international sentences).

Since it is not gradual, the *Foreign Affairs* proposal and the *Geneva Accord* do not put its implementation to the test. Since it does not include applying sanctions in the case of unilateral violations, any failure could lead to a threat of violence or possibly war. They create the foundations for their own failure, since they close the doors on cooperation in the future, precisely on behalf of future cooperation.

They need sanctions that they cannot supply without annulling themselves. They have no answer for two conflicting concerns that are offered by Marwan Bishara and Yuval Steinitz.

Speaking of Palestinian security, Bishara asks, "What will stop a radical Israeli government in the future from invading a demilitarized and fragile

Palestinian state?²⁶ While Steinitz, on the contrary, concerned with Israel's security, points out that:

Israel has no strategic depth and could face a situation in which its air superiority was jeopardized by guerrilla forces coming from neighboring countries just a short distance away, or even from the Palestinian Authority.²⁷

Both concerns, whether the authors recognize it or not, are but a lively proof of the impossibility to reach final agreements without processes intended to create an atmosphere of trust. Under the threat of terror and violence, Bishara and Steinitz are right and the *GA* is wrong. The only way to invalidate their arguments, is to reach peace not instantaneously, but by walking toward it, thereby, renouncing the wish to get everything at once.

Instead, the *Road Map* proposal is relatively immune to these types of arguments and clauses regarding sanctions against violations since the gradual process means that each stage is only achieved after its own implementation is tested.

We should not forget that the real problem is not the nature of the final borders, security arrangements, refugees, settlements, or Jerusalem. The real problem is the kind of coexistence that each agreement promotes. To put it in the words of Dennis Ross: the choice is between reconciliation and partition, and not between peace and war.²⁸



Chapter Nine

A Mode of Conclusion

The discussion between Agha and Malley and Barak, was not about what happened at *Camp David II*. It was also not about the tactic of interim agreements or of a final accord, nor was it about continuous negotiations. In this regard, the sides changed their position without changing their goals. The real issue here was the struggle for the quality of the prevailing atmosphere between Palestinians and Israelis, during and after the negotiations, as well as after the agreements.

A policy intended to bring about reconciliation and cooperation can be advanced by arguments that explicitly refer to integration or by separatist arguments. There are circumstances indeed, where the implementation of a policy is more effective if their sustainers declare that they are against it. Barak was in this position when, although he preferred to advance a policy of gradualism to build confidence between the sides, he decided instead, when confronted with a partner that was not ready to postpone the negotiations on Jerusalem even for “two hours,”¹ to propose a final comprehensive agreement that included the declaration of the end of violence and the cessation of further demands.

Obviously, we can assert the same regarding the separatist policy. It can use integrationist arguments and can speak on behalf of a Kantian universal peace and in its name to advance separation.

Those possibilities are facilitated by the abstract character of declarations when they are regarded, as is frequently the case, as detached from their circumstances. For this reason, the mere formulation of peace proposals is not enough to be able to recognize genuine political intentions.

With the help of those distinctions, I followed the consistency of the different stands. Only after considering the circumstances under which

the *Camp David II* negotiations took place, it was possible to draw the conclusion that there were within each delegation, two opposite approaches, each with a different “ideal” image of the Middle East and therefore, each with a different agenda. One of them was an attempt to perpetuate the conflict, while the other sought to resolve it. Paradoxically, under those circumstances, those who proposed the implementation of previous agreements (Arafat, and his associates) brought about its perpetuation, and those who proposed a final agreement (Barak and Clinton) intended to resolve it. It is difficult to determine who in the Palestinian delegation was against Arafat and who in the Israeli delegation was against Barak. However, I tried to uncover indications of internal struggles. Within the Palestinian delegation, A’sfour, Dahlan and Abu-Mazen were against Arafat’s agenda.² Within the Israeli delegation, Ben Ami and Lipkin-Shahak were against Barak’s agenda. In addition to the evidence I provided in this regard, Madeleine Albright offers an indication of the inner struggle taking place on the Israeli side. She quotes Barak’s words on the third day of the negotiations:

Barak asked to see the paper we were drafting. I said Dennis was in the process of briefing the Israeli negotiators. Barak said, “I must see it. Maybe my negotiators will make a mistake. I have to let you know whether I can accept or reject it.”³

Why did he ask her instead of asking them directly? A plausible assumption is that Barak believed that they were trying to bypass his directives and were using the art of the *fait accompli* against his policy. In the end, Barak indeed rejected the draft of the agreement that his negotiators were trying to achieve (see *ibid.*).

The striking point was that both sides did not mean exactly what they said and did not say exactly what they meant. Arafat intended to leave for the continuation of violence without committing himself to fight terrorism, while Barak and Clinton intended to make a last minute effort to prevent an armed intifada. The idea of an armed confrontation was in the air and somehow everyone was trapped in another “narrative.”⁴

Agha and Malley, contrary to what is called the *Camp David II* myth, recognize that Barak did indeed offer more than 90% of the territories. Nevertheless, they chose to ignore this fact and insisted upon arguing that the failure of the negotiations was because of Barak’s unwillingness

to reach an interim agreement. Barak proposed to postpone the negotiations on Jerusalem for years in an attempt to advance an interim accord, while Arafat was unwilling to postpone them. At no point did they attempt to explain the relationship between Arafat and Barak's tactics. Barak's opposition to reaching an interim accord was a response to Arafat's policy, which was against reaching any accord, either final or interim.

As a result, Barak's dilemma was either to agree to the ending of the summit without an accord and accepting its corollary—the resumption of violence, or to try to prevent Arafat from taking this path by making clear to Arafat that he would be held responsible for the violence. Arafat's decision to pursue the course of violence, even when it became clear that he would be publicly held accountable for the future hostilities—is not a reason to assert that Barak's tactic was wrong. He really did his best in order to prevent violence, which in turn worked against his own declared policy, and hampered his chances for reelection. His decision to call for early elections was the result of his understanding that with Arafat in power and with the resulting reinforcement of his internal opposition (Beilin, Peres, Ben Ami and Lipkin-Shahak), he could not execute his own policy.

Barak's decision to go ahead with the summit was reasonable despite the fact that it was clear that there was no chance to reach an agreement. *Camp David II* was not a summit intended to reach an agreement, but to prevent, as a last resort, the imminent outbreak of violence designed by Arafat before the summit.⁵ Kissinger believed that to reach an agreement in the eight days set aside for the summit was an impossible task.⁶ Amos Malka and Amos Gilad, Israeli military intelligence experts, who generally disagree in their evaluation of political matters, did not really believe that Arafat was a genuine partner in the peace negotiations, and it is hard to believe that Barak did not take their evaluations into account when evaluating Arafat's actual intentions.⁷

However, this does not mean that Barak was not serious about his proposal. He proposed, among other things, a redeployment from about 91% of the West Bank and 100% of the Gaza Strip, the creation of a Palestinian state in the areas of Israeli withdrawal, the removal of isolated settlements and the transfer of this land to Palestinian control, the exchange of land for West Bank settlements remaining under Israeli control (mainly in the Jordan Valley along the frontier with Jordan), and Pales-

tinian control over East Jerusalem including most of the Old City.⁸ Clinton added a proposal of massive reparations within the frame of a large “Marshall Plan” for the Middle East for refugees on both sides of the conflict. In return, Arafat had to declare an end to the conflict and agree that in the future, no additional claims could be made against Israel.

Arafat chose neither to negotiate nor to make a counter-offer. Members of the Palestinian negotiating team (Mohammed Dahlan, Hassan A’sfour and Abu-Mazen) attempted to make concessions during the negotiating process, but Arafat himself prevented them from adopting realistic proposals.⁹

His best option was the *threat* to declare an independent State unilaterally, or, which is largely the same, to create a situation where the only viable solution to the conflict would be separation, best implemented by the intervention of an international force and its deployment between Israel and Palestine. The conflict could be maintained through the tactic of “threatening” to *announce* the unilateral declaration of the state (without actually declaring it), as well as by not announcing the declaration if the declaration, as part and parcel of the negotiations, brought reconciliation.

Arafat’s tactic was to insist that the negotiations should first focus on a third Israeli interim withdrawal from areas of the West Bank when the real intention was to create an internationalization of the conflict in order to reach an imposed settlement without the need for a dialogue with Israel.¹⁰

Arafat’s stand provided the clues necessary for the understanding of Barak’s and Clinton’s position. Arafat’s undeclared stand explains why Barak, who in principle supported a gradual resolution of the conflict, changed his mind before the summit.

Barak’s policy was: 1) To avoid the coming violence by putting pressure on Arafat to formulate a counter-proposal (which Arafat did not offer),¹¹ that would be instrumental in continuing the negotiations without the threat of imminent violence. The idea was to begin a gradual process of reconciliation, which did not mean an immediate withdrawal. 2) To avoid the imminent upraising by making a generous offer to Arafat that almost could not be turned down. Barak and Clinton expected to make him reject his own plans.¹² 3) As the third-best option, to make it clear

that Arafat was responsible for rejecting the proposal while still maintaining the hope that it would not happen.

Therefore, it might be reasonable to assume that Barak made his offer with the understanding that Arafat would be reluctant to accept it. However, without taking into account the circumstances, Barak's offer would remain unclear.

What is most surprising and helpful in understanding the negotiations, is that Agha and Malley themselves were opposed to interim accords. Additionally, as the only alternative for the Middle East, they proposed (in their article in *Foreign Affairs* and in Malley's first draft of the *Geneva Accord*), a final and imposed settlement. By revealing this contradiction, I endeavored to show their biased argumentation, which is manifest in their efforts to create a necessary connection between the possibility of reaching an agreement and their inability to think about an alternative leadership to Arafat.

My intention however, was neither to blame them for contradicting themselves nor for supporting Arafat's leadership. I only used those two points as an intellectual device in order to show that beyond their attempts to create the impression that they were neutral, with the help of convincing arguments they actually supported a policy that was oriented towards a separatist peace solution. I also tried to show that this attempt implied the need for their support of Arafat's leadership, thereby concluding that Arafat's policy actually fitted their own agenda—to bring about the failure of the negotiations in order to facilitate the separatist alternative.

The attempt to negotiate before the elections in Israel, the Taba summit, was made by Ben Ami and Yossi Beilin, Barak's internal opponents. Ben Ami recalls that:

...[T]here was a pistol on the table. The elections were a month away and there was a minister who told Ehud that if he didn't go to Taba they would denounce him in public for evading his duty to make peace. He had no choice but to go to a meeting for something he himself no longer believed in.¹³

The Israeli proposals at Taba opposed the spirit of Barak's proposals at Camp David.¹⁴ Finally, Barak and Clinton, who undertook the initiative for the summit, were the losers, while Arafat, who went there unwillingly, was the real winner. He continued the financing and support of

terrorist groups and anti-peace actions, and as a result, brought a new right-wing government, headed by Ariel Sharon, into power in Israel. Sharon's reputation makes it easy to place blame for the bitter situation on him rather than on Arafat. This does not imply that Sharon really was against a peace process, against painful concessions, against returning territories, against dismantling illegal outposts, and against the existence of a Palestinian state—those are assertions that the subsequent events prove to be untrue. The case is not that Arafat ignored who Sharon was and what his policy would be, but his need to choose the best of the worst alternatives.

Be that as it may, Sharon reacted to Arafat's support of violence by placing him under siege in Ramallah in order to prevent him from reaching the Gaza Strip. This was done in order to escalate the war against terrorism, to reject negotiations under fire, and through the construction of the fence and the unilateral withdrawal from Gaza, to leave a door open to the possibility of future negotiations.

Terror and Democracy

Why were Arafat and the supporters of his policy on both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides unready to reach a peace of reconciliation and open frontiers, or why were they not prepared to achieve a peace, at all? At this point, I have no answers to this question other than to point out several consequences that are an indirect result of this policy.

I find Rachel Ehrenfeld's notion that Arafat uses terror and corruption to stay in power, attractive.¹⁵ However, at most it explains his personal motivations. This approach falls short of understanding his policy, namely, the political, social and economic outcomes of his personal advantages. She believes that the European Union is uncooperative in the war against global terror generally, and Palestinian terror in particular, and as a result, it is part of the problem: "Both the European Union and Osama Bin Laden are interested in devastating the U.S. economy. Therefore, helping the U.S. to identify the elements that work to undermine it is against their interests."¹⁶ She even attributes the launching of the Al-Aqsa Intifada as an attempt to "deflect internal turmoil."¹⁷ Ehrenfeld's impressive findings regarding corruption in the Palestinian Authority and her conclusions regarding the reasons for global terror are in con-

trast to her explanations. She assumes that there is a conflict between the European and American economies, to the extent that the prosperity of the one is to the detriment of the other. This idea runs contrary to a market economy in which the development of one market means opportunities for the other. Additionally, and far outside the limits of this work, it seems that the support of terror and the fight against it, does not only come from European countries and its interests. Instead, the *operative* support of terror and the struggle against it cuts across the borders of countries, including the United States, Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

My contention is not that the governments of certain countries support terrorism, even not the Palestinian Authority, as contended by Ehrenfeld and as contended in a more extreme version by those seduced by the appeal of secret conspiracies. Conspiracy theorists are exempt from offering evidences for their deductive, overwhelming generalizations. My contention, on the contrary, is based on the analysis of conflicting operative results of opposing policies taking place within governments. Therefore, the issue of the support for (or fight against) global terrorism cut across political parties and governments.

Nevertheless, I do not need “why” explanations in order to draw my limited conclusions. I only wanted to show that on both sides of the conflict, there are those opposing a reconciliatory peace agreement while others support it. I also tried to illustrate this point through an interpretation of the events. Such an interpretation does not evaporate only because one ignores or does not reveal his/her reasons. If a geologist, when asked about why an earthquake took place in Pasa Robles, California, on December 23 2003, replies that he/she does not know and that he/she had been even unable to predict it, nobody would claim that the earthquake had never occurred. Ignorance of causes is irrelevant to the recognition of facts. Similarly, I offered a functional analysis of the operative results of political stands. The “why” questions poses a line of inquiry beyond the limits of this analysis and they have no effect on its conclusions. My analysis only opens the door for them, and is intended, more than anything else, to encourage further intellectual disputation on the subject.

Throughout the history of the conflict, those who were unready to end the conflict were not any fewer or less important, than the leaders who

made efforts to bring about its end.¹⁸ Separatists from both sides believe that the fulfillment of their aspirations clashes with the other side's aspirations, which when placed together produces the conditions for a volatile and restless Middle East. It is a political fact that this conflict in its various phases has endured for more than 100 years. It serves as living proof of just how far the triumph of the supporters of such mutual assured destruction can extend. This conflict survived two World Wars, the Cold War era, and now it even threatens to bring the world to a new type of "multipolar" confrontation. Certainly, when they fulfill their aspirations, whoever prefers the perpetuation of the conflict achieve a double advantage: One is the indefinite continuation of the conflict itself, and the other is to prevent a solution. The doors leading to the integration of Israel into the Middle East have almost become closed, irreversibly, by the very triumph of this anti-reconciliatory policy.

Reconciliation, as opposed to separatism, is a process of peace building. In the context of an attempt to explain Rabin's policy, Henry Kissinger wrote that:

... [A] state of 5 million in a sea of several hundred millions, perhaps the majority of whom consider the Jewish state somehow illegitimate, will consume its substance if it finds no way to transcend that mutual hostility ... [they] owed it to themselves to attempt the peace of *reconciliation*, not merely the peace of strength... having lived in ghettos for nearly two millennia ... they must not turn their national home into another ghetto, cut off from the rest of humanity by philosophical and political alienation. They cannot abandon their concern with security to that quest, but neither must they define their future entirely in military terms¹⁹ [My italics].

However, for many people the names Kissinger and Rabin are a call for the rejection of their ideas. Consider a quotation from Edward Said, although written in another style for another audience. It is an expression of Kissinger's very same idea:

...[C]o-existence is possible, whether you call it binationalism, cantonization, confederation, but something that takes seriously into account the full presence of the "Other" as a component of the new Palestine/Israel, or Israel/Palestine. I don't think there's another serious political alternative available. ... draw[ing] lines between peoples whose cultures, histories and geographical proximity cannot be sepa-

rated will not solve the basic problems of conflict between them. Political separation is at best a makeshift measure. Partition is a legacy of imperialism, as the unhappy cases of Pakistan and India, Ireland, Cyprus, and the Balkans amply testify, and as the disasters of 20th-century Africa attest in the most tragic way. We must now begin to think in terms of coexistence, *after separation, in spite of partition* [my italics].²⁰

In spite of all my efforts, I do not find differences. Their common struggle is against those on both sides who, perceiving each other as adversaries, are only building a future of ghettos.

Insofar as there is terrorism instead of a peace process, this situation will become a reality that annuls the Kissinger/Said alternative. As its immediate outcome, the killing of a civilian population, in addition to the murder, results in persistent bitterness and suspicion. It creates anxiety and/or fear in the targeted population that is translated into the support of extreme political stands, poverty and a reduction of investment. The more terrorism becomes a legitimate factor to be taken into account as part of the negotiations, the harder it becomes to remove it from the process. It determines the rules of the political game, rules that the players hardly can change. The traces of violence endure in a peace agreement signed under an atmosphere of violence. How can it be trusted if signed under the pressure of great fear?

It is commonplace to believe that peace is an event in time, an agreement once for all accomplished and ceremoniously signed. It is assumed that peace is a point between the period in which it has not yet existed, and a time in which it begins to appear. This assumption leads one to accept the idea that to sign a peace treaty means to have achieved success, without taking into account the consequences arising from the contents of the agreement. It is commonplace to assert that the signature of a peace agreement already contains the seeds of its stability.

This idea has been proven false— although its opposite idea has not been proven true. It is not enough to ask the parties to put down their weapons and to sit down at the bargaining table. It is not even enough to find ways to aid in the reconstruction after the signing of agreements. An agreement depends on its pre-conditions and the pre-conditions depend on the content of what is signed. Without taking into account the specific contents and pre-conditions, an agreement may serve as a recipe for

its violation and for promoting its endurance. Many societies remained deeply divided after the resolution of armed conflict, despite signed peace agreements, while others have attained full reconciliation. Shlomo Avineri wrote that “the attempt to reach a comprehensive agreement over a short period of time is a counsel of despair; it tries to abstract from the real complex relationships among the contending parties.”²¹ He should be right, only under certain circumstances, and not as a matter of principle. In principle, peace is a clear idea: It means a political condition in which the decisions between one group of people and another, is not achieved through violence but by reaching an agreement. It means the acceptance of rules and laws agreed upon by the parties concerned, and the suppression of violence.

Therefore, instead of asking for the lofty goal of peace, there is a need for the more specific notion of reconciliation. This term inherently includes the terms and goals of a peace agreement. Since nobody will be ready to stipulate that an agreement is signed in order not to honor it, we should be particularly suspicious of abstract declarations of good will. The letter should reveal the spirit, and the more concrete and specific the spirit, the more it will assure the endurance of a treaty.

Politics is full of devices designed to defeat good ideas and intentions. One of the prerequisites for a stable peace agreement is the demand for democracy in each of the signatory countries. A peace process or a peace-agreement that does not demand democracy leaves the door open for dictatorship, authoritarianism, centralization, and personalism, which are easily partnered with terrorism. Terrorism, in a dictatorial regime, does not come into conflict with the rulers. Moreover, just as it can make criminals into heroes, terrorist provocations can also make governments into lawbreakers. Violence against terror has a boomerang effect, in which the repressor represses itself. It easily encourages the very policy against which it fights. An anti-terror crusade can easily satisfy terror's aspirations, by restricting constitutional rights and the abridgement of liberties in the name of their defense. An anti-terrorist strategy can easily become a device not to win over terror but continuously to fight it thereby reducing the achievements of democratic regimes. This way, terrorism bestows legitimacy on central decisions to fight it. And the more the government fights it, the more it becomes justified in the eyes of the public. Terrorism works against the very essence of democratic regimes,

where decisions are taken, under the rule of law, by collective arrangements like elections, the protection of basic liberties, and formal arrangements like the division of powers intended to prevent governments from taking arbitrary decisions.²²

I am not implying that terror should not be violently confronted, but I am demonstrating results that this reaction could bring. A war on terror can be conducted in order to defeat it, as well as to strength it.

Terrorism attempts to overthrow democratic regimes, playing into the hands of military revolutions, as was the case in Argentina during the “dirty war” years (1976–83). Each side’s use of violence reinforced the “legitimacy” of the other side’s use of force.

Terrorism is a clever and effective use of force intended to engender fear, and fear is an additional weapon,²³ since it results in a reaction. Terrorism wants a reaction, at least, it expects a reaction, but one that is not specifically intended to defeat it. Terrorism in the Palestinian Authority leads, almost by necessity, to sealing borders and to the violation of civil and human rights on both sides. It is not difficult to envisage governments fighting terrorism in such a manner that the fight itself becomes a way of living on continuous alert. In the Middle East specifically, terrorism is also incompatible with the regional integration of Israel. Its intention, judging by the results of their actions, is to decrease the growth of free markets and mutual dependency between Israelis and Palestinians. Those who are against reconciliation, whether their political affiliations are with the left or the right—have wittingly or unwittingly aligned themselves, operatively or even consciously, with terrorism and its policy of fear and harassment. A multipolar world, which is the alternative to globalization, as defended by the French President Jacques Chirac, is terrorism’s best choice. It has a chance to use the Middle East as a trigger for such multipolar world order. In a divided world, it can always play with the multi-antagonistic powers.

The demand for a Jewish state, a state with a majority of Jews, was not only the result of the Holocaust, but also, and perhaps mainly, the immediate outcome of the hostility of the Arab world toward Zionism. In a truly peaceful and democratic Middle East, the demand would lose its force by becoming irrelevant—nobody would either oppose it or support it. Under the empire of terrorism, it can easily become anti-democratic. Maybe this is the main trap of terrorism. It tries to force democratic re-

gimes to fight against their own principles and *raison d'être*s. It attempts to cause people to become angry and lash out against their own values and principles. Therefore, the defense of democracy and the defeat of terrorism without compromises is the only way to overcome it. Terrorism proposes two apparent options which have the same operative meaning: keeping democracy without fighting it, and fighting it on account of democracy. The aim of a war of attrition against terror is anti-democratic. Democracy means the triumph of politics over war. Contrary to Clausewitz's idea that war is the continuation of politics waged by other means, war is actually the negation of politics, it is "a parasitic growth upon political life."²⁴

Maintaining a Democracy without Fighting Terrorism

The advantage of judging positions by their operative meaning is especially useful at this point. Through this prism, there are indeed those who propose keeping democracy without really fighting terrorism. Javier Solana, The EU foreign policy chief, said, "Europe is not at war with terrorism," because "we are democrats who cherish our freedom. If we change the way we think, we are adding to the terrorists' victory."²⁵ "We must not lose sight of the roots of this evil: unstable states, an abuse of human rights, the impoverishment of populations," he added (*ibid.*). Solana is concerned with stability rather than with democracy, and with an effort to eradicate world poverty. First stability, then human rights, then eradicate poverty, and then let's see what happens.

Similarly, the former European Commission President Romano Prodi stated "it is clear that using force is not the answer to resolving the conflict with terrorists." "We must remember that it has been a year since the war in Iraq started. Terrorism is infinitely more powerful than a year ago."²⁶

Astonished analysts reacted by asking rhetorical questions, even though they were unable to grasp the meaning of his words. The implied assumption is neither to negotiate nor to capitulate. Even though the literal meaning of the words appears to be, "resolving the conflict," operatively, it means to prevent taking drastic measures at this stage and eventually, to negotiate with terrorism.

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Spain's prime minister, like Prodi and Solana, believes that violence against terror is not the answer and state

that, “Combating terrorism with bombs, with Tomahawk missiles, isn’t the way to defeat terrorism. Terrorism is fought by the state of law.”²⁷

The alternative is not instability, or the annulment of constitutional rights and poverty. These are not the answers to terrorism. It is quite possible that world poverty and the major problems of humanity will never be solved. But this is not a reason for the belief that there are no remedies available for existing threats. If this were the case, political action would be utterly useless. In the name of finding the answer to the big problems of humanity, Solana, Prodi and Zapatero are unprepared to take concrete steps in order to confront terrorism.

Fighting Terror without Maintaining a Democracy

Fareed Zakaria’s “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy,”²⁸ perhaps the most influential work on the issue, proposes an alternative to the idea that promoting democracy can be an effective tool against terrorism. Distinguishing between liberalism and democracy, he makes a further distinction: liberalism concerns civil rights, while democracy concerns politics. He needs the distinction in order to assert that under certain circumstances, “constitutional liberalism” is better than democracy, since it is about the limitation of power, while democracy is about “its accumulation and use” (p. 30).

What at first appears simply as a theoretical analysis of the need to put constitutional limits to democratic elections in order to prevent the election of dictators—ends in the rejection of the people’s right to free elections. Elections, in certain cases, may serve only to substitute one dictator for another. He introduces the issue mildly, asserting, “The absence of free and fair elections should be viewed as one flaw, not the definition of tyranny... If a government with limited democracy steadily expands... freedoms it should not be branded a dictatorship” (pp. 40–1). However, the bottom line is that he proposes a new role for the United States and the international community:

...Instead of searching for new lands to democratize and new places to hold elections—to consolidate democracy where it has taken root and to encourage the gradual development of constitutional liberalism across the globe. (p. 42).

Zakaria does not refer to two options that should arise from his own distinctions and terminology: constitutional democracies, and illiberal non-democratic dictatorships. As a result, he does not offer a solution for the real problem. The problem is not with “constitutional liberalism” and “democracy.” Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and Arafat’s Palestinian Authority are neither one nor the other. The problem is how to overthrow or change illiberal non-democratic regimes, and how to create or save existing constitutional democracies.

Since Zakaria ignores them, in the name of the consolidation of democracy in “illiberal” democracies, his analysis allows dictatorial regimes to stay in power. This way, his apparently irrelevant discussion becomes a justification of dictatorships.

This is the operative meaning of his analysis. Although there is indeed a real conflict between democracy and liberalism, between the primacy of justice and the primacy of freedom, it should also be clear that an anti-liberal democracy cannot be regarded as a democracy, and a liberal non-democratic regime cannot be regarded as liberal. However, this was not Zakaria’s concern.

As for the main issue of the relationship between terrorism and democracy, Zakaria is not only ready to make room for dictatorial regimes. He badly misses the Cold War era, which he defines as a time where the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, “never turned violent” thanks to the existence of nuclear weapons.²⁹ Today, “violence is much more likely than it was during the Cold War, at the time deterrence ensured that adversaries could refuse to surrender and yet stay at peace” (*ibid.*). The advantage of the Cold War era compared to the new era of terrorism, (which seems to be in his eyes a necessary substitute for the former) is that since the “central battlefield was quiet,” both sides “helped” their allies in their local struggles. Therefore, the role of the Middle East in the Cold War era was the keeping of world peace with the maintenance of tension and war as a security-valve against a global conflagration. Terror now, according to his vision, is more dangerous than the Cold War strategy of nuclear “Mutually Assured Destruction.”³⁰ Moreover, if in those days violence was in the hands of governments, now we are witnesses to a “democratization of violence” (*ibid.*).³¹

Zakaria puts violence together with democracy in this way simply in order to identify terror with democracy. Democracies, he says, “are more

warlike, going to war more often and with greater intensity than most states.”³² The democratization of terror means also that it cannot be defeated. The religious orientation of the Islamists is an additional reason for the break down of deterrence. How do you deter someone who is willing, indeed eager, to die?

This new world order, that he calls “world disorder,” is described as a new era of permanent conflict with terror, an era in which it should be fought but without chance to win. There is no need, therefore, to return to Cold War era tensions. According to his vision, we are entering an era of violence without a way to evade it or to change it. This description is correct. Fighting terror, suspicion, and sealing borders, becomes, slowly and firmly, a way of life. However, since nothing else can be done except fighting terror, Zakaria is instead proposing this way of life as an expedient program, although in the guise of a mere description of hard facts.

At least at its face value, his discourse regards terrorism with disdain and scorn. Before the attack in Madrid (and published four days after it), he wrote, “It is clear that Al Qaeda can produce videotapes but not terrorism.”³³ His underestimation of the danger of terrorism fits the attempt to find a “reasonable” *modus vivendi* with it rather than fighting it. It is hard to believe that Zakaria misconstrues that, for terrorism, sporadic attacks and even sporadic videotapes are sufficient in order to produce a world empire of fear and anxiety with the resulting state-security measures becoming a part of everyday life. Terrorism does not create only fear. It undermines the very meaning of the division of powers. On their normal days, liberal democracies protect their citizens with a system of checks and balances. Terrorism also undermines the division of powers. Indeed, mutual control, which is essential in the interests of freedom, cannot be “effective” in making quick decisions: “Congress must deliberate; the courts must review—and meanwhile, the crisis calls out for decisive action.”³⁴ The intention of terrorism, or to put it mildly, its consequence, is the strengthening of the executive branch at the expense of legislatures and the courts. It is an abuse of the democratic rules in order to bring about their annulment. Threats, which cost nothing, are enough to lead to the destruction of free markets, commercial travel, tourism and economic development.

Zakaria wants to promote liberalism as an irrelevant response to terror. His concern for liberal measures rather than for an effective fight against

terrorism and dictatorial regimes is simply creating the conditions for their success. Terrorism precisely explodes liberalism thereby provoking governmental decisions to annul the very liberties and rights they are supposed to protect. Therefore, terrorism poses a double threat and has a two-fold gain. Its own attacks, and counter actions that, when managed the way terror seeks democracies to manage them, justify the erosion of the achievements of democracy precisely, for the sake of national security.

Playing into the hands of this policy, Bruce Hoffman, External Affairs Director of the Rand Corporation, proposes a strategy based on the appreciation that the struggle against terrorism “is never-ending,” while the search for solutions must be “equally continuous and unyielding, proportional to the threat posed by our adversaries in both innovation and determination.”³⁵ Even though it refers to innovation, the bottom line of the proposal is a defensive and re-active strategy, adapted to the shifts and maneuvers of terrorist policies. They define the issues, make the challenges, and select the place of confrontation. Moreover, “being proportional to the threat posed,” they will even choose the weapons. This means holding positions indefinitely, and planning for the worst while hoping for the best.

The alternative is not a policy of active defensive measures, but of leadership and offensive initiatives. It is a decisive-war strategy to maintain the achievements of democracy and the protection of constitutional rights.

Hegel said that a cunning force makes real history by means of and behind human passions promoting reason. Terrorism, on the contrary, uses a calculated reasoning to promote fear. If it succeeds, as Michael Ignatieff says, “government would not have to impose tyranny on a cowed populace. We would demand it for our own protection.”³⁶

The problem is genuine, since Bin Laden, Arafat, Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah, Hamas and their supporters, including those who play into their hands, ask democracies to do what they believe is an impossible task: to fight terror, to respond with violence, even to undertake the initiative of an offensive strategy and maintain the achievements of a liberal democracy. The viable solution, or still better, the “lesser evil,” lies between those who oppose measures “that give the executive branch more

power" (*ibid.*), and those who refuse to believe that any step taken to defend democracies can be called an evil at all (cf. *ibid.*).

Terrorism's first victims are those who believe that modern terrorists are interested in discrete acts of violence without clear political goals. Such interpretation of terrorism is primarily a product of the misunderstanding of one's own reaction.³⁷ This is an additional threat, since it prevents the adoption of a sound anti-terrorist policy. Zakaria's misunderstanding ends with an underestimation of the power of terrorism. In addition to his belief that terrorism can only produce videotapes, he also asserts that it is not part of a "clash of civilizations," but in reality, is a clash within Islamic civilization. This argument, if accepted, would persuade Western policymakers to remain unworried about its power.³⁸

One thing is clear. The Middle East conflict is neither the result of a clash within a civilization nor between civilizations. Just as it is difficult to refer to Western identity except in abstract terms, it is also difficult to refer to an oriental or even particular Arab identity. Those are stereotypical generalizations full of prejudices. Abstract concepts lack specific reference. The more we search for common cultural characteristics, the more abstract our concepts become. On the other hand, the emptier our findings, the more we believe that we have arrived at an accurate description of reality. The generalizations made about "Arab culture" are no different from the generalizations made by anti-Semites regarding "Jewish culture." When coming from the mouths of politicians, these generalizations are not devoid of intention. These are attempts to use abstract concepts for the sake of a political justification for a clash of civilizations, which is taken as a genuine and indisputable historical fact. Once the others are defined as "others," they easily become enemies. I am not arguing against cultural pluralism and ethnical identities but am denouncing their politicization. These generalizations about the Middle East are instrumentally manipulated against yet another possible peace of coexistence and reconciliation. They are employed to mean that coexistence goes against national identities.

This idea underlies Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*.³⁹ Fundamentalist and radical movements can find their justification in Zakaria's mentor. He argues in support of the superiority of Western civilization above all others. Islam is the dark power against which he fights. Huntington's political manifesto is also an attempt at an intellectual jus-

tification for the return to the days of the Cold War. In Huntington's work the basic concept of the "identity of civilizations," is a vague generalization and is itself, devoid of identity and specificity.

Peace—An Open Question

There is a popular notion that in the atmosphere of terrorism, intolerance, extreme nationalism and dictatorship, a peace of reconciliation and constitutional democracy cannot be a real agenda in the Middle East. It is an undeniable fact, so it is argued, that experiments with democratization and a stable peace in the Arab world have failed, and that Israel, although trying to be a Jewish and a democratic state, cannot be a fully democratic state. If countries with impressive progress towards democracy lack a democratic tradition, they will finally withdraw from reforms and will return to the authoritarian rule of military governments. Peace agreements turn either cold or collapsed altogether. As a result, so they claim, it is hard to see concrete evidence for hope for the chances of democracy in the near future.

This idea, by way of a generalization, turns a historical situation into an a-historical, "eternal" state of affairs. This way, it is not an explanation of a real situation but becomes a justification as well as an expression of actual events. It is not only a denial of change in the Middle East, but is also a denial of the very essence of politics and history. Similar claims were made in the past by the British about India before its independence in 1947. South Africans argued that their black compatriots were "somehow unequipped to participate in the democratic process."⁴⁰

Such arguments turn to the past in order to justify the continuance of long standing suffering, and these past events become the authority and guide for any future decision taken by the parties involved in the dispute. This argument assumes that nothing new can happen, since only "that which has been is that which will be."⁴¹ However, according to such an opinion, even history could not be, for what is now "history" was once something new, and what is now the present will become the past. Without pushing the past into the past, namely, without forgetting, and without assuming that something new can happen even if it never was—politics would altogether be impossible to imagine.

Human beings find it easier to view accomplished facts as if they were eternal, and find it difficult to see the actions that brought them into existence. However, without considering the struggle between political tendencies, the political reality of the Middle East is illusorily regarded as the result of a deterministic process without alternatives. When conflicting trends and defeated alternatives are ignored, facts become the expression of what cannot otherwise happen. Under the rules that apply to this kind of argumentation, and in the atmosphere of terrorism and unilateral decisions, people tend to argue on behalf of those “hard” facts believing that nothing can be changed or at least that separation and sealing borders—the continuation of the conditions of violence—is the only likely solution.

This is an easy way for making prophecies of gloom and doom that, during the ongoing situation, appear to be very realistic. After all, they are inverted prophecies that foresee the past. Their motto is that what is taking place, terrorism, fences and unilateral decisions, is not only the key to understanding what will be, but also prophesizes about what should be. They transform facts into arguments and arguments into values to feed their despair.

Their despair is orchestrated by the triumph of terrorism, which leads each side to regard the other as unwilling to think about reconciliation. As a result, each side is left alone without a partner with whom to fulfill its wishes that become, in their eyes, mere dreams devoid of effective power. This denial of the other’s aspirations is relatively easier to bear than to believe that the other side shares the same aspirations, because the alternative demands imagination, namely, going beyond the nasty reality. The tendency to overlook alternatives is an advantage of those who win by imposing their “realistic” values.

On the other hand, there are those who react to their despair with their wishes and dreams for an immediate peace, while never thinking about what the content of an agreement may bring. They predict that good-will will be enough. If in the minds of “realists” facts become arguments, then in the well-intentioned “Kantians” mind they become facts. They believe that words and promises stipulated by the clauses of a peace agreement are already a real peace.

The prophecies of those concerned with facts are simply a reaction to their own fears and disillusion, and the prophecies of those who scorn facts are simply a reaction to their own hopes and expectations.

These apparently opposite prophecies have far more in common than their advocates are ready to concede. Those who persist in their fear of change succumb to the gloomy present, and those who desperately seek to ignore facts are condemned to live with them. The present situation is the impassable obstacle along their road back to the very place from which they started. Both prefer not to pursue their thoughts beyond their hopes and fears. As they are condemned to a present with the help of their emotions, both share a Manichean mind of "all or nothing," which is nothing other than to surrender to their present of violence, suffering and open wounds.

These prophecies are not any more successful than those made by the followers of Nostradamus. Hume said that fear and hope are emotions that are aroused when the mind has "the least foundation to rest upon, and is tossed with the greatest uncertainty."⁴²

Yet, for the protagonists of history, it is quite another matter. Policymakers, who shape the future by conscious decisions, are the only prophets available. "The only sure way of predicting the future is to have the power to shape it," wrote Abba Eban.⁴³ According to Immanuel Kant, prophecy means to contrive the events that it predicts. Policymakers, as prophets, are the authors of the very events they anticipate, who expend great efforts trying to convince others that they simply describe them. They do their best to prove that they correctly predicted the events and their outcome. Prophecy is also the same as the practical analysis of reality. Contrary to a theoretical analysis, a practical analysis aims to bring about certain results, whether it is to modify reality or to prevent others from modifying it. Therefore, instead of increasing our knowledge of the political facts surrounding the impossibility of reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis, we learn much about the wishful-thinking of their proponents and of their intentions from those prophecies. Nowadays, prophecies based on disillusion represent the prevalent state of mind between Palestinians and Israelis. It can change at any moment however, because there are leaders on both sides who can bring the parties closer to a pluralistic perception of governance, making the Middle East a place to live beyond fear and hope. Since the beginnings of Zion-

ism there were arab leaders that supported the idea of reconciliation. Da'ud Barakat, editor of *al-Ahram*, wrote as early as 1913:

It is absolutely imperative that an entente be made between the Zionists and the Arabs... The Zionists are necessary for the country; the capital which they will bring, their knowledge and intelligence, and the industriousness that characterises them, will contribute without doubt to the regeneration of the country.⁴⁴

As Mark Cohen puts it, the parties should be brought “to the point where they not only begrudge each other’s existence but actually learn to live together in political and economic symbiosis.” Then, he believes, “they can fall back on the memory of the past and feel that there is something intrinsic in Moslem-Jewish relations that can give encouragement to a new kind of relationship.”⁴⁵ Is it a call for a change of myths? Or is it a call to believe in another past and in another future?



Appendix

The New York Review of Books

Discussion

Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors

(Paragraphs 1–63)

Hussein Agha and Robert Malley

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1. In accounts of what happened at the July 2000 Camp David summit and the following months of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, we often hear about Ehud Barak's unprecedented offer and Yasser Arafat's uncompromising no. Israel is said to have made a historic, generous proposal, which the Palestinians, once again seizing the opportunity to miss an opportunity, turned down. In short, the failure to reach a final agreement is attributed, without notable dissent, to Yasser Arafat.

2. As orthodoxies go, this is a dangerous one. For it has larger ripple effects. Broader conclusions take hold. That there is no peace partner is one. That there is no possible end to the conflict with Arafat is another.

3. For a process of such complexity, the diagnosis is remarkably shallow. It ignores history, the dynamics of the negotiations, and the relationships among the three parties. In so doing, it fails to capture why what so many viewed as a generous Israeli offer, the Palestinians viewed as neither generous, nor Israeli, nor, indeed, as an offer. Worse, it acts as a harmful constraint on American policy by offering up a single, convenient culprit—Arafat—rather than a more nuanced and realistic analysis.

1.

4. Each side came to Camp David with very different perspectives, which led, in turn, to highly divergent approaches to the talks.

5. Ehud Barak was guided by three principles. First was a deep antipathy toward the concept of gradual steps that lay at the heart of the 1993 Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. In his view, the withdrawals of Israeli forces from parts of Gaza and the West Bank during the preceding seven years had forced Israel to pay a heavy price without getting anything tangible in return and without knowing the scope of the Palestinians' final demands. A second axiom for Barak was that the Palestinian leadership would make a historic compromise—if at all—only after it had explored and found unappealing all other possibilities.

6. An analysis of Israeli politics led to Barak's third principle. Barak's team was convinced that the Israeli public would ratify an agreement with the Palestinians, even one that entailed far-reaching concessions, so long as it was final and brought quiet and normalcy to the country. But Barak and his associates also felt that the best way to bring the agreement before the Israeli public was to minimize any political friction along the way. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had paid a tremendous political (and physical) price by alienating the Israeli right wing and failing to bring its members along during the Oslo process. Barak was determined not to repeat that mistake. Paradoxically, a government that believed it enjoyed considerable latitude concerning the terms of the ultimate deal felt remarkably constrained on the steps it could take to get there. Bearing these principles in mind helps us to make sense of the Israeli government's actions during this period.

7. To begin, Barak discarded a number of interim steps, even those to which Israel was formally committed by various agreements—including a third partial redeployment of troops from the West Bank, the transfer to Palestinian control of three villages abutting Jerusalem, and the release of Palestinians imprisoned for acts committed before the Oslo agreement. He did not want to estrange the right prematurely or be (or appear to be) a "sucker" by handing over assets, only to be rebuffed on the permanent status deal. In Barak's binary cost-benefit analysis, such steps did not add up: on the one hand, if Israelis and Palestinians reached a final agreement, all these minor steps (and then some) would be taken; on the other hand, if the parties failed to reach a final agreement, those steps would have been wasted. What is more, concessions to the Palestinians would cost Barak precious political capital he was determined to husband until the final, climactic moment.

8. The better route, he thought, was to present all concessions and all rewards in one comprehensive package that the Israeli public would be asked to accept in a national referendum. Oslo was being turned on its head. It had been a wager on success—a blank check signed by two sides willing to take difficult preliminary steps in the expectation that they would reach an agreement. Ba-

rak's approach was a hedge against failure—a reluctance to make preliminary concessions out of fear that they might not.

9. Much the same can be said about Israel's expansion of the West Bank settlements, which proceeded at a rapid pace. Barak saw no reason to needlessly alienate the settler constituency. Furthermore, insofar as new housing units were being established on land that Israel ultimately would annex under a permanent deal—at least any permanent deal Barak would sign—he saw no harm to the Palestinians in permitting such construction. In other words, Barak's single-minded focus on the big picture only magnified in his eyes the significance—and cost—of the small steps. Precisely because he was willing to move a great distance in a final agreement (on territory or on Jerusalem, for example), he was unwilling to move an inch in the preamble (prisoners, settlements, troop redeployment, Jerusalem villages).

10. Barak's principles also shed light on his all-or-nothing approach. In Barak's mind, Arafat had to be made to understand that there was no "third way," no "reversion to the interim approach," but rather a corridor leading either to an agreement or to confrontation. Seeking to enlist the support of the US and European nations for this plan, he asked them to threaten Arafat with the consequences of his obstinacy: the blame would be laid on the Palestinians and relations with them would be downgraded. Likewise, and throughout *Camp David II*, Barak repeatedly urged the US to avoid mention of any fall-back options or of the possibility of continued negotiations in the event the summit failed.

11. The Prime Minister's insistence on holding a summit and the timing of the *Camp David II* talks followed naturally. Barak was prepared to have his negotiators engage in preliminary discussions, which in fact took place for several months prior to *Camp David II*. But for him, these were not the channels in which real progress could be made. Only by insisting on a single, high-level summit could all the necessary ingredients of success be present: the drama of a stark, all-or-nothing proposal; the prospect that Arafat might lose US support; the exposure of the ineffectiveness of Palestinian salami-tactics (pocketing Israeli concessions that become the starting point at the next round); and, ultimately, the capacity to unveil to the Israeli people all the achievements and concessions of the deal in one fell swoop.

2.

12. In Gaza and the West Bank, Barak's election was greeted with mixed emotions. Benjamin Netanyahu, his immediate predecessor, had failed to implement several of Israel's signed obligations and, for that reason alone, his defeat was welcome. But during his campaign, Barak had given no indication that he was prepared for major compromises with the Palestinians. Labor back in

power also meant Tel Aviv back in Washington's good graces; Netanyahu's tenure, by contrast, had seen a gradual cooling of America's relations with Israel and a concomitant warming of its relations with the Palestinian Authority.

13. Palestinians were looking for early reassuring signs from Barak; his first moves were anything but. His broad government coalition (an assortment of peace advocates and hard-liners), his tough positions on issues like Jerusalem, and his reluctance to confront the settlers all contributed to an early atmosphere of distrust. Delays in addressing core Palestinian concerns—such as implementing the 1998 Wye Agreement (which Barak chose to renegotiate) or beginning permanent status talks (which Barak postponed by waiting to name a lead negotiator)—were particularly irksome given the impatient mood that prevailed in the territories. Seen from Gaza and the West Bank, Oslo's legacy read like a litany of promises deferred or unfulfilled. Six years after the agreement, there were more Israeli settlements, less freedom of movement, and worse economic conditions. Powerful Palestinian constituencies—the intellectuals, security establishment, media, business community, “state” bureaucrats, political activists—whose support was vital for any peace effort were disillusioned with the results of the peace process, doubtful of Israel's willingness to implement signed agreements, and, now, disenchanted with Barak's rhetoric and actions.

14. Perhaps most disturbing was Barak's early decision to concentrate on reaching a deal with Syria rather than with the Palestinians, a decision that Arafat experienced as a triple blow. The Palestinians saw it as an instrument of pressure, designed to isolate them; as a delaying tactic that would waste precious months; and as a public humiliation, intended to put them in their place. Over the years, Syria had done nothing to address Israeli concerns. There was no recognition, no bilateral contacts, not even a suspension of assistance to groups intent on fighting Israel. During that time, the PLO had recognized Israel, countless face-to-face negotiations had taken place, and Israeli and Palestinian security services had worked hand in hand. In spite of all this, Hafez al-Assad—not Arafat—was the first leader to be courted by the new Israeli government.

15. In March 2000, after the failed Geneva summit between Clinton and President Assad made clear that the Syrian track had run its course, Barak chose to proceed full steam ahead with the Palestinians, setting a deadline of only a few months to reach a permanent agreement. But by then, the frame of mind on the other side was anything but receptive. It was Barak's timetable, imposed after his Syrian gambit had failed, and designed with his own strategy in mind. Arafat was not about to oblige.

16. Indeed, behind almost all of Barak's moves, Arafat believed he could discern the objective of either forcing him to swallow an unconscionable deal or mobilizing the world to isolate and weaken the Palestinians if they refused to

yield. Barak's stated view that the alternative to an agreement would be a situation far grimmer than the status quo created an atmosphere of pressure that only confirmed Arafat's suspicions—and the greater the pressure, the more stubborn the belief among Palestinians that Barak was trying to dupe them.

17. Moreover, the steps Barak undertook to husband his resources while negotiating a historical final deal were interpreted by the Palestinians as efforts to weaken them while imposing an unfair one. Particularly troubling from this perspective was Barak's attitude toward the interim commitments, based on the Oslo, Wye, and later agreements. Those who claim that Arafat lacked interest in a permanent deal miss the point. Like Barak, the Palestinian leader felt that permanent status negotiations were long overdue; unlike Barak, he did not think that this justified doing away with the interim obligations.

18. For Arafat, interim and permanent issues are inextricably linked—"part and parcel of each other," he told the President—precisely because they must be kept scrupulously separate. Unfulfilled interim obligations did more than cast doubt on Israel's intent to deliver; in Arafat's eyes, they directly affected the balance of power that was to prevail once permanent status negotiations commenced.

19. To take the simplest example: if Israel still held on to land that was supposed to be turned over during the interim phase, then the Palestinians would have to negotiate over *that* land as well during permanent status negotiations. And while Barak claimed that unfulfilled interim obligations would be quickly forgotten in the event that the summit succeeded, Arafat feared that they might just as quickly be ignored in the event that it failed. In other words, Barak's seemed a take-it-or-leave-it proposition in which leaving it meant forsaking not only the permanent status proposal, but also a further withdrawal of Israeli forces, the Jerusalem villages, the prisoner releases, and other interim commitments. Worse, it meant being confronted with the new settlement units in areas that Barak self-confidently assumed would be annexed to Israel under a permanent status deal.

20. In many ways, Barak's actions led to a classic case of misaddressed messages: the intended recipients of his tough statements—the domestic constituency he was seeking to carry with him—barely listened, while their unintended recipients—the Palestinians he would sway with his final offer—listened only too well. Never convinced that Barak was ready to go far at all, the Palestinians were not about to believe that he was holding on to his assets in order to go far enough. For them, his goals were to pressure the Palestinians, lower their expectations, and worsen their alternatives. In short, everything Barak saw as evidence that he was serious, the Palestinians considered to be evidence that he was not.

21. For these reasons, *Camp David II* seemed to Arafat to encapsulate his worst nightmares. It was high-wire summitry, designed to increase the pressure on the Palestinians to reach a quick agreement while heightening the political and symbolic costs if they did not. And it clearly was a Clinton/Barak idea both in concept and timing, and for that reason alone highly suspect. That the US issued the invitations despite Israel's refusal to carry out its earlier commitments and despite Arafat's plea for additional time to prepare only reinforced in his mind the sense of a US-Israeli conspiracy.

22. On June 15, during his final meeting with Clinton before *Camp David II*, Arafat set forth his case: Barak had not implemented prior agreements, there had been no progress in the negotiations, and the prime minister was holding all the cards. The only conceivable outcome of going to a summit, he told Secretary Albright, was to have everything explode in the President's face. If there is no summit, at least there will still be hope. The summit is our last card, Arafat said—do you really want to burn it? In the end, Arafat went to Camp David, for not to do so would have been to incur America's anger; but he went intent more on surviving than on benefiting from it.

3.

23. Given both the mistrust and tactical clumsiness that characterized the two sides, the United States faced a formidable challenge. At the time, though, administration officials believed there was a historic opportunity for an agreement. Barak was eager for a deal, wanted it achieved during Clinton's term in office, and had surrounded himself with some of Israel's most peace-minded policy-makers. For his part, Arafat had the opportunity to preside over the first Palestinian State, and he enjoyed a special bond with Clinton, the first US president to have met and dealt with him. As for Clinton, he was prepared to devote as much of his presidency as it took to make the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations succeed. A decision *not* to seize the opportunity would have produced as many regrets as the decision to seize it produced recriminations.

24. Neither the President nor his advisers were blind to the growing distrust between the two sides or to Barak's tactical missteps. They had been troubled by his decision to favor negotiations with the "other woman," the Syrian president, who distracted him from his legitimate, albeit less appealing, Palestinian bride-to-be. Barak's inability to create a working relationship with Arafat was bemoaned in the administration; his entreaties to the Americans to "expose" and "unmask" Arafat to the world were largely ignored.

25. When Barak reneged on his commitment to transfer the three Jerusalem villages to the Palestinians—a commitment the Prime Minister had specifically authorized Clinton to convey, in the President's name, to Arafat—Clinton was furious. As he put it, this was the first time that he had been made out to be a

“false prophet” to a foreign leader. And, in an extraordinary moment at Camp David, when Barak retracted some of his positions, the President confronted him, expressing all his accumulated frustrations. “I can’t go see Arafat with a retrenchment! You can sell it; there is no way I can. This is not real. This is not serious. I went to Shepherdstown [for the Israeli-Syrian negotiations] and was told nothing by you for four days. I went to Geneva [for the summit with Assad] and felt like a wooden Indian doing your bidding. I will not let it happen here!”

26. In the end, though, and on almost all these questionable tactical judgments, the US either gave up or gave in, reluctantly acquiescing in the way Barak did things out of respect for the things he was trying to do. For there was a higher good, which was Barak’s determination to reach peace agreements with Syria and the Palestinians. As early as July 1999, during their first meeting, Barak had outlined to Clinton his vision of a comprehensive peace. He provided details regarding his strategy, a timetable, even the (astronomical) US funding that would be required for Israel’s security, Palestinian and Syrian economic assistance, and refugee resettlement. These were not the words of a man with a ploy but of a man with a mission.

27. The relationship between Clinton and Barak escapes easy classification. The President, a political pro, was full of empathy, warmth, and personal charm; the Prime Minister, a self-proclaimed political novice, was mainly at ease with cool, logical argument. Where the President’s tactics were fluid, infinitely adaptable to the reactions of others, Barak’s every move seemed to have been conceived and then frozen in his own mind. At Camp David, Clinton offered Barak some advice: “You are smarter and more experienced than I am in war. But I am older in politics. And I have learned from my mistakes.”

28. Yet in their political relations, the two men were genuine intimates. For all his complicated personality traits, Barak was deemed a privileged partner because of his determination to reach a final deal and the risks he was prepared to take to get there. When these were stacked against Arafat’s perceived inflexibility and emphasis on interim commitments, the administration found it hard not to accommodate Barak’s requests. As the President told Arafat three weeks before *Camp David II* began, he largely agreed with the chairman’s depiction of Barak—politically maladroit, frustrating, lacking in personal touch. But he differed with Arafat on a crucial point: he was convinced that Barak genuinely wanted a historic deal.

29. The President’s decision to hold the *Camp David II* summit despite Arafat’s protestations illuminates much about US policy during this period. In June, Barak—who for some time had been urging that a summit be rapidly convened—told the President and Secretary Albright that Palestinian negotia-

tors had not moved an inch and that his negotiators had reached the end of their compromises; anything more would have to await a summit. He also warned that without a summit, his government (at least in its current form) would be gone within a few weeks.

30. At the same time, Arafat posed several conditions for agreeing to go to a summit. First, he sought additional preparatory talks to ensure that *Camp David II* would not fail. Second, he requested that the third Israeli territorial withdrawal be implemented before *Camp David II*—a demand that, when rebuffed by the US, turned into a request that the US “guarantee” the withdrawal even if *Camp David II* did not yield an agreement (what he called a “safety net”). A third Palestinian request—volunteered by Clinton, rather than being demanded by Arafat—was that the US remain neutral in the event the summit failed and not blame the Palestinians.

31. The administration by and large shared Arafat’s views. The Palestinians’ most legitimate concern, in American eyes, was that without additional preparatory work the risk of failure was too great. In June, speaking of a possible summit, Clinton told Barak, “I want to do this, but not under circumstances that will kill Oslo.” Clinton also agreed with Arafat on the need for action on the interim issues. He extracted a commitment from Barak that the third Israeli withdrawal would take place with or without a final deal, and, in June, he privately told the Chairman he would support a “substantial” withdrawal were *Camp David II* to fail. Describing all the reasons for Arafat’s misgivings, he urged Barak to put himself “in Arafat’s shoes” and to open the summit with a series of goodwill gestures toward the Palestinians. Finally, Clinton assured Arafat on the eve of the summit that he would not be blamed if the summit did not succeed. “There will be,” he pledged, “no finger-pointing.”

32. Yet, having concurred with the Palestinians’ contentions on the merits, the US immediately proceeded to disregard them. Ultimately, there was neither additional preparation before the summit, nor a third redeployment of Israeli troops, nor any action on interim issues. And Arafat got blamed in no uncertain terms.

33. Why this discrepancy between promise and performance? Most importantly, because Barak’s reasoning—and his timetable—had an irresistible logic to them. If nothing was going to happen at pre-summit negotiations—and nothing was—if his government was on the brink of collapse, and if he would put on Camp David’s table concessions he had not made before, how could the President say no? What would be gained by waiting? Certainly not the prospect offered by Arafat—another interminable negotiation over a modest territorial withdrawal. And most probably, as many analysts predicted, an imminent confrontation, if Arafat proceeded with his plan to unilaterally announce a state on

September 13, 2000, or if the frustration among the Palestinians—of which the world had had a glimpse during the May 2000 upheaval—were to reach boiling point once again.

34. As for the interim issues, US officials believed that whatever Palestinian anger resulted from Israeli lapses would evaporate in the face of an appealing final deal. As a corollary, from the President on down, US officials chose to use their leverage with the Israelis to obtain movement on the issues that had to be dealt with in a permanent agreement rather than expend it on interim ones.

35. The President's decision to ignore his commitment to Arafat and blame the Palestinians after the summit points to another factor, which is how the two sides were perceived during the negotiations. As seen from Washington, *Camp David II* exemplified Barak's political courage and Arafat's political passivity, risk-taking on the one hand, risk-aversion on the other. The first thing on the President's mind after *Camp David II* was thus to help the Prime Minister, whose concessions had jeopardized his political standing at home. Hence the finger-pointing. And the last thing on Clinton's mind was to insist on a further Israeli withdrawal. Hence the absence of a safety net. This brings us to the heart of the matter—the substance of the negotiations themselves, and the reality behind the prevailing perception that a generous Israeli offer met an unyielding Palestinian response.

4.

36. Was there a generous Israeli offer and, if so, was it peremptorily rejected by Arafat?

37. If there is one issue that Israelis agree on, it is that Barak broke every conceivable taboo and went as far as any Israeli prime minister had gone or could go. Coming into office on a pledge to retain Jerusalem as Israel's "eternal and undivided capital," he ended up appearing to agree to Palestinian sovereignty—first over some, then over all, of the Arab sectors of East Jerusalem. Originally adamant in rejecting the argument that Israel should swap some of the occupied West Bank territory for land within its 1967 borders, he finally came around to that view. After initially speaking of a Palestinian State covering roughly 80 percent of the West Bank, he gradually moved up to the low 90s before acquiescing to the mid-90s range.

38. Even so, it is hard to state with confidence how far Barak was actually prepared to go. His strategy was predicated on the belief that Israel ought not to reveal its final positions—not even to the United States—unless and until the endgame was in sight. Had any member of the US peace team been asked to describe Barak's true positions before or even during *Camp David II*—indeed, were any asked that question today—they would be hard-pressed to answer. Barak's worst fear was that he would put forward Israeli concessions and pay the

price domestically, only to see the Palestinians using the concessions as a new point of departure. And his trust in the Americans went only so far, fearing that they might reveal to the Palestinians what he was determined to conceal.

39. As a consequence, each Israeli position was presented as unmovable, a red line that approached “the bone” of Israeli interests; this served as a means of both forcing the Palestinians to make concessions and preserving Israel’s bargaining positions in the event they did not. On the eve of *Camp David II*, Israeli negotiators described their purported red lines to their American counterparts: the annexation of more than 10 percent of the West Bank, sovereignty over parts of the strip along the Jordan River, and rejection of any territorial swaps. At the opening of *Camp David II*, Barak warned the Americans that he could not accept Palestinian sovereignty over any part of East Jerusalem other than a purely symbolic “foothold.” Earlier, he had claimed that if Arafat asked for 95 percent of the West Bank, there would be no deal. Yet, at the same time, he gave clear hints that Israel was willing to show more flexibility if Arafat was prepared to “contemplate” the endgame. Bottom lines and false bottoms: the tension, and the ambiguity, were always there.

40. Gradual shifts in Barak’s positions also can be explained by the fact that each proposal seemed to be based less on a firm estimate of what Israel had to hold on to and more on a changing appraisal of what it could obtain. Barak apparently took the view that, faced with a sufficiently attractive proposal and an appropriately unattractive alternative, the Palestinians would have no choice but to say yes. In effect, each successive Palestinian “no” led to the next best Israeli assessment of what, in their right minds, the Palestinians couldn’t turn down.

41. The final and largely unnoticed consequence of Barak’s approach is that, strictly speaking, there never was an Israeli offer. Determined to preserve Israel’s position in the event of failure, and resolved not to let the Palestinians take advantage of one-sided compromises, the Israelis always stopped one, if not several, steps short of a proposal. The ideas put forward at Camp David were never stated in writing, but orally conveyed. They generally were presented as US concepts, not Israeli ones; indeed, despite having demanded the opportunity to negotiate face to face with Arafat, Barak refused to hold any substantive meeting with him at Camp David out of fear that the Palestinian leader would seek to put Israeli concessions on the record. Nor were the proposals detailed. If written down, the American ideas at Camp David would have covered no more than a few pages. Barak and the Americans insisted that Arafat accept them as general “bases for negotiations” before launching into more rigorous negotiations.

42. According to those “bases,” Palestine would have sovereignty over 91 percent of the West Bank; Israel would annex 9 percent of the West Bank and, in exchange, Palestine would have sovereignty over parts of pre-1967 Israel

equivalent to 1 percent of the West Bank, but with no indication of where either would be. On the highly sensitive issue of refugees, the proposal spoke only of a “satisfactory solution.” Even on Jerusalem, where the most detail was provided, many blanks remained to be filled in. Arafat was told that Palestine would have sovereignty over the Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City, but only a loosely defined “permanent custodianship” over the Haram al-Sharif, the third holiest site in Islam. The status of the rest of the city would fluctuate between Palestinian sovereignty and functional autonomy. Finally, Barak was careful not to accept anything. His statements about positions he could support were conditional, couched as a willingness to negotiate on the basis of the US proposals so long as Arafat did the same.

5.

43. Much as they tried, the Palestinian leaders have proved utterly unable to make their case. In Israel and the US, they are consistently depicted as uncompromising and incapable of responding to Barak’s supreme effort. Yet, in their own eyes, they were the ones who made the principal concessions.

44. For all the talk about peace and reconciliation, most Palestinians were more resigned to the two-state solution than they were willing to embrace it; they were prepared to accept Israel’s existence, but not its moral legitimacy. The war for the whole of Palestine was over because it had been lost. Oslo, as they saw it, was not about negotiating peace terms but terms of surrender. Bearing this perspective in mind explains the Palestinians’ view that Oslo itself is the historic compromise—an agreement to concede 78 percent of mandatory Palestine to Israel. And it explains why they were so sensitive to the Israelis’ use of language. The notion that Israel was “offering” land, being “generous,” or “making concessions” seemed to them doubly wrong—in a single stroke both affirming Israel’s right and denying the Palestinians.’ For the Palestinians, land was not given but given back.

45. Even during the period following the Oslo agreement, the Palestinians considered that they were the ones who had come up with creative ideas to address Israeli concerns. While denouncing Israeli settlements as illegal, they accepted the principle that Israel would annex some of the West Bank settlements in exchange for an equivalent amount of Israeli land being transferred to the Palestinians. While insisting on the Palestinian refugees’ right to return to homes lost in 1948, they were prepared to tie this right to a mechanism of implementation providing alternative choices for the refugees while limiting the numbers returning to Israel proper. Despite their insistence on Israel’s withdrawal from all lands occupied in 1967, they were open to a division of East Jerusalem granting Israel sovereignty over its Jewish areas (the Jewish Quarter,

the Wailing Wall, and the Jewish neighborhoods) in clear contravention of this principle.

46. These compromises notwithstanding, the Palestinians never managed to rid themselves of their intransigent image. Indeed, the Palestinians' principal failing is that from the beginning of the *Camp David II* summit onward they were unable either to say yes to the American ideas or to present a cogent and specific counterproposal of their own. In failing to do either, the Palestinians denied the US the leverage it felt it needed to test Barak's stated willingness to go the extra mile and thereby provoked the President's anger. When Abu Ala'a, a leading Palestinian negotiator, refused to work on a map to negotiate a possible solution, arguing that Israel first had to concede that any territorial agreement must be based on the line of June 4, 1967, the President burst out, "Don't simply say to the Israelis that their map is no good. Give me something better!" When Abu Ala'a again balked, the President stormed out: "This is a fraud. It is not a summit. I won't have the United States covering for negotiations in bad faith. Let's quit!" Toward the end of the summit, an irate Clinton would tell Arafat: "If the Israelis can make compromises and you can't, I should go home. You have been here fourteen days and said no to everything. These things have consequences; failure will mean the end of the peace process.... Let's let hell break loose and live with the consequences."

47. How is one to explain the Palestinians' behavior? As has been mentioned earlier, Arafat was persuaded that the Israelis were setting a trap. His primary objective thus became to cut his losses rather than maximize his gains. That did not mean that he ruled out reaching a final deal; but that goal seemed far less attainable than others. Beyond that, much has to do with the political climate that prevailed within Palestinian society. Unlike the situation during and after Oslo, there was no coalition of powerful Palestinian constituencies committed to the success of *Camp David II*. Groups whose support was necessary to sell any agreement had become disbelievers, convinced that Israel would neither sign a fair agreement nor implement what it signed. Palestinian negotiators, with one eye on the summit and another back home, went to Camp David almost apologetically, determined to demonstrate that this time they would not be duped. More prone to caution than to creativity, they viewed any US or Israeli idea with suspicion. They could not accept the ambiguous formulations that had served to bridge differences between the parties in the past and that later, in their view, had been interpreted to Israel's advantage; this time around, only clear and unequivocal understandings would do.

48. Domestic hostility toward the summit also exacerbated tensions among the dozen or so Palestinian negotiators, which, never far from the surface, had grown as the stakes rose, with the possibility of a final deal and the coming

struggle for succession. The negotiators looked over their shoulders, fearful of adopting positions that would undermine them back home. Appearing to act disparately and without a central purpose, each Palestinian negotiator gave pre-eminence to a particular issue, making virtually impossible the kinds of trade-offs that, inevitably, a compromise would entail. Ultimately, most chose to go through the motions rather than go for a deal. Ironically, Barak the democrat had far more individual leeway than Arafat the supposed autocrat. Lacking internal cohesion, Palestinian negotiators were unable to treat *Camp David II* as a decisive, let alone a historic, gathering.

49. The Palestinians saw acceptance of the US ideas, even as “bases for further negotiations,” as presenting dangers of its own. The *Camp David II* proposals were viewed as inadequate: they were silent on the question of refugees, the land exchange was unbalanced, and both the Haram and much of Arab East Jerusalem were to remain under Israeli sovereignty. To accept these proposals in the hope that Barak would then move further risked diluting the Palestinian position in a fundamental way: by shifting the terms of debate from the international legitimacy of United Nations resolutions on Israeli withdrawal and on refugee return to the imprecise ideas suggested by the US. Without the guarantee of a deal, this was tantamount to gambling with what the Palestinians considered their most valuable currency, international legality. The Palestinians’ reluctance to do anything that might undercut the role of UN resolutions that applied to them was reinforced by Israel’s decision to scrupulously implement those that applied to Lebanon and unilaterally withdraw from that country in the months preceding *Camp David II*. Full withdrawal, which had been obtained by Egypt and basically offered to Syria, was now being granted to Lebanon. If Hezbollah, an armed militia that still considered itself at war with Israel, had achieved such an outcome, surely a national movement that had been negotiating peacefully with Israel for years should expect no less.

50. The Palestinians’ overall behavior, when coupled with Barak’s conviction that Arafat merely wanted to extract Israeli concessions, led to disastrous results. The mutual and by then deeply entrenched suspicion meant that Barak would conceal his final proposals, the “endgame,” until Arafat had moved, and that Arafat would not move until he could see the endgame. Barak’s strategy was predicated on the idea that his firmness would lead to some Palestinian flexibility, which in turn would justify Israel’s making further concessions. Instead, Barak’s piecemeal negotiation style, combined with Arafat’s unwillingness to budge, produced a paradoxical result. By presenting early positions as bottom lines, the Israelis provoked the Palestinians’ mistrust; by subsequently shifting them, they whetted the Palestinians’ appetite. By the end of the process, it was hard to tell which bottom lines were for real, and which were not.

6.

51. The United States had several different roles in the negotiations, complex and often contradictory: as principal broker of the putative peace deal; as guardian of the peace process; as Israel's strategic ally; and as its cultural and political partner. The ideas it put forward throughout the process bore the imprint of each.

52. As the broker of the agreement, the President was expected to present a final deal that Arafat could not refuse. Indeed, that notion was the premise of Barak's attraction to a summit. But the United States' ability to play the part was hamstrung by two of its other roles. First, America's political and cultural affinity with Israel translated into an acute sensitivity to Israeli domestic concerns and an exaggerated appreciation of Israel's substantive moves. American officials initially were taken aback when Barak indicated he could accept a division of the Old City or Palestinian sovereignty over many of Jerusalem's Arab neighborhoods—a reaction that reflected less an assessment of what a “fair solution” ought to be than a sense of what the Israeli public could stomach. The US team often pondered whether Barak could sell a given proposal to his people, including some he himself had made. The question rarely, if ever, was asked about Arafat.

53. A second constraint on the US derived from its strategic relationship with Israel. One consequence of this was the “no-surprise rule,” an American commitment, if not to clear, at least to share in advance, each of its ideas with Israel. Because Barak's strategy precluded early exposure of his bottom lines to anyone (the President included), he would invoke the “no-surprise rule” to argue against US substantive proposals he felt went too far. The US ended up (often unwittingly) presenting Israeli negotiating positions and couching them as rock-bottom red lines beyond which Israel could not go. Faced with Arafat's rejection, Clinton would obtain Barak's acquiescence in a somewhat improved proposal, and present it to the Palestinians as, once again, the best any Israeli could be expected to do. With the US playing an endgame strategy (“this is it!”) in what was in fact the middle of the game (“well, perhaps not”), the result was to depreciate the assets Barak most counted on for the *real* finale: the Palestinians' confidence in Clinton, US credibility, and America's ability to exercise effective pressure. Nor was the US tendency to justify its ideas by referring to Israeli domestic concerns the most effective way to persuade the Palestinians to make concessions. In short, the “no-surprise rule” held a few surprises of its own. In a curious, boomerang-like effect, it helped convince the Palestinians that any US idea, no matter how forthcoming, was an Israeli one, and therefore both immediately suspect and eminently negotiable.

54. Seven years of fostering the peace process, often against difficult odds, further eroded the United States' effectiveness at this critical stage. The deeper Washington's investment in the process, the greater the stake in its success, and the quicker the tendency to indulge either side's whims and destructive behavior for the sake of salvaging it. US threats and deadlines too often were ignored as Israelis and Palestinians appeared confident that the Americans were too busy running after the parties to think seriously of walking away.

55. Yet for all that, the United States had an important role in shaping the content of the proposals. One of the more debilitating effects of the visible alignment between Israel and the United States was that it obscured the real differences between them. Time and again, and usually without the Palestinians being aware of it, the President sought to convince the Prime Minister to accept what until then he had refused—among them the principle of land swaps, Palestinian sovereignty over at least part of Arab East Jerusalem and, after *Camp David II*, over the Haram al-Sharif, as well as a significantly reduced area of Israeli annexation. This led Barak to comment to the President that, on matters of substance, the US was much closer to the Palestinians' position than to Israel's. This was only one reflection of a far wider pattern of divergence between Israeli and American positions—yet one that has systematically been ignored by Palestinians and other Arabs alike.

56. This inability to grasp the complex relationship between Washington and Tel Aviv cost Arafat dearly. By failing to put forward clear proposals, the Palestinians deprived the Americans of the instrument they felt they needed to further press the Israelis, and it led them to question both the seriousness of the Palestinians and their genuine desire for a deal. As the President repeatedly told Arafat during *Camp David II*, he was not expecting him to agree to US or Israeli proposals, but he was counting on him to say something he could take back to Barak to get him to move some more. "I need something to tell him," he implored. "So far, I have nothing."

57. Ultimately, the path of negotiation imagined by the Americans—get a position that was close to Israel's genuine bottom line; present it to the Palestinians; get a counterproposal from them; bring it back to the Israelis—took more than one wrong turn. It started without a real bottom line, continued without a counterproposal, and ended without a deal.

7.

58. Beneath the superficial snapshot—Barak's offer, Arafat's rejection—lies a picture that is both complex and confusing. Designed to preserve his assets for the "moment of truth," Barak's tactics helped to ensure that the parties never got there. His decision to view everything through the prism of an all-or-nothing negotiation over a comprehensive deal led him to see every step as a test of

wills, any confidence-building measure as a weakness-displaying one. Obsessed with Barak's tactics, Arafat spent far less time worrying about the substance of a deal than he did fretting about a possible ploy. Fixated on potential traps, he could not see potential opportunities. He never quite realized how far the prime minister was prepared to go, how much the US was prepared to push, how strong a hand he had been dealt. Having spent a decade building a relationship with Washington, he proved incapable of using it when he needed it most. As for the United States, it never fully took control of the situation. Pulled in various and inconsistent directions, it never quite figured out which way to go, too often allowing itself to be used rather than using its authority.

59. Many of those inclined to blame Arafat alone for the collapse of the negotiations point to his inability to accept the ideas for a settlement put forward by Clinton on December 23, five months after the *Camp David II* talks ended. During these months additional talks had taken place between Israelis and Palestinians, and furious violence had broken out between the two sides. The President's proposal showed that the distance traveled since *Camp David II* was indeed considerable, and almost all in the Palestinians' direction. Under the settlement outlined by the President, Palestine would have sovereignty over 94 to 96 percent of the West Bank and it would as well have land belonging to pre-1967 Israel equivalent to another 1 to 3 percent of West Bank territory. Palestinian refugees would have the right to return to their homeland in historic Palestine, a right that would guarantee their unrestricted ability to live in Palestine while subjecting their absorption into Israel to Israel's sovereign decision. In Jerusalem, all that is Arab would be Palestinian, all that is Jewish would be Israeli. Palestine would exercise sovereignty over the Haram and Israel over the Western Wall, through which it would preserve a connection to the location of the ancient Jewish Temple.

60. Unlike at Camp David, and as shown both by the time it took him to react and by the ambiguity of his reactions, Arafat thought hard before providing his response. But in the end, many of the features that troubled him in July came back to haunt him in December. As at Camp David, Clinton was not presenting the terms of a final deal, but rather "parameters" within which accelerated, final negotiations were to take place. As at Camp David, Arafat felt under pressure, with both Clinton and Barak announcing that the ideas would be off the table—would "depart with the President"—unless they were accepted by both sides. With only thirty days left in Clinton's presidency and hardly more in Barak's premiership, the likelihood of reaching a deal was remote at best; if no deal could be made, the Palestinians feared they would be left with principles that were detailed enough to supersede international resolutions yet too fuzzy to constitute an agreement.

61. Besides, and given the history of the negotiations, they were unable to escape the conclusion that these were warmed-over Israeli positions and that a better proposal may still have been forthcoming. In this instance, in fact, the United States had resisted last-minute Israeli attempts to water down the proposals on two key items—Palestinian sovereignty over the Haram and the extent of the territory of the Palestinian State. All told, Arafat preferred to continue negotiating under the comforting umbrella of international resolutions rather than within the confines of America's uncertain proposals. In January, a final effort between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in the Egyptian town of Taba (without the Americans) produced more progress and some hope. But it was, by then, at least to some of the negotiators, too late. On January 20, Clinton had packed his bags and was on his way out. In Israel, meanwhile, Sharon was on his way in.

62. Had there been, in hindsight, a generous Israeli offer? Ask a member of the American team, and an honest answer might be that there was a moving target of ideas, fluctuating impressions of the deal the US could sell to the two sides, a work in progress that reacted (and therefore was vulnerable) to the pressures and persuasion of both. Ask Barak, and he might volunteer that there was no Israeli offer and, besides, Arafat rejected it. Ask Arafat, and the response you might hear is that there was no offer; besides, it was unacceptable; that said, it had better remain on the table.

63. Offer or no offer, the negotiations that took place between July 2000 and February 2001 make up an indelible chapter in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This may be hard to discern today, amid the continuing violence and accumulated mistrust. But taboos were shattered, the unspoken got spoken, and, during that period, Israelis and Palestinians reached an unprecedented level of understanding of what it will take to end their struggle. When the two sides resume their path toward a permanent agreement—and eventually, they will—they will come to it with the memory of those remarkable eight months, the experience of how far they had come and how far they had yet to go, and with the sobering wisdom of an opportunity that was missed by all, less by design than by mistake, more through miscalculation than through mischief.

—July 12, 2001

Camp David: An Exchange

(Paragraphs 64–75)

Dennis Ross

The New York Review of Books, September 20 2001

(In response to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors”)

To the Editors:

64. I read the article by Rob Malley and Hussein Agha [“The Truth About Camp David,” NYR, August 9] with interest and, unfortunately, some dismay. I know and respect both men. Rob served on the peace team that I headed during the Clinton administration. And Hussein, a longtime adviser to the Palestinians, is someone who has consistently sought to promote peace and reconciliation.

65. But their account of “the tragedy of errors” of Camp David—though correct in many aspects—is glaring in its omission of Chairman Arafat’s mistakes. One is left with the impression that only Barak did not fulfill commitments. But that is both wrong and unfair, particularly given Arafat’s poor record on compliance. Moreover, while striving to prove that the reality was far more complicated than Israel offering and Palestinians rejecting, they equate tactical mistakes with strategic errors. Did Prime Minister Barak make mistakes in his tactics, his negotiating priorities, and his treatment of Arafat? Absolutely. Did the American side make mistakes in its packaging and presentation of ideas? Absolutely. Are Prime Minister Barak and President Clinton responsible for the failure to conclude a deal? Absolutely not.

66. Both Barak and Clinton were prepared to do what was necessary to reach agreement. Both were up to the challenge. Neither shied away from the risks inherent in confronting history and mythology. Can one say the same about Arafat? Unfortunately, not—and his behavior at Camp David and afterward cannot be explained only by his suspicions that a trap was being set for him. Indeed, his mistakes cannot be reduced to his being “so fixated on potential traps, he could not see potential opportunities.”

67. Throughout the course of the Oslo process, Chairman Arafat was extremely passive. His style was to respond, not initiate ideas. That is a good tactic, especially for a weaker party that feels it has little to give. If it was only a tactic, it should have stopped when serious ideas or package proposals were put on the table. Whether the Israelis put a generous offer on the table is not the issue. The issue is, did Yasser Arafat respond at any point—not only at Camp David—to possibilities to end this conflict when they presented themselves?

68. Any objective appraisal would have to conclude he did not. Consider that in June when Barak was pushing very hard to convene a summit, and we

were resisting on the grounds that we needed more preparation, more of a basis, Arafat resisted all our efforts to develop that basis. As Rob and Hussein rightly say, Arafat sought more time for preparation before going to the summit. But they neglect to say that he was neither revealing anything himself nor authorizing his negotiators to do anything to make additional preparation possible. On the contrary, at this very time, his negotiators hardened their positions, not being willing even to discuss security arrangements until the Israelis conceded the eastern border.

69. Consider Arafat's performance at Camp David. It is not just that he had, in the words of President Clinton, "been here fourteen days and said no to everything." It is that all he did at Camp David was to repeat old mythologies and invent new ones, like, for example, that the Temple was not in Jerusalem but in Nablus. Denying the core of the other side's faith is not the act of someone preparing himself to end a conflict. (What's more, in the completely closed environment of Camp David, he did nothing to control the fratricidal competition in his delegation—effectively giving license to those who were attacking other members who were trying to find ways to bridge the differences.)

70. Consider that near the end of September, when we had just concluded three days of quiet talks with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators and Arafat knew we were on the verge of presenting ideas that would have been close to those the President presented in December, he allowed the violence to erupt and did nothing to prevent it or contain it. This, despite a phone call from Secretary Albright asking him to act and reminding him of what we were about to do.

71. The President's ideas went well beyond those raised at Camp David. When Arafat proved unable to accept these ideas, he convinced the Israeli public that he could not accept any ideas for solving the conflict. Would it have made a difference if the President's ideas had been presented on October 1, rather than December 23? Rob and Hussein would probably say yes. I am less sure, but we will never know because the Chairman, knowing the violence was about to erupt, did nothing to stop it.

72. I am not one who believes that Chairman Arafat is against peace in principle. Nor am I one who believes that Palestinian negotiators made no concessions. But at no point during Camp David or in the six months after it did the Chairman ever demonstrate any capability to conclude a permanent status deal. Because it requires personal redefinition and giving up myths, I simply do not believe he is capable of doing a permanent status deal. But the choices before us cannot be either a permanent deal or nothing. There is a need to stabilize the current situation and to create a political process to provide direction and hope. There is a need to reestablish the core premise of peacemaking: security for Israelis, the end of Israeli control of Palestinian lives for the Palestinians. And

there is a need for real accountability on both sides so that commitments made are commitments fulfilled.

73. But there is little prospect of ever ending this conflict if we do not face up to the lessons of the past. I am now writing a book that looks at the last decade of peacemaking with the aim of telling the story of what happened and what we need to learn from it. Rob and Hussein have told a part of the story of Camp David. However, in their desire to show that there was a reason for Palestinian behavior—and for Arafat's suspicions—they may perpetuate a mindset that has plagued the Palestinians throughout their history.

74. It is not, as Abba Eban said, that the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. It is that in always feeling victimized they fall back on blaming everyone else for their predicament. It is never their fault. History may not have been kind or fair to the Palestinians. They have suffered and been betrayed by others. They are, surely, the weakest player with the fewest cards to play. But by always blaming others, they never have to focus on their own mistakes. And that perpetuates the avoidance of responsibility, not its assumption.

75. Like Rob and Hussein, I believe that Camp David and the Clinton ideas, by breaking the taboos and responding to the essential needs of each side, will eventually provide the basis for solution. But, given the damage done by nine months of violence, it will take a long time to create the conditions in which solutions can again be discussed. And that day will not emerge as long as the Palestinians avoid facing painful truths, and leveling with their own public about what is possible and what is not. They, too, must assume responsibility and be accountable. They, too, must face up to their mistakes and learn from them.

Ambassador Dennis Ross
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Reply to Dennis Ross

(Paragraphs 76–87)

Hussein Agha and Robert Malley
The New York Review of Books, September 20 2001

76. Dennis Ross offers one of the more thoughtful and articulate presentations of the view that has been widely accepted since the failure of Camp David. His central argument is that, while all sides made mistakes, Yasser Arafat's were of a different nature and demonstrate that he is inherently incapable of "doing a permanent status deal." In other words, having conceded missteps on the Israeli

and American sides, Dennis then proceeds to deny that they might have had any significant impact on the ultimate outcome of the effort to reach a final agreement. Were Arafat capable of reaching a deal, we would have had one; the fact that we do not proves that he is not.

77. But Dennis, who spent countless tireless hours seeking to bridge gaps between Arabs and Israelis, knows—better than most—that any negotiation is a fragile enterprise, in which one must be attuned to questions of timing, personal psychology, popular moods, domestic constraints, distrust, and politics pure and simple. This is all the more true in the case of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which is so laden with cultural, historical, and religious components, where deep insecurities on both sides magnify the importance of the negotiating process, and whose core issues the leaders had to resolve in a fortnight after having studiously ignored them for years.

78. Our article does not assign blame or catalog each side’s respective mistakes. Rather, it shows how the historical context and conduct of the negotiations shaped the parties’ attitudes and effectively undermined the possibility of a deal. Dennis wishes to treat Arafat’s behavior at Camp David in a vacuum—divorced from what had occurred during the seven years since Oslo and the twelve months since Barak had become prime minister; and divorced, too, from political dynamics on the Palestinian side. But it is no more possible to do this than it is to divorce Barak’s behavior from Israel’s parallel experience or from its own political realities.

79. Years of accumulated mistrust and loss of faith in the peace process, political circumstances in Israel and among the Palestinians, the history of prior agreements, perceptions of the United States’ role, the relationship (or lack thereof) between Barak and Arafat, the mechanics of the negotiations—all these contributed to a situation in which each side’s actions were interpreted by the other in the most damaging way. For instance, Barak’s decisions not to implement some of the interim commitments made at Oslo and afterward, and not to turn over three Jerusalem-area neighborhoods to the Palestinians, were consistent with his desire to seek a comprehensive deal and therefore entirely logical from his point of view; but those decisions were seen by the Palestinians merely as further examples of Israel’s ignoring its obligations and seeking to maximize the pressure it was bringing to bear on them.

80. To say that these steps undermined the prospects for a deal is not to engage in a post hoc attempt to absolve Arafat. Indeed, as Dennis well knows, the US administration’s concern at the time about their potential negative impact was such (given the frailty of the process and the already highly suspicious mood on the Palestinian side) that US negotiators repeatedly sought to persuade Barak to modify his approach. Nothing in what Dennis writes demon-

strates that Arafat's alleged inability to reach a deal, rather than the overall context and the clash of opposing mindsets, was responsible for the failure to achieve an agreement.

81. Dennis fears that our article will reinforce the Palestinians' belief that it is "never their fault." But it surely is symptomatic of the skewed nature of today's debate that our article, which describes how the Palestinians' actions—and inaction—contributed to the breakdown in the negotiations, can be characterized as absolving the Palestinians of blame. There also is considerable irony in worrying that the Palestinians will avoid responsibility when, to date, they are the only ones to have been held accountable for the failure to reach a deal. In reality, the predominant view that Arafat alone is to blame has spared both Israel and the United States from the necessity of self-critical analysis.

82. Of course, the Palestinians made serious mistakes. As Gidi Grinstein observes in his letter, we mention quite a few of them; and Dennis adds others. (In particular, Dennis points to their claim that the Jewish Temple was not in Jerusalem—an offensive position that cannot be excused.) But the question is not whether Arafat made mistakes, or whether these were justified. The question is whether his behavior can be explained by factors other than his presumed inability to put an end to the conflict. A close scrutiny of events, we believe, shows that it can.

83. One of the more unsettling consequences of the notion that the failure of the negotiations was caused by Arafat's incapacity to reach a deal is that it obscures the significant substantive progress that was made. Dennis notes that Barak was prepared to "do what was necessary" to reach an agreement and we, too, noted that he broke many taboos. But Dennis refers only in passing to the Palestinians' "concessions," attributing them to "negotiators" as if they had nothing to do with Arafat.

84. The fact is that Camp David and the talks that followed demonstrated that, at their core, Israeli and Palestinian interests are compatible. For Israel those interests include its continued existence as a Jewish state; genuine security; Jewish Jerusalem as its recognized capital; respect and acknowledgment of its connection to holy Jewish sites. For the Palestinians they include a viable, contiguous Palestinian State on the West Bank and Gaza with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital and sovereignty over its Muslim and Christian holy sites; meaningful sovereignty; and a just settlement of the refugee issue. In short, both sides share a fundamental interest in realizing their national right of self-determination within internationally recognized borders on the basis of the two-state solution.

85. This may not suggest that a deal was readily at hand. But can we, on this record, maintain that it was out of reach? And that, on the basis of a hurried,

unsuccessful six-month effort, we are better off giving up on the current Palestinian leadership and placing our hopes on a gamble that as yet unknown but presumably more flexible leaders will somehow emerge?

86. To solve a one-hundred-year conflict in a matter of months is a daunting task even under the best of circumstances—without the miscalculations, missteps, and mismatched timetables that occurred before and during Camp David. In this sense, paradoxically, this tragedy of errors contains a message of hope. For it points to the possibility that things can turn out differently if they are done differently.

87. The priority today, of course, must be to put a stop to the tragic cycle of violence that is exacting a heavy price from Israelis and Palestinians alike. But eventually all sides must honestly confront the lessons of what went wrong. That certainly must be the case if we are to achieve the goal to which Dennis has devoted so much of his life—a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians that meets the fundamental aspirations of both peoples.

Camp David and After: An Exchange: 1. An Interview with Ehud Barak

(Paragraphs 88–148)

Benny Morris

The New York Review of Books, June 13 2002

In response to Agha and Malley's "Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors"

The following interview with Ehud Barak took place in Tel Aviv during late March and early April. I have supplied explanatory references in brackets with Mr. Barak's approval.

88. The call from Bill Clinton came hours after the publication in *The New York Times* of Deborah Sontag's "revisionist" article ("Quest for Middle East Peace: How and Why It Failed," July 26, 2001) on the Israeli–Palestinian peace process. Ehud Barak, Israel's former prime minister, on vacation, was swimming in a cove in Sardinia. Clinton said (according to Barak):

89. What the hell is this? Why is she turning the mistakes we [i.e., the US and Israel] made into the essence? The true story of Camp David was that for the first time in the history of the conflict the American president put on the table a proposal, based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, very close to the Palestinian demands, and Arafat refused even to accept it as a basis for negotiations, walked out of the room, and deliberately turned to terrorism. That's the real story—all the rest is gossip.

90. Clinton was speaking of the two-week-long July 2000 Camp David conference that he had organized and mediated and its failure, and the eruption

at the end of September of the Palestinian Intifada, or campaign of anti-Israeli violence, which has continued ever since and which currently plagues the Middle East, with no end in sight. Midway in the conference, apparently on July 18, Clinton had “slowly”—to avoid misunderstanding—read out to Arafat a document, endorsed in advance by Barak, outlining the main points of a future settlement. The proposals included the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian State on some 92 percent of the West Bank and 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, with some territorial compensation for the Palestinians from pre-1967 Israeli territory; the dismantling of most of the settlements and the concentration of the bulk of the settlers inside the 8 percent of the West Bank to be annexed by Israel; the establishment of the Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem, in which some Arab neighborhoods would become sovereign Palestinian territory and others would enjoy “functional autonomy;” Palestinian sovereignty over half the Old City of Jerusalem (the Muslim and Christian quarters) and “custodianship,” though not sovereignty, over the Temple Mount; a return of refugees to the prospective Palestinian State though with no “right of return” to Israel proper; and the organization by the international community of a massive aid program to facilitate the refugees’ rehabilitation.

91. Arafat said “No.” Clinton, enraged, banged on the table and said: “You are leading your people and the region to a catastrophe.” A formal Palestinian rejection of the proposals reached the Americans the next day. The summit sputtered on for a few days more but to all intents and purposes it was over.

92. Barak today portrays Arafat’s behavior at Camp David as a “performance” geared to exacting from the Israelis as many concessions as possible without ever seriously intending to reach a peace settlement or sign an “end to the conflict.” “He did not negotiate in good faith, indeed, he did not negotiate at all. He just kept saying ‘no’ to every offer, never making any counterproposals of his own,” he says. Barak continuously shifts between charging Arafat with “lacking the character or will” to make a historic compromise (as did the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1977–1979, when he made peace with Israel) and accusing him of secretly planning Israel’s demise while he strings along a succession of Israeli and Western leaders and, on the way, hoodwinks “naive journalists”—in Barak’s phrase—like Sontag and officials such as former US National Security Council expert Robert Malley (who, with Hussein Agha, published another “revisionist” article on Camp David, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors”[*]). According to Barak:

93. What they [Arafat and his colleagues] want is a Palestinian State in all of Palestine. What we see as self-evident, [the need for] two states for two peoples, they reject. Israel is too strong at the moment to defeat, so they formally recognize it. But their game plan is to establish a Palestinian State

while always leaving an opening for further “legitimate” demands down the road. For now, they are willing to agree to a temporary truce à la *Hudnat Hudaybiyah* [a temporary truce that the Prophet Muhammad concluded with the leaders of Mecca during 628–629, which he subsequently unilaterally violated]. They will exploit the tolerance and democracy of Israel first to turn it into “a state for all its citizens,” as demanded by the extreme nationalist wing of Israel’s Arabs and extremist left-wing Jewish Israelis. Then they will push for a binational state and then, demography and attrition will lead to a state with a Muslim majority and a Jewish minority. This would not necessarily involve kicking out all the Jews. But it would mean the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state. This, I believe, is their vision. They may not talk about it often, openly, but this is their vision. Arafat sees himself as a re-born Saladin—the Kurdish Muslim general who defeated the Crusaders in the twelfth century—and Israel as just another, ephemeral Crusader state.

94. Barak believes that Arafat sees the Palestinian refugees of 1948 and their descendants, numbering close to four million, as the main demographic-political tool for subverting the Jewish state.

Arafat, says Barak, believes that Israel “has no right to exist, and he seeks its demise.” Barak buttresses this by arguing that Arafat “does not recognize the existence of a Jewish people or nation, only a Jewish religion, because it is mentioned in the Koran and because he remembers seeing, as a kid, Jews praying at the Wailing Wall.” This, Barak believes, underlay Arafat’s insistence at Camp David (and since) that the Palestinians have sole sovereignty over the Temple Mount compound (Haram al-Sharif—the noble sanctuary) in the southeastern corner of Jerusalem’s Old City. Arafat denies that any Jewish temple has ever stood there—and this is a microcosm of his denial of the Jews’ historical connection and claim to the Land of Israel/Palestine. Hence, in December 2000, Arafat refused to accept even the vague formulation proposed by Clinton positing Israeli sovereignty over the earth beneath the Temple Mount’s surface area.

95. Barak recalls Clinton telling him that during the Camp David talks he had attended Sunday services and the minister had preached a sermon mentioning Solomon, the king who built the First Temple. Later that evening, he had met Arafat and spoke of the sermon. Arafat had said: “There is nothing there [i.e., no trace of a temple on the Temple Mount].” Clinton responded that “not only the Jews but I, too, believe that under the surface there are remains of Solomon’s temple.” (At this point one of Clinton’s [Jewish] aides whispered to the President that he should tell Arafat that this is his personal opinion, not an official American position.)

96. Repeatedly during our prolonged interview, conducted in his office in a Tel Aviv skyscraper, Barak shook his head—in bewilderment and sadness—at what he regards as Palestinian, and especially Arafat’s, mendacity:

97. They are products of a culture in which to tell a lie...creates no dissonance. They don’t suffer from the problem of telling lies that exists in Judeo-Christian culture. Truth is seen as an irrelevant category. There is only that which serves your purpose and that which doesn’t. They see themselves as emissaries of a national movement for whom everything is permissible. There is no such thing as “the truth.”

98. Speaking of Arab society, Barak recalls: “The deputy director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation once told me that there are societies in which lie detector tests don’t work, societies in which lies do not create cognitive dissonance [on which the tests are based].” Barak gives an example: back in October 2000, shortly after the start of the current Intifada, he met with then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Arafat in the residence of the US ambassador in Paris. Albright was trying to broker a cease-fire. Arafat had agreed to call a number of his police commanders in the West Bank and Gaza, including Tawfik Tirawi, to implement a truce. Barak said:

99. I interjected: “But these are not the people organizing the violence. If you are serious [in seeking a cease-fire], then call Marwan Barghouti and Hussein al-Sheikh” [the West Bank heads of the Fatah, Arafat’s own political party, who were orchestrating the violence. Barghouti has since been arrested by Israeli troops and is currently awaiting trial for launching dozens of terrorist attacks].

100. Arafat looked at me, with an expression of blank innocence, as if I had mentioned the names of two polar bears, and said: “Who? Who?” So I repeated the names, this time with a pronounced, clear Arabic inflection—“Mar-wan Bar-gou-ti” and “Hsein a Sheikh”—and Arafat again said, “Who? Who?” At this, some of his aides couldn’t stop themselves and burst out laughing. And Arafat, forced to drop the pretense, agreed to call them later. [Of course, nothing happened and the shooting continued.]

101. But Barak is far from dismissive of Arafat, who appears to many Israelis to be a sick, slightly doddering buffoon and, at the same time, sly and murderous. Barak sees him as “a great actor, very sharp, very elusive, slippery.” He cautions that Arafat “uses his broken English” to excellent effect.

102. Barak was elected prime minister, following three years of Benjamin Netanyahu’s premiership, in May 1999 and took office in July. He immediately embarked on his multipronged peace effort—vis-à-vis Syria, Lebanon, and the Palestinians—feeling that Israel and the Mideast were headed for “an iceberg and a certain crash and that it was the leaders’ moral and political responsibility

to try to avoid a catastrophe.” He understood that the year and a half left of Clinton’s presidency afforded a small window of opportunity inside a larger, but also limited, regional window of opportunity. That window was opened by the collapse of the Soviet Empire, which had since the 1950s supported the Arabs against Israel, and the defeat of Iraq in Kuwait in 1991, and would close when and if Iran and/or Iraq obtained nuclear weapons and when and if Islamic fundamentalist movements took over states bordering Israel.

103. Barak said he wanted to complete what Rabin had begun with the Oslo agreement, which inaugurated mutual Israeli–Palestinian recognition and partial Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank and Gaza Strip back in 1993. A formal peace agreement, he felt, would not necessarily “end the conflict, that will take education over generations, but there is a tremendous value to an [official] framework of peace that places pacific handcuffs on these societies.” Formal peace treaties, backed by the international community, will have “a dynamic of their own, reducing the possibility of an existential conflict. But without such movement toward formal peace, we are headed for the iceberg.” He seems to mean something far worse than the current low-level Israeli–Palestinian conflagration.

104. Barak says that, before July 2000, IDF intelligence gave the Camp David talks less than a 50 percent chance of success. The intelligence chiefs were doubtful that Arafat “would take the decisions necessary to reach a peace agreement.” His own feeling at the time was that he “hoped Arafat would rise to the occasion and display something of greatness, like Sadat and Hussein, at the moment of truth. They did not wait for a consensus [among their people], they decided to lead. I told Clinton on the first day [of the summit] that I didn’t know whether Arafat had come to make a deal or just to extract as many political concessions as possible before he, Clinton, left office.”

105. Barak dismisses the charges leveled by the Camp David “revisionists” as Palestinian propaganda. The visit to the Temple Mount by then Likud leader Ariel Sharon in September 2000 was not what caused the Intifada, he says.

106. Sharon’s visit, which was coordinated with [Palestinian Authority West Bank security chief] Jibril Rajoub, was directed against me, not the Palestinians, to show that the Likud cared more about Jerusalem than I did. We know, from hard intelligence, that Arafat [after Camp David] intended to unleash a violent confrontation, terrorism. [Sharon’s visit and the riots that followed] fell into his hands like an excellent excuse, a pretext.

107. As agreed, Sharon had made no statement and had refrained from entering the Islamic shrines in the compound in the course of the visit. But rioting broke out nonetheless. The Intifada, says Barak, “was preplanned, pre-prepared. I don’t mean that Arafat knew that on a certain day in September [it would be

unleashed].... It wasn't accurate, like computer engineering. But it was definitely on the level of planning, of a grand plan."

108. Nor does Barak believe that the IDF's precipitate withdrawal from the Security Zone in Southern Lebanon, in May 2000, set off the Intifada. "When I took office [in July 1999] I promised to pull out within a year. And that is what I did." Without doubt, the Palestinians drew inspiration and heart from the Hezbollah's successful guerrilla campaign during 1985–2000, which in the end drove out the IDF, as well as from the spectacle of the sometime slapdash, chaotic pullout at the end of May; they said as much during the first months of the Intifada. "But had we not withdrawn when we did, the situation would have been much worse," Barak argues:

109. We would have faced a simultaneous struggle on two fronts, in Palestine and in southern Lebanon, and the Hezbollah would have enjoyed international legitimacy in their struggle against a foreign occupier.

110. The lack of international legitimacy, Barak stresses, following the Israeli pullback to the international frontier, is what has curtailed the Hezbollah's attacks against Israel during the past weeks. "Had we still been in Lebanon we would have had to mobilize 100,000, not 30,000, reserve soldiers [in April, during 'Operation Defensive Wall']," he adds. But he is aware that the sporadic Hezbollah attacks might yet escalate into a full-scale Israeli–Lebanese–Syrian confrontation, something the pullback had been designed—and so touted—to avoid.

111. As to the charge raised by the Palestinians, and, in their wake, by Deborah Sontag, and Agha and Malley, that the Palestinians had been dragooned into coming to Camp David "unprepared" and prematurely, Barak is dismissive to the point of contempt. He observes that the Palestinians had had eight years, since 1993, to prepare their positions and fall-back positions, demands and red lines, and a full year since he had been elected to office and made clear his intention to go for a final settlement. By 2002, he said, they were eager to establish a state,

112. "which is what I and Clinton proposed and offered. And before the summit, there were months of discussions and contacts, in Stockholm, Israel, the Gaza Strip. Would they really have been more "prepared" had the summit been deferred to August, as Arafat later said he had wanted?

113. One senses that Barak feels on less firm ground when he responds to the "revisionist" charge that it was the continued Israeli settlement in the Occupied Territories, during the year before Camp David and under his premiership, that had so stirred Palestinian passions as to make the Intifada inevitable:

114. Look, during my premiership we established no new settlements and, in fact, dismantled many illegal, unauthorized ones. Immediately after I took office I promised Arafat: No new settlements—but I also told him that we would continue to honor the previous government’s commitments, and contracts in the pipeline, concerning the expansion of existing settlements. The courts would force us to honor existing contracts, I said. But I also offered a substantive argument. I want to reach peace during the next sixteen months. What was now being built would either remain within territory that you, the Palestinians, agree should remain ours—and therefore it shouldn’t matter to you—or would be in territory that would soon come under Palestinian sovereignty, and therefore would add to the housing available for returning refugees. So you can’t lose.

115. But Barak concedes that while this sounded logical, there was a psychological dimension here that could not be neutralized by argument: the Palestinians simply saw, on a daily basis, that more and more of “their” land was being plundered and becoming “Israeli.” And he agrees that he allowed the expansion of existing settlements in part to mollify the Israeli right, which he needed quiescent as he pushed forward toward peace and, ultimately, a withdrawal from the territories.

116. Regarding the core of the Israeli-American proposals, the “revisionists” have charged that Israel offered the Palestinians not a continuous state but a collection of “bantustans” or “cantons.” “This is one of the most embarrassing lies to have emerged from Camp David,” says Barak.

117. I ask myself why is he [Arafat] lying. To put it simply, any proposal that offers 92 percent of the West Bank cannot, almost by definition, break up the territory into noncontiguous cantons. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip are separate, but that cannot be helped [in a peace agreement, they would be joined by a bridge].

118. But in the West Bank, Barak says, the Palestinians were promised a continuous piece of sovereign territory except for a razor-thin Israeli wedge running from Jerusalem through from Maale Adumim to the Jordan River. Here, Palestinian territorial continuity would have been assured by a tunnel or bridge:

119. The Palestinians said that I [and Clinton] presented our proposals as a diktat, take it or leave it. This is a lie. Everything proposed was open to continued negotiations. They could have raised counter-proposals. But they never did.

120. Barak explains Arafat’s “lie” about “bantustans” as stemming from his fear that “when reasonable Palestinian citizens would come to know the real

content of Clinton's proposal and map, showing what 92 percent of the West Bank means, they would have said: 'Mr. Chairman, why didn't you take it?'

121. In one other important way the "revisionist" articles are misleading: they focused on Camp David (July 2000) while almost completely ignoring the follow-up (and more generous) Clinton proposals (endorsed by Israel) of December 2000 and the Palestinian–Israeli talks at Taba in January 22–28 2001. The "revisionists," Barak implies, completely ignored the shift—under the prodding of the Intifada—in the Israeli (and American) positions between July and the end of 2000. By December and January, Israel had agreed to Washington's proposal that it withdraw from about 95 percent of the West Bank with substantial territorial compensation for the Palestinians from Israel proper, and that the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem would become sovereign Palestinian territory. The Israelis also agreed to an international force at least temporarily controlling the Jordan River line between the West Bank and the Kingdom of Jordan instead of the IDF. (But on the refugee issue, which Barak sees as "existential," Israel had continued to stand firm: "We cannot allow even one refugee back on the basis of the 'right of return,'" says Barak. "And we cannot accept historical responsibility for the creation of the problem.")

122. Had the Palestinians, even at that late date, agreed, there would have been a peace settlement. But Arafat dragged his feet for a fortnight and then responded to the Clinton proposals with a "Yes, but..." that, with its hundreds of objections, reservations, and qualifications, was tantamount to a resounding "No." Palestinian officials maintain to this day that Arafat said "Yes" to the Clinton proposals of December 23. But Dennis Ross, Clinton's special envoy to the Mideast, in a recent interview (on Fox News, April 21, 2002), who was present at the Arafat–Clinton White House meeting on January 2, says that Arafat rejected "every single one of the ideas" presented by Clinton, even Israeli sovereignty over the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem's Old City. And the "Palestinians would have [had] in the West Bank an area that was contiguous. Those who say there were cantons, [that is] completely untrue." At Taba, the Palestinians seemed to soften a little—for the first time they even produced a map seemingly conceding 2 percent of the West Bank. But on the refugees they, too, stuck to their guns, insisting on Israeli acceptance of "the right of return" and on Jerusalem, that they have sole sovereignty over the Temple Mount.

123. Several "revisionists" also took Barak to task for his "Syria first" strategy: soon after assuming office, he tried to make peace with Syria and only later, after Damascus turned him down, did he turn to the Palestinians. This had severely taxed the Palestinians' goodwill and patience; they felt they were being sidelined. Barak concedes the point, but explains:

124. I always supported Syria first. Because they have a [large] conventional army and nonconventional weaponry, chemical and biological, and missiles to deliver them. This represents, under certain conditions, an existential threat. And after Syria comes Lebanon [meaning that peace with Syria would immediately engender a peace treaty with Lebanon]. Moreover, the Syrian problem, with all its difficulties, is simpler to solve than the Palestinian problem. And reaching peace with Syria would greatly limit the Palestinians' ability to widen the conflict. On the other hand, solving the Palestinian problem will not diminish Syria's ability to existentially threaten Israel.

125. Barak says that this was also Rabin's thinking. But he points out that when he took office, he immediately informed Arafat that he intended to pursue an agreement with Syria and that this would in no way be at the Palestinians' expense. "I arrived on the scene immediately after [Netanyahu's emissary Ronald] Lauder's intensive [secret] talks, which looked very interesting. It was a Syrian initiative that looked very close to a breakthrough. It would have been very irresponsible not to investigate this because of some traditional, ritual order."

126. The Netanyahu-Lauder initiative, which posited an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights to a line a few kilometers east of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee, came to naught because two of Netanyahu's senior ministers, Sharon and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, objected to the proposed concessions. Barak offered then President Hafiz Assad more, in effect a return to the de facto border of "4 June 1967" along the Jordan River and almost to the shoreline at the northeastern end of the Sea of Galilee. Assad, by then feeble and close to death, rejected the terms, conveying his rejection to President Clinton at the famous meeting in Geneva on March 26, 2000. Barak explains,

127. Assad wanted Israel to capitulate in advance to all his demands. Only then would he agree to enter into substantive negotiations. I couldn't agree to this. We must continue to live [in the Middle East] afterward [and, had we made the required concessions, would have been seen as weak, inviting depredation].

128. But Barak believes that Assad's effort, involving a major policy switch, to reach a peace settlement with Israel was genuine and sincere.

129. Barak appears uncomfortable with the "revisionist" charge that his body language toward Arafat had been unfriendly and that he had, almost consistently during Camp David, avoided meeting the Palestinian leader, and that these had contributed to the summit's failure. Barak:

130. I am the Israeli leader who met most with Arafat. He visited Rabin's home only after [the assassinated leader] was buried on Mount Herzl [in Jerusalem]. He [Arafat] visited me in my home in Kochav Yair where my wife

made food for him. [Arafat's aide] Abu Mazen and [my wife] Nava swapped memories about Safad, her mother was from Safad, and both their parents were traders. I also met Arafat in friends' homes, in Gaza, in Ramallah.

131. Barak says that they met "almost every day" in Camp David at meal-times and had one "two-hour meeting" in Arafat's cottage. He admits that the time had been wasted on small talk—but, in the end, he argues, this is all part of the "gossip," not the real reason for the failure. "Did Nixon meet Ho Chi Minh or Giap [before reaching the Vietnam peace deal]? Or did De Gaulle ever speak to [Algerian leader] Ben Bella? The right time for a meeting between us was when things were ready for a decision by the leaders...." Barak implies that the negotiations had never matured or even come close to the point where the final decision-making meeting by the leaders was apt and necessary.

132. Barak believes that since the start of the Intifada Israel has had no choice—"and it doesn't matter who is prime minister" (perhaps a jab at his former rival and colleague in the Labor Party, the dovish-sounding Shimon Peres, currently Israel's foreign minister)—but to combat terrorism with military force. The policy of "targeted killings" of terrorist organizers, bomb-makers, and potential attackers began during his premiership and he still believes it is necessary and effective, "though great care must be taken to limit collateral damage. Say you live in Chevy Chase and you know of someone who is preparing a bomb in Georgetown and intends to launch a suicide bomber against a coffee shop outside your front door. Wouldn't you do something? Wouldn't it be justified to arrest this man and, if you can't, to kill him?" he asks.

133. Barak supported Sharon's massive incursion in April—"Operation Defensive Wall"—into the Palestinian cities—Nablus, Jenin, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Qalqilya, and Tulkarm—but suggests that he would have done it differently:

134. More forcefully and with greater speed, and simultaneously against all the cities, not, as was done, in staggered fashion. And I would argue with the confinement of Arafat to his Ramallah offices. The present situation, with Arafat eyeball to eyeball with [Israeli] tank gun muzzles but with an insurance policy [i.e., Israel's promise to President Bush not to harm him], is every guerrilla leader's wet dream. But, in general, no responsible government, following the wave of suicide bombings culminating in the Passover massacre [in which twenty-eight Israelis were murdered and about 100 injured in a Netanya hotel while sitting at the seder] could have acted otherwise.

135. But he believes that the counter-terrorist military effort must be accompanied by a constant reiteration of readiness to renew peace negotiations on the basis of the Camp David formula. He seems to be hinting here that Sharon,

while also interested in political dialogue, rejects the Camp David proposals as a basis. Indeed, Sharon said in April that his government will not dismantle any settlements, and will not discuss such a dismantling of settlements, before the scheduled November 2003 general elections. Barak fears that in the absence of political dialogue based on the Camp David–Clinton proposals, the vacuum created will be filled by proposals, from Europe or Saudi Arabia, that are less agreeable to Israel.

136. Barak seems to hold out no chance of success for Israeli–Palestinian negotiations, should they somehow resume, so long as Arafat and like-minded leaders are at the helm on the Arab side. He seems to think in terms of generations and hesitantly predicts that only “eighty years” after 1948 will the Palestinians be historically ready for a compromise. By then, most of the generation that experienced the catastrophe of 1948 at first hand will have died; there will be “very few ‘salmons’ around who still want to return to their birthplaces to die.” (Barak speaks of a “salmon syndrome” among the Palestinians—and says that Israel, to a degree, was willing to accommodate it, through the family reunion scheme, allowing elderly refugees to return to be with their families before they die.) He points to the model of the Soviet Union, which collapsed roughly after eighty years, after the generation that had lived through the revolution had died. He seems to be saying that revolutionary movements’ zealotry and dogmatism die down after the passage of three generations and, in the case of the Palestinians, the disappearance of the generation of the *nakba*, or catastrophe, of 1948 will facilitate compromise.

137. I asked, “If this is true, then your peace effort vis-à-vis the Palestinians was historically premature and foredoomed?”

138. Barak: “No, as a responsible leader I had to give it a try.”

In the absence of real negotiations, Barak believes that Israel should begin to unilaterally prepare for a pullout from “some 75 percent” of the West Bank and, he implies, all or almost all of the Gaza Strip, back to defensible borders, while allowing a Palestinian State to emerge there. Meanwhile Israel should begin constructing a solid, impermeable fence around the evacuated parts of the West Bank and new housing and settlements inside Israel proper and in the areas of the West Bank that Israel intends to permanently annex (such as the Etzion Block area, south of Bethlehem) to absorb the settlers who will be moving out of the territories. He says that when the Palestinians will be ready for peace, the fate of the remaining 25 percent of the West Bank can be negotiated.

139. Barak is extremely troubled by the problem posed by Israel’s Arab minority, representing some 20 percent of Israel’s total population of some 6.5 million. Their leadership over the past few years has come to identify with Arafat and the PA, and an increasing number of Israeli Arabs, who now com-

monly refer to themselves as “Palestinian Arabs,” oppose Israel’s existence and support the Palestinian armed struggle. A growing though still very small number have engaged in terrorism, including one of the past months’ suicide bombers. Barak agrees that, in the absence of a peace settlement with the Palestinians, Israel’s Arabs constitute an irredentist “time bomb,” though he declines to use the phrase. At the start of the Intifada Israel’s Arabs rioted around the country, blocking major highways with stones and Molotov cocktails. In response, thirteen were killed by Israeli policemen, deepening the chasm between the country’s Jewish majority and Arab minority.

140. The relations between the two have not recovered and the rhetoric of the Israeli Arab leadership has grown steadily more militant. One Israeli Arab Knesset member, Azmi Bishara, is currently on trial for sedition. If the conflict with the Palestinians continues, says Barak, “Israel’s Arabs will serve as [the Palestinians’] spearpoint” in the struggle:

141. This may necessitate changes in the rules of the democratic game ...in order to assure Israel’s Jewish character.

142. He raises the possibility that in a future deal, some areas with large Arab concentrations, such as the “Little Triangle” and Umm al-Fahm, bordering on the West Bank, could be transferred to the emergent Palestinian Arab state, along with their inhabitants:

143. But this could only be done by agreement—and I don’t recommend that government spokesmen speak of it [openly]. But such an exchange makes demographic sense and is not inconceivable.

144. Barak is employed as a senior adviser to an American company, Electronic Data Systems, and is considering a partnership in a private equity company, where he will be responsible for “security-related” ventures. I asked him, “Do you see yourself returning to politics?” Barak answered,

145. Look, the public [decisively] voted against me a year ago. I feel like a reserve soldier who knows he might be called upon to come back but expects that he won’t be unless it is absolutely necessary. But it’s not inconceivable. After all, Rabin returned to the premiership fifteen years after the end of his first term in office.

146. At one point in the interview, Barak pointed to the settlement campaign in heavily populated Palestinian areas, inaugurated by Menachem Begin’s Likud-led government in 1977, as the point at which Israel took a major historical wrong turn. But at other times Barak pointed to 1967 as the crucial mistake, when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza (and Sinai and the Golan Heights) and, instead of agreeing to immediate withdrawal from all the territories, save East Jerusalem, in exchange for peace, began to settle them. Barak

recalled seeing David Ben-Gurion, Israel's founder and first prime minister (1948–1953 and 1955–1963), on television in June 1967 arguing for the immediate withdrawal from all the territories occupied in the Six-Day War in exchange for peace, save for East Jerusalem.

147. Many of us—me included—thought that he was suffering from [mental] weakness or perhaps a subconscious jealousy of his successor [Levi Eshkol, who had presided over the unprecedented victory and conquests]. Today one understands that he simply saw more clearly and farther than the leadership at that time.

148. How does Barak see the Middle East in a hundred years' time? Would it contain a Jewish state? Unlike Arafat, Barak believes it will, "and it will be strong and prosperous. I really think this. Our connection to the Land of Israel is not like the Crusaders'.... Israel fits into the zeitgeist of our era. It is true that there are demographic threats to its existence. That is why a separation from the Palestinians is a compelling imperative. Without such a separation [into two states] there is no future for the Zionist dream."

[*] *The New York Review*, August 9 2001.

Camp David and After: An Exchange: 2. A Reply to Ehud Barak

(Paragraphs 149–197)

Hussein Agha and Robert Malley.

The New York Review of Books, June 13 2002.

In response to "Camp David and After: An Exchange: 1. An Interview with Ehud Barak."

149. Both sides in the Israeli–Palestinian war have several targets in mind, and public opinion is not the least of them. The Camp David summit ended almost two years ago; the Taba negotiations were abandoned in January 28 2001; Ariel Sharon has made no secret of his rejection of the Oslo process, not to mention the positions taken by Israel at Camp David or in Taba; and the confrontation between the two sides has had disastrous consequences. Yet in the midst of it all, the various interpretations of what happened at Camp David and its aftermath continue to draw exceptional attention both in Israel and in the United States.

150. Ehud Barak's interview with Benny Morris makes it clear why that is the case: Barak's assessment that the talks failed because Yasser Arafat cannot make peace with Israel and that his answer to Israel's unprecedented offer was to resort to terrorist violence has become central to the argument that Israel is in a fight for its survival against those who deny its very right to exist. So much of what is said and done today derives from and is justified by that crude appraisal.

First, Arafat and the rest of the Palestinian leaders must be supplanted before a meaningful peace process can resume, since they are the ones who rejected the offer. Second, the Palestinians' use of violence has nothing to do with ending the occupation since they walked away from the possibility of reaching that goal at the negotiating table not long ago. And, finally, Israel must crush the Palestinians—"badly beat them" in the words of the current prime minister—if an agreement is ever to be reached.

151. The one-sided account that was set in motion in the wake of Camp David has had devastating effects—on Israeli public opinion as well as on US foreign policy. That was clear enough a year ago; it has become far clearer since. Rectifying it does not mean, to quote Barak, engaging in "Palestinian propaganda." Rather, it means taking a close look at what actually occurred.

1.

152. Barak's central thesis is that the current Palestinian leadership wants "a Palestinian State in all of Palestine. What we see as self-evident, two states for two peoples, they reject." Arafat, he concludes, seeks Israel's "demise." Barak has made that claim repeatedly, both here and elsewhere, and indeed it forms the crux of his argument. His claim therefore should be taken up, issue by issue.

153. On the question of the boundaries of the future state, the Palestinian position, formally adopted as early as 1988 and frequently reiterated by Palestinian negotiators throughout the talks, was for a Palestinian State based on the June 4, 1967, borders, living alongside Israel. At Camp David (at which one of the present writers was a member of the US administration's team), Arafat's negotiators accepted the notion of Israeli annexation of West Bank territory to accommodate settlements, though they insisted on a one-for-one swap of land "of equal size and value." The Palestinians argued that the annexed territory should neither affect the contiguity of their own land nor lead to the incorporation of Palestinians into Israel.

154. The ideas put forward by President Clinton at Camp David fell well short of those demands. In order to accommodate Israeli settlements, he proposed a deal by which Israel would annex 9 percent of the West Bank in exchange for turning over to the Palestinians parts of pre-1967 Israel equivalent to 1 percent of the West Bank. This proposal would have entailed the incorporation of tens of thousands of additional Palestinians into Israeli territory near the annexed settlements; and it would have meant that territory annexed by Israel would encroach deep inside the Palestinian State. In his December 23, 2000, proposals—called "parameters" by all parties—Clinton suggested an Israeli annexation of between 4 and 6 percent of the West Bank in exchange for a land swap of between 1 and 3 percent. The following month in Taba, the Palestinians put their own map on the table which showed roughly 3.1 percent of the

West Bank under Israeli sovereignty, with an equivalent land swap in areas abutting the West Bank and Gaza. [*]

155. On Jerusalem, the Palestinians accepted at Camp David the principle of Israeli sovereignty over the Wailing Wall, the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, and Jewish neighborhoods of East Jerusalem—neighborhoods that were not part of Israel before the 1967 Six-Day War—though the Palestinians clung to the view that all of Arab East Jerusalem should be Palestinian.

156. In contrast to the issues of territory and Jerusalem, there is no Palestinian position on how the refugee question should be dealt with as a practical matter. Rather, the Palestinians presented a set of principles. First, they insisted on the need to recognize the refugees' right of return, lest the agreement lose all legitimacy with the vast refugee constituency—roughly half the entire Palestinian population. Second, they acknowledged that Israel's demographic interests had to be recognized and taken into account. Barak draws from this the conclusion that the refugees are the "main demographic-political tool for subverting the Jewish state." The Palestinian leadership's insistence on a right of return demonstrates, in his account, that their conception of a two-state solution is one state for the Palestinians in Palestine and another in Israel. But the facts suggest that the Palestinians are trying (to date, unsuccessfully) to reconcile these two competing imperatives—the demographic imperative and the right of return. Indeed, in one of his last pre-Camp David meetings with Clinton, Arafat asked him to "give [him] a reasonable deal [on the refugee question] and then see how to present it as not betraying the right of return."

157. Some of the Palestinian negotiators proposed annual caps on the number of returnees (though at numbers far higher than their Israeli counterparts could accept); others wanted to create incentives for refugees to settle elsewhere and disincentives for them to return to the 1948 land. But all acknowledged that there could not be an unlimited, "massive" return of Palestinian refugees to Israel. The suggestion made by some that the Camp David summit broke down over the Palestinians' demand for a right of return simply is untrue: the issue was barely discussed between the two sides and President Clinton's ideas mentioned it only in passing. (In an Op-Ed piece in *The New York Times* this February Arafat called for "creative solutions to the right of return while respecting Israel's demographic concerns.")

158. The Palestinians did insist that Israel recognize that it bore responsibility for creating the problem of the refugees. But it is ironic that Barak would choose to convey his categorical rejection of any such Israeli historical responsibility to Benny Morris, an Israeli historian called "revisionist" in large part for his account of the origins of the displacement of the Palestinians and for his

conclusion that, while there were many reasons why the refugees left, Israeli military attacks and expulsions were the major ones.

159. The Palestinians can be criticized for not having presented detailed proposals at Camp David; but, as has been shown, it would be inaccurate to say they had no positions. It also is true that Barak broke a number of Israeli taboos and moved considerably from prior positions while the Palestinians believed they had made their historic concessions at Oslo, when they agreed to cede 78 percent of mandatory Palestine to Israel; they did not intend the negotiations to further whittle down what they already regarded as a compromise position. But neither the constancy of the Palestinians' view nor the unprecedented and evolving nature of the Israelis' ought to have any bearing on the question of whether the Palestinian leadership recognized Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. It is the substance of the Palestinian positions that should count.

160. Those Palestinian positions may well have been beyond what the Israeli people can accept, particularly on the refugee question. But that is no more the question than it is whether the Israeli position was beyond what the Palestinian people can accept. And it is not the question that Barak purports to address in his interview. The question is whether, as Barak claims, the Palestinian position was tantamount to a denial of Israel's right to exist and to seeking its destruction. The facts do not validate that claim. True, the Palestinians rejected the version of the two-state solution that was put to them. But it could also be said that Israel rejected the unprecedented two-state solution put to them by the Palestinians from Camp David onward, including the following provisions: a state of Israel incorporating some land captured in 1967 and including a very large majority of its settlers; the largest Jewish Jerusalem in the city's history; preservation of Israel's demographic balance between Jews and Arabs; security guaranteed by a US-led international presence.

161. Barak's remarks about other Arab leaders are, in this regard, misplaced. Arafat did not reach out to the people of Israel in the way President Sadat did. But unlike Sadat, he agreed to cede parts of the territory that was lost in 1967—both in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. The reference to President Assad—whose peace efforts are characterized as “genuine and sincere”—is particularly odd since Assad turned down precisely what Arafat was requesting: borders based on the lines of June 4, 1967, with one-for-one swaps.

162. Barak claims that “Israel is too strong at the moment to defeat, so [the Palestinians] formally recognize it. But their game plan is to establish a Palestinian State while always leaving an opening for further ‘legitimate’ demands down the road.” But here Barak contradicts himself. For if that were the case, the logical course of action for Arafat would have been to accept Clinton's proposals at Camp David, and even more so on December 23. He would then have

had over 90 percent of the land and much of East Jerusalem, while awaiting, as Barak would have it, the opportunity to violate the agreement and stake out a claim for more. Whatever else one may think of Arafat's behavior throughout the talks, it clearly offers little to substantiate Barak's theory.

2.

163. In his account of why the negotiations failed, Barak focuses only on the Palestinians' deficiencies, and dismisses as trivial sideshows several major political decisions that are crucial to the understanding of that failure. When he took office he chose to renegotiate the agreement on withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank signed by Benjamin Netanyahu rather than implement it. He continued and even intensified construction of settlements. He delayed talks on the Palestinian track while he concentrated on Syria. He did not release Palestinian prisoners detained for acts committed prior to the signing of the Oslo agreement. He failed to carry out his commitments to implement the third territorial redeployment of Israeli troops and the transfer of the three Jerusalem villages.

164. Barak is equally dismissive of the importance of his holding a substantive meeting with Arafat at Camp David—though here one cannot help but be struck by the contradiction between Barak's justification for that decision (namely that "the right time for a meeting between us was when things were ready for a decision by the leaders") and his conviction that a leaders' summit was necessary. If he felt things were not ready for a decision by the leaders meeting together, why insist on convening a leaders' summit in the first place?

165. More broadly, from a Palestinian perspective, the issues concerning the timing of the talks were dealt with in ways that were both damaging and exasperating. The Palestinian leaders had called for negotiations on a comprehensive settlement between the two sides as early as the fall of 1999. They had asked for an initial round of secret talks between Israelis and Palestinians who were not officials in order to better prepare the ground. They had argued against holding the Camp David summit at the time proposed, claiming it was premature and would not lead to an agreement in view of the gaps between the two sides. They later asked for a series of summit meetings following Camp David so as to continue the talks. Each of their requests was denied.

166. In the fall of 1999, Barak was not ready for talks with the Palestinians and chose to focus on Syria. He had no interest in discussions between nonofficials. When, by the summer of 2000, he finally was ready (the negotiations with Syria having failed), he insisted on going to Camp David without delay. And at Camp David he reacted angrily to any suggestion of holding further summit meetings. Barak, today, dismisses those Palestinian requests as mere pretexts and

excuses. But it is not clear why they should be taken any less seriously than the ones he made, and on which he prevailed.

167. All these external political events surrounding the negotiations, in fact, had critical implications for the negotiations themselves. The US administration felt so at the time, seeking on countless occasions before, during, and after the Camp David meetings to convince Barak to change his approach, precisely because the administration feared his tactics would harm the prospects for a deal. As has since become evident, the mood among critical Palestinian constituencies had turned decidedly sour—a result of continued settlement construction, repeated territorial closings that barred Palestinians from working in Israel, and their humiliation and harassment at checkpoints. Confidence in the possibility of a fair negotiated settlement was badly shaken. Israeli actions that strengthened those trends further narrowed the Palestinian leaders' room to maneuver and accentuated the sense of paralysis among them.

168. Barak's failure to recognize this is peculiar coming from a leader who was so sensitive to the role of Israeli public opinion. As so many examples from both the Syrian and Palestinian tracks illustrate, he was convinced that poor management of domestic public opinion could scuttle the chances for a deal. In his approach to the Israeli–Syrian negotiations, he went so far as to counsel Clinton against moving too quickly toward agreement during the Shepherdstown summit between the US, Israel, and Syria in January 2000, arguing that prolonged talks were required to show the Israeli public that he had put up a tough fight. In December, he had invoked the harsh statement of the Syrian foreign minister on the White House lawn as a reason why he could not show flexibility in their subsequent discussions at Blair House, arguing that the Israeli public would feel he had displayed weakness. He repeatedly insisted on (but rarely obtained) Syrian confidence-building measures in advance of the negotiations to help him sell his proposals back home.

169. When dealing with the Palestinians, likewise, Barak evidently felt the pressures of Israeli public opinion. He adamantly refused to discuss the issue of Jerusalem prior to the Camp David summit, claiming that to do so would have “torpedoed” the prospects for success. Settlement activity, to which both the Palestinians and the US objected, nonetheless proceeded at an extraordinary pace—faster than during Netanyahu's tenure, with over 22,000 more settlers. This was done, as Barak concedes in his interview, in order to “mollify the Israeli right which he needed quiescent as he pushed forward toward peace.”

170. In short, Barak understood all too well how political developments surrounding the negotiations could affect Israeli public opinion and, therefore, his own ability to make agreements. Yet he showed no such comprehension when it came to the possible effects of his policies on Arafat's own flexibility and capac-

ity to make compromises. That Arafat was unable either to obtain a settlement freeze or to get Israel to carry out its prior commitments Barak views as inconsequential. In reality, the cards Barak was saving to increase his room to maneuver during the negotiations were precisely those the Palestinians needed to expand their own room to maneuver. Ultimately, the Palestinian team that went to Camp David was suspected by many Palestinians and other Arabs of selling out—incapable of standing up to Israeli or American pressure.

171. Barak's apparent insensitivity to how his statements might affect the other side is revealed in his interview with Benny Morris. He characterizes Palestinian refugees as "salmons" whose yearning to return to their land somehow is supposed to fade away in roughly eighty years in a manner that the Jewish people's never did, even after two thousand years. When he denounces the idea that Israel be a "state for all its citizens" he does not seem to realize he risks alienating its many Arab citizens. Most troubling of all is his description of Arabs as people who "don't suffer from the problem of telling lies that exists in Judeo-Christian culture. Truth is seen as an irrelevant category." It is hard to know what to make of this disparaging judgment of an entire people. In the history of this particular conflict, neither Palestinians nor Israelis have a monopoly on unkept commitments or promises.

3.

172. By now, some of those who said that the Palestinians' rejection of the American proposals at Camp David was definitive proof of their inability to make peace have shifted their argument. Instead, they concentrate on President Clinton's proposals of December 23, 2000, along with the Israeli-Palestinian talks that took place at Taba, in January 22–28 2001, which Barak takes the so-called "revisionists" to task for ignoring.

173. First, the facts. There is little doubt, as we described in our earlier article for *The New York Review of Books*, that the ideas put forward by President Clinton in December 2000 were a significant step in the direction of the Palestinians' position. It is also beyond dispute that while the Israeli cabinet accepted Clinton's "parameters," Arafat took his time, waiting ten days before offering his response—a costly delay considering the fact that only thirty days remained in Clinton's presidency.

174. When he finally met with Clinton, on January 2, 2001, Arafat explained that he accepted the President's ideas with reservations and that Clinton could tell Barak that "[I] accepted your parameters and have some views I must express. At the same time, we know Israelis have views we must respect." His attitude, basically, was that the parameters contained interesting elements that should guide but not bind the negotiators. It is clearly an overstatement to

claim that Arafat rejected “every one” of the President’s ideas, and it certainly is not the message Clinton delivered to Barak.

175. On a more specific point, Arafat did not reject Israeli sovereignty over the Wailing Wall but over the much larger Western Wall (of which it is a part), which encroaches on the Muslim Quarter of the Old City. A few days later, Barak presented his own reservations about Clinton’s proposals in a private communication.

176. Again, however, it is the conclusion Barak draws from this episode that is questionable. The Palestinians undoubtedly were not satisfied with Clinton’s parameters, which they wanted to renegotiate. They were not responding with the same sense of urgency as the Americans or as Barak, who was facing elections and knew the fate of the peace process could decide them. But unlike what had happened at Camp David, there was no Palestinian rejection. On the contrary, the two sides, which had engaged in secret meetings during the autumn, agreed to continue talks at Taba. Indeed, the intensive talks that subsequently took place there ended not for lack of an agreement but for lack of time in view of the impending Israeli elections. In January Prime Minister Barak campaigned seeking a mandate to continue those talks. He went so far as to authorize his delegation at Taba to issue a joint statement with the Palestinians asserting that

177. the two sides declare that they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged with the resumption of negotiations following the Israeli elections.

178. If we assume that Barak meant what the Taba statement said, that statement simply cannot be reconciled with his current assertion that the Palestinians are out to achieve the destruction of Israel. That statement also contradicts the constantly made claim that Arafat simply rejected a historic chance to negotiate a settlement.

4.

179. The failure at Camp David and the start of the second Palestinian Intifada are directly linked in accounts by Barak and others to argue that Arafat’s response to the unprecedented offers was to scuttle negotiations and seek to achieve his goals through terror.

180. Clearly, the Palestinian Authority did not do what it could to stop the uprising, which some of its leaders felt might well serve its interests. It is equally true that Palestinians initiated many acts of violence. Later on, as the conflict continued and intensified, cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and militant groups became much closer, and Palestinians engaged in repeated attacks with the clear and deeply deplorable intent of killing as many Israeli civilians as possible. But the charges against Arafat make another claim as well. He is

said to have unleashed a wave of terrorist violence in the aftermath of Camp David as part of a grand scheme to pressure Israel; and Israel, it is said, had no choice but to act precisely as it did in response to a war initiated by others against its will. This assessment cannot be squared with the facts stated in the Mitchell report, which describes an uprising that began as a series of confrontations between largely unarmed Palestinians and armed Israeli security forces that resorted to excessive and deadly use of force.

181. Barak entirely rejects the notion that Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif on September 28, 2000, played any part in setting off the subsequent clashes. To support his case, he asserts that the visit was coordinated with Palestinian security officials. But that is hardly the point. The point is that when we consider the context in which the visit was taking place—the intense focus on the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif at Camp David and the general climate among Palestinians—its impact was predictable. As Dennis Ross, Clinton's special Middle East envoy, said: "I can think of a lot of bad ideas, but I can't think of a worse one."

The Mitchell Report says:

182. On the following day, in the same place, a large number of unarmed Palestinian demonstrators and a large Israeli police contingent confronted each other. According to the US Department of State, "Palestinians held large demonstrations and threw stones in the vicinity of the Western Wall. Police used rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition to disperse the demonstrators, killing 4 persons and injuring about 200." According to the Government of Israel, 14 Israeli policemen were injured.

183. From then on, the numbers of Palestinian deaths rose swiftly: twelve on September 30, twelve again on October 1, seventeen on October 2 (including seven Israeli Arabs), four on October 3, and twelve (including one Israeli Arab) on October 4. By the end of the first week, over sixty Palestinians had been killed (including nine Israeli Arabs). During that same time period, five Israelis were killed by Palestinians.

184. According to the Mitchell report, for the first three months of the Intifada, "most incidents did not involve Palestinian use of firearms and explosives." The report quotes the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem as finding that "73 percent of the incidents [from September 29 to December 2, 2000] did not include Palestinian gunfire. Despite this, it was in these incidents that most of the Palestinians [were] killed and wounded." Numerous other organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, and Physicians for Human Rights, criticized the excessive use of force by the Israel Defense Forces, often against unarmed Palestinians.

185. Barak suggests that Arafat had planned as his response to the Camp David summit a campaign of violent terror. That is a curious assertion in view of the fact that the Palestinians had argued that the parties were not ready for a summit and that Camp David should be understood as merely the first of a series of meetings. In contrast, as he knows well, Barak conceived of Camp David as a make-it-or-break-it summit. Defining the summit as a test of Arafat's true intentions, he early made clear that he foresaw only two possible outcomes: a full-scale agreement on the "framework" of a settlement, or a full-scale confrontation.

186. Some things appear beyond dispute. The mood on the Palestinian street had reached the boiling point, as the May 2000 violence had shown and as both American and Israeli official reports had confirmed. Sharon's visit on the Haram was both a pretext and a provocation, a case of the wrong person being at the wrong place at the wrong time. A large number of Palestinians had lost patience with the peace process and felt humiliated by their experience with the settlements and at checkpoints; and many were impressed by the success of Hezbollah in Lebanon, where Israel was believed to have decided to withdraw in the face of armed resistance.

187. At a tactical level, the Palestinians may have seen some advantage to a short-lived confrontation to show the Israelis they could not be taken for granted. The Israeli security forces, for their part, were still affected by the bloody experiences of September 1996 and of May 2000, during which Palestinian policemen confronted Israelis. They were determined to stop any uprising at the outset, using far greater force to subdue the enemy. Hence the Israeli decision to use lethal weapons, and hence the very heavy (and almost entirely Palestinian) toll of death and grave injury in the early days of the Intifada. That, in turn, made it, if not impossible, at least very difficult for the Palestinian leadership to bring things under control; rather, it increased pressure to respond in kind. Some among the Palestinian leaders may have hoped that the uprising would last a few days. The Israelis expected their strong reaction to stop it in its tracks. Instead, in this tragic game, in which both sides were reading from different scripts, the combination of the two may have led to an outcome that neither ever intended.

188. Again, it is worth recalling the Mitchell report:

189. The Sharon visit did not cause the "Al-Aqsa Intifada." But it was poorly timed and the provocative effect should have been foreseen; indeed it was foreseen by those who urged that the visit be prohibited. More significant were the events that followed: the decision of the Israeli police on September 29 to use lethal means against the Palestinian demonstrators; and the subsequent failure...of either party to exercise restraint.

190. The report concluded: “We have no basis on which to conclude that there was a deliberate plan by the PA to initiate a campaign of violence at the first opportunity.”

5.

191. Barak’s broad endorsement of Israel’s current military campaign is cause for perhaps the greatest dismay. Of course Israel must deal with breaches of its security and look after its people’s safety. Israel cannot be expected to sit idly by as Palestinians target civilians and engage in suicide attacks. The question, however, is not whether Israel should respond, but how. One might have hoped for a wise response—one that combined strong security measures with a genuine attempt to end the conflict—and that Ariel Sharon would have imitated his predecessor in continuing the political talks. Short of that, one might have hoped for a response that was driven principally, and understandably, by security concerns. But what has occurred can be deemed neither wise nor understandable. The wanton destruction on the West Bank of basic infrastructure, of civilian ministries, of equipment and documents, including school records, that have no security value—these are acts of revenge having little to do with security and everything to do with humiliating and seeking to break the will of the Palestinian people and undoing its capacity for self-governance.

192. The recent military action is directly related to the question of what can now be done. Barak appears to have given up on the current Palestinian leadership, placing his hopes in the next generation—a generation that has not lived through the catastrophe, or *nakba*, of 1948. But what of the catastrophe of 2002? Is there any reason to believe that today’s children will grow up any less hardened and vengeful after the indiscriminate attacks of the past few months?

193. Barak also appears to have given up on what was his most important intuition—that the time for incremental or partial moves was over, and that the parties had to move toward a comprehensive and final settlement. While in office, he frequently made the point that Israel could not afford to make tangible concessions until it knew where the process was headed. Yet the unilateral withdrawal he now has in mind would have Israel—in the absence of any agreement or reciprocal concession—withdraw from Gaza and some 75 percent of the West Bank. It would concentrate the struggle on the remaining 25 percent and on prevailing on outstanding issues, such as Jerusalem and the refugees. Worst of all, it would embolden those Palestinians who are ready to subscribe to the Hezbollah precedent and would be quick to conclude that Israel, having twice withdrawn under fire, would continue to do so.

6.

194. Ehud Barak came into office vowing to leave no possibility unexplored in the quest for peace and departed from office seeking a renewed mandate to

complete the talks begun at Taba. Since he left, he has in effect branded the Taba discussions as a sham and hinted broadly that his goal throughout was to “unmask” Arafat and prove him an unworthy partner for peace. As one reads his interview with Benny Morris, it is hard to tell which is the true Barak. Certainly, his wholesale indictment of the Palestinian leaders, his unqualified assertion that they seek the end of Israel, his pejorative reflections on Arab culture, and his support of Sharon’s methods are at odds with the goals he once professed.

195. The interpretation of what happened before, during, and after Camp David—and why—is far too important and has shown itself to have far too many implications to allow it to become subject to political caricature or posturing by either side. The story of Barak is of a man with a judicious insight—the need to aim for a comprehensive settlement—that tragically was not realized. The Camp David process was the victim of failings on the Palestinian side; but it was also, and importantly, the victim of failings on Israel’s (and the United States’) part as well. By refusing to recognize this, Barak continues to obscure the debate and elude fundamental questions about where the quest for peace ought to go now.

196. One of those questions is whether there is not, in fact, a deal that would be acceptable to both sides, respectful of their core interests, and achievable through far greater involvement (and pressure) by the international community. Such a deal, we suggest, would include a sovereign, nonmilitarized Palestinian State with borders based on the 1967 lines, with an equal exchange of land to accommodate demographic realities, and with contiguous territory on the West Bank. Jewish neighborhoods of Jerusalem would be the capital of Israel and Arab neighborhoods would be the capital of Palestine. Palestinians would rule over the Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount), Israeli would rule over the Kotel (Wailing Wall), with strict, internationally backed guarantees regarding excavation. A strong international force could provide security and monitor implementation of the agreement. A solution to the problem of the refugees would recognize their desire to return while preserving Israel’s demographic balance—for example by allowing unrestricted return to that part of 1948 land that would then be included in the land swap and fall under Palestinian sovereignty.

197. Barak closes his interview with the thought that Israel will remain a strong, prosperous, and Jewish state in the next century. In order to achieve that goal, there are far better and more useful things that Barak could do than the self-justifying attempt to blame Arafat and his associates for all that has gone awry.

[*]For further details, see our article “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *The New York Review*, August 9, 2001.

Camp David and After—Continued

(Paragraphs 198–210)

Benny Morris and Ehud Barak

Reply to Hussein Agha and Robert Malley's response to "Camp David and After: An Exchange: 2. A Reply to Ehud Barak"

The New York Review of Books, June 27, 2002

198. Robert Malley and Hussein Agha ["Camp David and After: An Exchange," *NYR*, June 13] still don't get it (or pretend they don't). And it's really very simple—Ehud Barak and Bill Clinton put on the table during July–December 2000 a historic compromise and the Palestinians rejected it. They concede that Barak's offer at Camp David was "unprecedented" and that the upgraded (Clinton) proposals offered the Palestinians 94–96 percent of the West Bank, 100 percent of the Gaza Strip, a sovereign Palestinian State, an end to the occupation, the uprooting of most of the settlements, and sovereignty over Arab East Jerusalem—and Arafat and his aides still rejected the deal and pressed on with their terroristic onslaught.

199. Yet Agha and Malley continue, in effect, to blame Israel for the descent into war while producing "a smokescreen," in Barak's phrase, of sophistry and misleading nit-picking, that aims to get their man off the hook. Permeating their response is that shopsoiled Palestinian *Weltanschauung*, that someone else, always, is to blame for their misfortunes—Ottoman Turks, British Mandate officials, Zionists, Americans, anyone but themselves.

200. Agha and Malley, trying to drive home the point of permanent Palestinian innocence and victimhood, speak of "the catastrophe of 2002" in the same breath as "the catastrophe ...of 1948." But how can anyone with a minimal historical perspective compare the 1948 shattering and exile of a whole society, accompanied by thousands of deaths and the wholesale destruction of hundreds of villages, with the two or three hundred deaths, mostly of Palestinian gunmen, and the destruction of several dozen homes in the IDF's April 2002 Operation Defensive Shield, a reprisal for the murder by Palestinian suicide bombers of some one hundred Israeli civilians during the previous weeks?

201. The answer lies in the realm of fantasy or propaganda—and, unfortunately, much of what Agha and Malley write belongs to one of these categories. They speak of Israel's "indiscriminate attacks of the past few months." Indiscriminate? We hazard to say that no military has ever been more discriminating and gone to such lengths to avoid inflicting civilian casualties. And there were precious few bona fide civilian casualties (despite Palestinian efforts to beef up the numbers with borrowed corpses, double and triple tabulations, the inclusion of dead gunmen in "civilian" rosters, etc., and despite the fact that the gunmen, as in Jenin's refugee camp, were operating from among and behind a civilian

“shield”). Human Rights Watch and other groups subsequently concluded that there was no evidence that the IDF had “massacred” anyone in the Jenin camp. Indeed, the only “indiscriminate massacres” that have taken place over the past few months have been of Israeli women, children, and the old by Palestinian suicide bombers, many of them belonging to Arafat’s own Fatah organization, in cafés, malls, and buses. But the European media persists in believing the never-ending torrent of Palestinian mendacity; political correctness as well as varied economic interests and anti-Semitism dictate that no third-world people can do wrong and no first-world people, right.

202. Regarding Camp David and the subsequent negotiations, readers should note that Agha and Malley invariably refer to what “Arafat’s negotiators” said or accepted or proposed—never to Arafat’s own views and actions. And this is no accident. Arafat himself has never affirmed Israel’s right to exist or its legitimacy, and has never waived the Palestinian refugees’ “right of return”—and what his underlings “offer” or “accept” can always be denied or repudiated. This is the Arafat method, and Malley/Agha enter the game with gusto, while pretending to their readers that what “Arafat’s negotiators” said or did carried the old man’s imprimatur. They apparently forget that in their original article [“Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *NYR*, August 9, 2001] they stated: “...The Palestinians’ principal failing is that from the beginning of the Camp David summit onward they were unable either to say yes to the American ideas or to present a cogent and specific counterproposal of their own.” So Clinton had “stormed out” and said: “This is a fraud. I won’t have the United States covering for negotiations in bad faith.” The Palestinians went “through the motions rather than go for a deal,” Agha and Malley then concluded.

203. The new Agha and Malley are busy watering this down. Arafat, they now say, did not reject Clinton’s December 23, 2000, proposals; he merely “took his time” in responding. And both Barak and the Palestinians wanted to “renegotiate” the parameters, they say. This smooth, false symmetry is vintage Malley/Agha. They fail to tell their readers that the Israeli cabinet immediately and formally accepted the parameters as a basis for negotiation and that Arafat, on the other hand, according to both Clinton and Ambassador Dennis Ross, flatly rejected the parameters and slammed the door shut.

204. The question of the “right of return” offers a good example of Palestinian doublespeak. All Palestinian spokesmen, including Arafat (see, for example, his interview in *Al-Ittihad* (United Arab Emirates February 6, 2002) and Abu Alaa (at the press conference at the end of the January 2001 Taba negotiations), affirm the unreserved, uncurtailed “right of return” to Israel proper of the 1948 refugees and their descendants, of whom there are today close to four million on UN rolls. When speaking in Arabic, they assure their constituen-

cies—in Lebanon’s and Jordan’s and Gaza’s refugee camps—that they will return once “Jerusalem is conquered” (code for when Israel is destroyed). But when facing westward, they affirm that the “implementation” of that right will “take account of Israel’s demographic concerns.” Going one better, Malley/Agha state that “there is no Palestinian position on how the refugee question should be dealt with as a practical matter” and that “all” acknowledge that there can be no “massive” return. Really?

205. “All”—Palestinians and Israelis—understand that concession of the principle will entail a gradual effort at full implementation, in this generation or the next, spelling chaos and the subversion of the Jewish state and its replacement by an Arab-majority “Palestine,” a twenty-third Arab state. The demand for the right of return, in the deepest sense, is a demographic mechanism to achieve Israel’s destruction, says Barak. This prospect does not greatly trouble Agha and Malley, who (naively? duplicitously?) admonish their readers not to exercise themselves overmuch “on the question of whether the Palestinian leadership recognized Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state.” But surely that’s the core of the problem—the Palestinian leadership’s desire to ultimately undermine the Jewish state.

206. The origins of the current violence are a further case in point. Agha and Malley, after trotting out some qualifications, leave their readers with the clear impression that the Sharon visit was what caused the Intifada. But Israeli intelligence (and the CIA, according to Barak) has strong evidence that the Palestinian Authority had planned the Intifada already in July 2000. For example, in March 2001 the PA’s communications minister, Imad Faluji, told residents of the Ein al-Hilwe refugee camp outside Sidon: “Whoever thinks that the Intifada broke out because of the despised Sharon’s visit to the al-Aqsa Mosque is wrong, even if this visit was the straw that broke the back of the Palestinian people. This Intifada was planned in advance, ever since President Arafat’s return from the Camp David negotiations, where he turned the table upside down on President Clinton.” (*Al-Safir*, Lebanon, March 3, 2001). Barak characterizes Arafat “and some (not all) of his entourage” as “serial liars.”

207. Arafat’s credentials as a serial liar are impressive, Malley/Agha’s protestations notwithstanding. Take, for example, Arafat’s interview with *Al-Ittihad* on February 6, 2002, in which he blamed the Israeli security service, the Shin Bet, for carrying out suicide bombings against Israeli soldiers and civilians; the attack on the Dolphinarium night club in 2001, in which about twenty-five Israeli youngsters died, he blamed on an IDF soldier. Arafat routinely tells anyone who will listen that Israeli troops use “poison gas” and “radioactive materials” against Palestinian civilians (Arafat on Abu Dhabi TV/Palestine TV, March 29, 2002).

208. To Western audiences Arafat usually affirms his interest in peace or “the peace of the braves” (a Palestinian baseball team?), as he puts it. To Arab audiences, he speaks only of battle and planting the Palestinian flag on Jerusalem’s walls (as Saladin planted his flag on Jerusalem’s walls, after defeating the Crusaders, back in 1189) and of sacrificing “one million *shuhada* [martyrs, meaning suicide bombers]” in “redeeming Palestine.” On May 10, 1994, he told a Muslim audience in Johannesburg that he was engaged in the Oslo peace process much as Mohammed had briefly acquiesced in a truce with the Quraish tribe of Mecca, only to unilaterally revoke it and slaughter them several years later. For good measure, Arafat in that speech said there is no “permanent state of Israel,” only a “permanent state of Palestine.”

209. It is worth noting that Malley/Agha conclude by proposing a settlement based on the establishment of “a sovereign, nonmilitarized Palestinian State based on the 1967 lines, with an equal exchange of land to accommodate demographic realities” and the return of refugees to the area that becomes the Palestinian State. But this, almost precisely, is the deal that Clinton and Barak proposed back in 2000—and Arafat violently rejected.

210. The time has come for the world to judge Arafat by what he does and not by the camouflaging defensive rhetoric tossed out by sophisticated polemicists, Barak says. He refers to Saddam Hussein and Arafat as “the terroristic odd couple” of 1991, who are now back for a second inning, with Saddam helping to fuel the present conflict by inciting the Arab world to join in and, like the Saudis, by paying gratuities to the families of suicide bombers. It is time that the West’s leaders, who initially dealt with Saddam and Milosevic as acceptable, responsible interlocutors, now treat Arafat and his ilk in the Palestinian camp as the vicious, untrustworthy, unacceptable reprobates and recidivists that they are.

Reply

(Paragraphs 211–218)

Robert Malley and Hussein Agha

Reply to Benny Morris and Ehud Barak “Camp David and After—Continued.”

The New York Review of Books, June 27 2002.

211. One might be tempted to dismiss much of what Benny Morris and Ehud Barak write as hollow demagoguery were it not so pernicious and damaging to the future of both the Israeli and Palestinian people. In the past, and through his words and actions, Barak helped to set in motion the process of delegitimizing the Palestinians and the peace process, thereby enabling Ariel Sharon to deal with them as he saw fit and absolve himself of all responsibility

for Israel's diplomatic, security, and economic predicament. Now, the inability to reach a peace deal in the seven months between Camp David and Taba has become, in Barak's and Morris' version, a tale in which Arab cultural deficiency and the Palestinians' inherent desire to destroy Israel are the dominant themes. As Shimon Peres has famously put it, Barak is making an ideology out of his failure. It is time he dealt with the failure, put aside the ideology, and let Israelis and Palestinians return to the far more urgent and serious task of peacemaking.

212. To begin, a few words about Morris' and Barak's rejoinder, a catalog of misrepresentations that scarcely deserves more. They distort what we wrote about the tragic events of the last few months, the reactions to President Clinton's December 23 ideas, the right of return, the importance of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, and the origins of the current Intifada. They turn what the world saw as Sharon's dangerously provocative walk on the Haram/Temple Mount into an innocent stroll. They charge the Palestinians with trying to evade all responsibility but then proceed to evade all responsibility on Barak's part, placing the entire burden of failure on the Palestinians while adding for good measure the usual tired accusations about Arab doublespeak, European media bias, "varied economic interests," and even political correctness. They refer to the "Arafat method" by which negotiators, and not Arafat himself, laid out Palestinian positions, without acknowledging that it was precisely the method routinely and quite openly practiced by Barak. Indeed, the desire not to commit himself personally was the reason Barak provided for his refusal to hold substantive discussions with Arafat at Camp David and it is also the reason why he both declined to give his negotiators specific instructions during the Taba talks and asked not to be fully briefed by them.

213. Then there is the issue of Barak's astonishing remarks about Palestinian and Arab culture that he now seeks to obfuscate. Yet his words in the initial interview were unequivocal. "They are products of a culture in which to tell a lie...creates no dissonance," he pronounced. "They don't suffer from the problem of telling lies that exists in Judeo-Christian culture. Truth is seen as irrelevant." And so on. But, plainly, factual accuracy and logical consistency are not what Morris and Barak are after. What matters is self-justification by someone who has chosen to make a career—and perhaps a comeback—through the vilification of an entire people.

214. For that, indeed, is the real issue that warrants attention. In Morris' and Barak's crude account, Barak made a most generous offer, the "vicious" Palestinian leadership turned it down because they wanted to get rid of Israel, and all the rest is gossip. But is a man who believes that a whole race or culture is immune to the truth well placed to make such a sweeping assessment or, for that matter, well equipped to strike a historic deal with the people about whom

he holds such prejudiced views? Barak deserves credit for understanding the need to end the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the importance of separation between the two peoples as part of a final peace agreement. But it is worth recalling that Barak opposed the Oslo accords from the outset; before 1996 he was against the inclusion of Palestinian Statehood in the Labor Party’s platform; he insisted on renegotiating an agreement with the Palestinians signed by his predecessor and then failed to carry it out; and, today, he takes pride in having made fewer tangible concessions to the Palestinians than Benjamin Netanyahu, the right-wing prime minister who preceded him. Are these truly the qualifications one would expect of a man who claims to sit in judgment of the peace-making capabilities of others?

215. What is clear from his reply and other recent statements is Barak’s utter lack of self-doubt. Yet, by the time he was defeated by Ariel Sharon, less than two years after coming into office, he had antagonized both the religious right and the secular left, not for the sake of high principle but through poor management. His governing coalition had disintegrated. Arab-Israelis had lost all confidence in him. His own Labor Party was adrift and strongly critical of him. He was unable to reach an agreement with Syria. And relations with much of the Arab world were at a lower point than they had been under his hard-line predecessor. The Palestinians, in short, were only one on a lengthy list of people whom he successfully managed to alienate or had failed to deal with successfully. In view of this record, might there not be room to wonder whether Barak’s tactics, approach, and cast of mind had at least something to do with the breakdown of the peace process?

216. Finally there is the question of what, today, Barak stands by and stands for. What, in his opinion, actually happened at Taba in January 2001, and does he accept the positive assessment provided by his official Israeli delegation? It is an assessment he ignores in his reply and that is worth repeating here:

217. The two sides declare that they have never been closer to reaching an agreement and it is thus our shared belief that the remaining gaps could be bridged with the resumption of negotiations following the Israeli elections.

218. That statement contradicts the claim made by Barak, and frequently heard from others, that the Palestinians simply turned their backs on a possible agreement. Would Barak be prepared, today, to resume where things were left off and seek to complete the negotiations, as he pledged at the time and as he repeated to the Israeli public throughout his reelection campaign? The question whether a peace agreement can still be reached, in the current situation of appalling daily violence, has become more urgent than ever. We know what President Clinton’s ideas were for an Israeli–Palestinian agreement. We know the positions of more than a few Israeli political leaders who in recent weeks have

unveiled their own peace formulas. We even know what the official Palestinian proposal is—though it may or may not be something the Israeli people can accept. But can Barak, who likes to tell the left that he went further than everyone else and the right that he gave less than anyone else, let us know what are his specific proposals for a final peace agreement with the Palestinians.



Notes

A Mode of Introduction

- 1 Agha, H. and R. Malley, “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” *The New York Review of Books*, August 9 2001. In response to this article, see Ross, D., “Camp David: An Exchange,” *The New York Review of Books*, September 20 2001. Agha, H. and R. Malley, “Reply to Dennis Ross,” *The New York Review of Books*, September 20 2001. In response to Agha and Malley’s “Camp David: The Tragedy of Errors,” see Morris, B., “Camp David and After: An Exchange (1. An Interview with Ehud Barak),” *The New York Review of Books*, June 13 2002. In response to Benny Morris, see Agha, H. and R. Malley, “Camp David and After: An Exchange (2. A Reply to Ehud Barak),” *The New York Review of Books*, June 13 2002. In response to that article, see Morris, B. and E. Barak, “Camp David and After—Continued,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 27 2002. All the former articles are included here in *Appendix I*. Agha, H. and R. Malley, “The Last Negotiation: How to End the Middle East Peace Process,” *Foreign Affairs*, 81 (3) 2002: 10–18. Hussein Agha is Senior Associate Member of St. Anthony’s College, Oxford and has been involved in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations for many years. He was among the Palestinians who participated in the draft of the Beilin–Abu-Mazen document. Robert Malley is Middle East Program Director at the *International Crisis Group* in Washington. Robert Malley was the successor of Martin Indyk as NSC Director for Near East Affairs in the Clinton Administration (from 1998 to 2001). He participated in the Camp David summit under the title of “Special Assistant to President Clinton for Arab-Israeli Affairs.” When taking into account his criticism of Barak and Clinton, and contrary to what is indicated by his title, it is hard to believe that he was among those who were closest to the President. In his biography, Clinton recalls Malley at Camp David as a note taker.
- 2 *Al-Aqsa* means “the farthest” and it was named because it is far away from Mecca and it was the destination of Mohammed’s Al Isra’a journey. *Intifada* is an Arabic word meaning, “a shaking off,” used as the designation of an uprising among Palestinians from 1987 until the Madrid Declaration

of Principles in 1991. The second intifada, known as the al-Aqsa intifada, started in September 2000. The first one was characterized as being conducted under the Israeli occupation and mainly as a popular uprising in which children and youths used stones, while the second one was conducted under auspices of the Palestinian Authority leadership, and was mainly armed.

- 3 The concept of the double-aspect of goal-oriented speech is from Strauss, M., *Volition and Valuation*: 117–8.
- 4 Swift, J., *Gulliver's Travels*, bk. 4, Ch. 6: 302.
- 5 The outstanding representative of epistemological relativism is Richard Rorty. He contends, "There is nothing to be said about truth save that each of us will commend as true those beliefs which he or she finds good to believe" (Rorty, R. *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*: 20). Rorty asserts that this is not an assertion that truth is "the contemporary opinion of a chosen individual or group" (*ibid.*). Such a theory, he admits, would be self-refuting. Rorty says that he "does not have a theory of truth, much less a relativistic one" (*ibid.*). Moreover, he argues that he has not an epistemology, and a fortiori, he does not have a relativistic one. However, Justin Cruickshank argues against Rorty in saying that "the latter point indicates why Rorty is a relativist, his denial notwithstanding: for in replacing truth by socially contingent beliefs, one is reducing truth to social norms. Relativism is anti-epistemological (rather than a non-epistemological) since rather than argue for a theory of truth or knowledge, which is held to be relative to social norms, truth and knowledge are reduced to social norms; they are identical with the prevailing norms" (Cruickshank, J., "Ethnocentrism, Social Contract Liberalism And Positivism," *Res Publica* 6 2000: 7).
- 6 Adorno, T., *Negative Dialectics*, 1973: 36.
- 7 Kissinger, H., *Years of Renewal*: 1034.
- 8 Sadat was proposing a move leading to be an alternative to a re-convened Geneva Conference on 1977. Kissinger testifies that Sadat's general strategy for the years '75 and '77 was developed with him in a meeting in Jacksonville, Florida the same week. This version contradicts the more famous one, according to which Sadat's visit to Jerusalem was planned by Moshe Dayan and Hassan el-Tohami, the Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister, at September 16 1977 in Morocco. Sadat's plan, according to Kissinger, was to accept a withdrawal of 4/5 of the Sinai Peninsula. In Morocco Dayan purposefully interprets Tohami's statements about the importance of land as a precondition for a peace agreement. See "The Dayan el-Tohami Protocol," in Bregman, A., *A History of Israel*: 287–290. Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin thwarted Sadat's plan by proposing, during Sadat's

- historic and dramatic visit to Jerusalem on November 19–20 1977, a full return of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. For Kissinger's full version, see *ibid.*: 1031–1038.
- 9 Both quotations are from Slater, J., "What Went Wrong? The Collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process," *Political Science Quarterly*, 116 (2) 2001: 171.
 - 10 Pressman, J., "Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?" *International Security*, 28 (2) 2003: 7.
 - 11 *Ethics*, Part III, preface.
 - 12 Waldron, J., *Law and Disagreement*: 160.
 - 13 Cf. van der Meer, E., "Gedächtnis und Inferenzen:" 343.
 - 14 See my "The Use of Error as an Argument in the Language of Human Sciences," *Semiotica*, 120–1/2, 1998: 139–59. "The Use of Error as an Explanatory Category in Politics," in Hon, G. and S. Rakover, (editors), *Explanation—Theoretical Approaches and Applications*, 2001: 277–306. See also, *Politics and Ideology—A Philosophical Approach*.
 - 15 Relevance is a term coined for practical use. If we would make decisions without distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information, we would never be able to make them. Theory does not need to make decisions in a "reasonable" amount of time, and therefore is less concerned with relevance. For practical reasons, the whole of our knowledge is a means and acts as a warning, "[T]hat the relevant has to be extracted." As a result, relevance,

[D]oes not deny the existence of the irrelevant, and indeed implies that any amount of it may be given; it only denies that it is 'helpful.' It is to be treated, therefore, *as if* it did not exist. It is a request to put the irrelevant aside, consciously and resolutely, as something which must not be allowed to affect our minds and to impede our progress (Schiller, F. C. S., "Relevance:" 156).
 - 16 See Lewis, C. I., *An Analysis of Knowledge and Valuation*: 441.
 - 17 Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States, tells that when he was young and yet politically immature, a Jewish car salesman in Alabama taught him about the careful use of words: "Make your words soft and sweet—you never know when you have to eat them" (quoted by Walsh, E., "The Prince," *The New Yorker*, March 24 2003: 49).
 - 18 "Negotiations are a process for the overcoming of obstacles and not for the advance documentation of its failure" (Ehud Barak at the Camp David summit, quoted by Sher, G., *Just Beyond Reach*, 2001: 162).
 - 19 Collingwood, R. G., *The Idea of History*: 276.

- 20 Aristotle distinguished between *poesis* and *praxis*: "...action (*praxis*) and making (*poesis*) are different kinds of thing, since making aims at an end distinct from the act of making, whereas in doing, the end cannot be other than the act itself" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140 b 1–5). *Poesis* is an activity where there is a clear distinction between means and ends, like labor. The worker is not interested in what he/she is doing but in the requested result. Therefore, he/she tries to be efficient, reducing the time and resources invested in the means. Science (Aristotle included politics) is an activity taken for its own sake, or an activity in which the end lies in the activity itself. See my "Praxis and Poesis in Aristotle's Practical Philosophy," *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 24, 1989: 185–198.
- 21 Doyle, A. C., *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*: 620.
- 22 See Hanieh, A., "The Camp David Papers:" 93. From an incident conveyed by Dennis Ross, it was clear that it was a "fissure" on the Israeli side. While Ben Ami and Shahak were negotiating the issue of Jerusalem with the Palestinians,
- Yossi [Ginossar] explained that there had been 'a story in the Israeli press today accusing Amnon [Shahak] and Shlomo [Ben Ami] of pressuring Ehud [Barak] to make concessions on Jerusalem.' I now understood that neither Amnon nor Shlomo needed more exposure on the issue, nor, *since they assumed that Barak was behind the story*, did they need to give Ehud ammunition against them [my italics] (Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 701).
- 23 Dennis Ross gives a live example of Orwell's newspeak: In Camp David, George Tenet had seen Arafat and felt that he had gotten a qualified yes from him on the President's ideas. But when he described what Arafat had said, I could see the 'qualification,' but had a harder time seeing the 'yes.' Arafat was saying yes provided he got several additions: the Armenian Quarter in the Old City and contiguity with sovereignty in all the inner neighborhoods. Barak would certainly interpret this as a 'no' (Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 702).
- Under certain conditions, "yes" means "no." The issue is that there is no such thing as a "yes" without conditions.
- 24 Shaka tells that
- Weizman once had me brought to his office in Tel Aviv and personally threatened me with physical liquidation. That was ... shortly before they decided to expel me—a decision which they were unable to enforce. He had me brought to his office and personally threatened me with death and physical injury if I continued to lead political action against Israel. Al-Shak'a, B., "West Bank Terror," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 10 (1) 1980: 158.
- He reports of his meeting with Weizman neither as an invitation nor as friendly.

- 25 On June 2 1980, a Jewish terrorist group booby-trapped Shaka's car. Gravely injured, Shaka's legs were amputated. He became a voice for democratic reforms against Arafat's leadership. Felicia Langer also opposes Arafat's policy: "The 'peace of the brave' brought the Palestinians the Israeli bulldozer," she said. See the full story in Radi, F., "A Portrait of Felicia Langer," *Al-Abram*, November 5 1998.

Chapter One

- 1 See also Agha, H. and R. Malley, "Let Israelis and Palestinians Vote on a Final Settlement," *The Guardian*, September 8 2003: "Enough with the small steps. Years of intermittent talks between Israelis and Palestinians have produced a good notion of what a settlement acceptable to both sides must look like. The challenge is to get there before a catastrophic chain of events takes place." See also Malley, R. and Agha, H., "Why Barak is Wrong," *The Guardian*, May 27 2002.
- 2 Unexpectedly, Rashid Khalidi, who was an advisor to the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid and Washington Arab-Israeli peace negotiations from October 1991 until June 1993, pointed out that: "The theory of *interim agreements*, beloved of pro-Israeli 'peace processors' in the Bush I and Clinton administrations, should have been buried for good by now, after the spectacular failure of the Madrid-Oslo approach, which relied on such phased *interim agreements*" ("Road Map or Road Kill?," *Nation*, 276 (22) June 9 2003).
- 3 In an interview on July 9 2004 Clinton Recognized that he "never expected to get an agreement at Camp David, and I wasn't" (Lehrer, J., "Conversation: Bill Clinton," *PBS Online*, July 7 2004).
- 4 For Agha and Malley's contradiction, see *Chapter Eight*. For the role of contradiction in interpretation, see *Chapter Seven*.
- 5 Clinton, B., *My Life*: 944.
- 6 In any case, if the efforts toward achieving a final agreement fail, there is no reason to prevent the conduct of further negotiations after the summit. According to Sari Nusseibeh, instead of turning to violence after the summit, the Palestinians "should have tried to maintain the ongoing network of negotiations with Israel. It is not a mistake to disagree, but the tragedy was in allowing that disagreement to deteriorate to a total collapse" (Panel Discussion on Implications of a 'Security Fence' for Israel and the Palestinians, 2002 *Weinberg Founders Conference*: 67).
- 7 Clinton held a Middle East summit conference at the Wye River Plantation, in Maryland during mid-October 1998. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu headed the Israeli delegation and Yasser Arafat headed the Pal-

estinian delegation. As a result of the negotiations, Netanyahu and Arafat signed the Wye River Memorandum on October 23 1998 in a ceremony attended by King Hussein of Jordan. It was designed to help the implementation of prior agreements. Assured of a zero tolerance of terror from the Palestinian side, it consisted of the transfer of 13% from Area C (1% to Area A, and 12% to Area C) to de Palestinian side. Its third phase was relayed to a committee, and never worked. See “The Wye River Memorandum,” *The Avalon Project at Yale Law School*, October 23 1998.

- 8 Yossi Beilin recalls the efforts of the Palestinians to obtain some commitments from Israel before the summit, such as three quarters of Jerusalem (“three villages adjoining Jerusalem”), and the release of a “few dozen of Palestinian prisoners” (see *The Path to Geneva*: 152–3).
- 9 According to Barry Rubin,
 - It cannot be proven whether Arafat, in his innermost mind, was ready to accept peace with Israel based on a two-state solution. But what can be shown is his refusal to make such a peace in a way that would discourage him or persuade his successors and his people from easily reversing that decision. Without such a step, there could be no diplomatic settlement and hence no Palestinian state (“The Terror and the Pity—Yasir Arafat and the Second Loss of Palestine”: 79).
- 10 Dahlan, M., “We’ll choose our leaders,” *The Guardian*, July 2 2002. See also *Ross*, par. 69.
- 11 Cf. Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 669.
- 12 ‘Oslo Accords’ refers to the *Declaration of Principles* signed in September 1993, the *Gaza and Jericho Agreement* signed in May 1994, and the *Interim Agreement* signed in September 1995. Regarding Barak’s policy, Israel would not unilaterally observe the territorial side of Oslo while the Palestinians had not sufficiently fulfilled their security side of the bargain.
- 13 The May 1999 elections that Barak won were conducted by a two-ballot method—one ballot for the election of the Prime Minister, and the other for a specific party. His own party won only 26 out of 120 seats in the parliament.
- 14 *A and M I*, par. 21. Cf. G. Sher who quotes Bill Clinton speaking about US\$20 billion, and Madeleine Albright blaming Arafat’s passivity (*Just Beyond Reach*: 148, 158, 216, 218). Prince Bandar bin Sultan, recalls that the proposal was, at the end of December 2000, of about US\$30 billion. See Walsh, E., “The Prince,” *The New Yorker*, March 24 2003: 54. Bruce Riedel, being more specific, contends that Barak asked for a commitment from Clinton to fund, either through US money or money solicited from other partners like the Europeans and Japanese, a financial aid package amounting to almost \$35 billion over several years. The Palestinians

would be the beneficiaries of the majority of the money. About \$10 billion would be for compensating the Palestinian refugees. Another \$10 billion would be used to develop water desalination plants to increase the usable water available to Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan. A further \$15 billion would be money for Israel's benefit. About \$3–5 billion would be used to upgrade and modernize the Israel Defense Forces, particularly in the area of new early warning aircraft, attack submarines, helicopters and the deployment of the Arrow anti-tactical ballistic missile defense system. Another \$2.5 billion would go to assisting the redeployment of IDF units from bases in the West Bank to new bases to be constructed inside the Green Line, and another one billion dollars to construct new training facilities to compensate for those lost in the transfer of the Judean Desert to the Palestinian Authority. Two billion would be spent on building new roads and fences to delineate the new borders between Israel and the PA and about \$3 billion would go to help pay for the expenses of removing Israeli settlers from settlements to be abandoned in the West Bank and Gaza. "Camp David—The US-Israeli bargain," *Bitterlemons.org* (26), July 15 2002.

- 15 This is the way that Ahmed Qureia (aka Abu Ala) recalls his position regarding a Palestinian proposal:
 I said, 'Mr. President, I don't have proposals. My proposal is the 1967 borders,' Qureia recalled. 'I told him this is the basis, the term of reference of this process,' he said, 'But you should offer a proposal.'
 I told him, 'Mr. President, I cannot take my hand, part of my body [and] give it to somebody else' (Quoted by Hockstader, L., "A Different Take on the Camp David Collapse," *Washington Post*, July 24 2001).
- 16 Cf. Sher, G., *Just Beyond Reach*: 163. Arafat also said that Menachem Begin was the first person to propose an independent Palestinian state to him, although he was unable to accept the idea because of the pressure from Syria. See *ibid*: 141.
- 17 Cf. Sher, G., *ibid*: 188. Yossi Beilin supported Arafat's policy. He said that
 The mistake of Camp David 2000 was that it took place at all ... That was a catastrophe ... It would have been wiser to hold a meeting first at the ministerial level, then formulate a plan for the president and only then hold the big meeting in order to clear the final hurdles—and then only if one knew in advance that the meetings could be held ... Perhaps we would have peace today if we had proceeded in this fashion ("Can We Return to September 2000?" Lecture on January 29 2002, *Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue*).
- 18 Cf. also Faisal el-Husseini, quoting Arafat:
 Please don't do this now. Give us another two or three weeks to prepare for such a meeting. If this meeting fails, it will be a disaster. We do not

know what Barak is coming with, and we don't know if he will accept what we are coming with, or even if he understands what we want or not (May 4 2001, "Interview with Faisal el-Husseini, *Middle East Insight*, 16 (4) 2001).

- 19 Israel's declaration of independence in 1948 triggered an invasion by Arab countries—and a war that forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes in what was to now be Israel.
- 20 The idea to include Jewish refugees from Arab countries remained alive. On October 28 2003, members of the US House of Representatives, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (Republican from Florida), Jerrold Nadler (Democrat from New York), and Frank Pallone (Democrat from New Jersey), introduced House Resolution 311, "expressing the sense of Congress that the international community should recognize the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab countries" asking the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to set out a course of action for the resolution of about 600,000 Palestinian refugees and about 900,000 Jews fled from Arab countries that were forced to leave "lands, homes, private property, businesses, community assets and thousands of years of Jewish heritage and history." See Beker, A., "Respect for the Jews of the Arab states," *Ha'aretz*, July 20 2003, and Rubinstein, A., "The Other Refugees," *Ha'aretz*, January 13 2004.
- 21 Shibley Telhami in an article full of contradictions—that makes it more interesting than if it would be written with consistency—arises the hypothesis that Arafat did not want an agreement. See "Camp David II: Assumptions and Consequences," *Current History*, 100 (642): 10–15, 2001.
- 22 Sid-Ahmed writes that Arafat

leaves the door open to a resurgence of violence in the region that could exceed anything it has witnessed since the initiation of the Madrid process. Once the rationale of peace is replaced by uncontrolled violence, the voices of Palestinian moderates will be drowned out. The arena will be left to the radicals, who can argue convincingly that it was thanks to Hezbollah's armed struggle that Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon, while Arafat's negotiation line has been a total failure ("Camp David II," *Al-Ahram*, July 13 2000).

Namely, he argues that his own failure was one of his cards.
- 23 Barak was aware of Arafat's reluctance to participate in the summit about a month beforehand. See Edelist, R., *Ehud Barak*, 2003: 362. Akram Hanieh recognizes that it was an American assumption that "the Palestinian leadership needed an achievement such as statehood and would be willing to pay a high price for it" ("The Camp David Papers:" 76.) Arafat was unconcerned with Barak's political situation and regarded it as some-

thing alien to the talks. Operatively, such indifference is actually the acceptance of the positions of those who were against Barak:

“They are not ready for peace. Didn’t I tell you?” This is what President Yasir Arafat told his delegation, more than once, within days of the summit’s opening. For it was immediately clear that the Israeli delegation was not prepared to take the risks needed for a historic reconciliation that would end the conflict. Their minds were elsewhere. Domestic politics, petty interests, and electoral calculations overshadowed peace considerations, and Israeli opinion polls, statements by party leaders, and press commentaries had greater weight than reaching a historic peace agreement (*ibid.*: 81).

- 24 Albright states, “Arafat was sick of hearing about Barak’s domestic political troubles, which he said the Israeli leader had simply made up” (*Madame Secretary*, 2003: 486).
- 25 In regards with Sharon’s victory, Clinton said to Arafat: “‘You are the greatest campaign manager in history,’ ... ‘because you’ve just elected Sharon by a majority that’s huge, and you think it doesn’t matter, and you’ll see’” (Lehrer, J., “Conversation: Bill Clinton,” *PBS Online*, July 7 2004).
- 26 *The New York Times*, September 11 2000. Usher believes that this was part of Arafat’s strategy. It was for Arafat “an opportunity to ‘internationalize’ the conflict” (Usher, G., “Facing Defeats: The Intifada Two Years On,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 32 (2) 2003): 21–40. See also:
Perhaps Arafat has another goal—to extract from us a document of commitment, from our point of view and from the international point of view, that will oblige us to take positions that will advance his own, and later on he will use this document as a platform for his next step, an attempt to internationalize the conflict. (Barak, as quoted by Edelist, R., in *Ehud Barak*: 347).
- 27 See *Ha’aretz*, July 10 2000, and July 12 2000. See also Inbar, E., “Palestinian rift in Jordan Rift,” *The Jerusalem Post*, July 10 2000.
- 28 See Gambill, G. C., “The Peace Process After Camp David,” *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, 2 (7) August 5 2000, and *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, July 2 1997 and July 15 1998. Kristen Schulze recognizes, and even though this contradicts his own belief that the intifada was spontaneous, that Arafat “clearly recognized the functionality of violence in a peace process.” As for his belief in a spontaneous uprising, he offers neither factual nor rational or inferred evidence. Additionally, when examining his argument regarding the functionality of violence, his implicit assumption is that only violence brings peace. This is not the same as arguing that peace comes after war and that peace is made with one’s enemies. He argues for the use of violence as an integral and functional part of the negotiations themselves.

- See Schulze, K. E., "Camp David and the Al-Aqsa Intifada," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, (24) 2001: 220.
- 29 Arafat in an interview with Danny Rubinstein, "The Wall is Ruining the New Middle East," *Ha'aretz*, August 6 2003.
- 30 This idea can be advanced through the definition of the conflict as "a collision between two national wills," in Usher, G., *Facing Defeats: 22*. Instead of going into an analysis of the political decisions that this vision promotes and justifies the "collision." When described as a collision between national wills, politics becomes a place of narratives that cannot achieve mutual recognition.
- 31 Abu-Mazen, when asked if there were temptations in Camp David, said that "The temptations were in what was offered, but it is impossible to describe these as temptations since, despite the fact that it is true that they offered things that were never offered before, it never reached the level of our aspirations" (Interview in *Al-Ayyam*, July 28 2001.) Actually, it never reached the level of Arafat's aspirations. He was against reaching the end of the conflict. According to Hanieh it was an Israeli aim:
- It was obvious that Barak and the American peace team had counted on the fact that the Palestinians would accept (albeit reluctantly) the "American" ideas and that a framework agreement would be signed whose most important clause would be "the end to the conflict." According to this same scenario, Barak would return triumphantly to Israel with this document and be able to threaten his opposition with early elections. The failure of these calculations mortified the Israelis ("The Camp David Papers:" 93).
- 32 Ross, D., "Yasir Arafat," *Foreign Policy*, 131, July/August 2002: 19.
- 33 Barak, E., *Q&A*, *Ha'aretz*, July 20 2004.
- 34 Cf. Clinton, B., *My Life*: 915. Clinton adds, "It was assumed that Palestine would get the Muslim and Christian quarters, with Israel getting the other two." Arafat however wanted "to have a few blocks of the Armenian quarter because of the Christian churches there." Clinton said he "couldn't believe he was talking to me about this" (*Ibid*: 943). Cf. also Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 671. In one opportunity, in a talk with Saeb A'reikat, Dennis Ross made the following proposal:
- For the Haram, have Palestinian sovereignty above ground and Israeli sovereignty below ground; you need sovereignty over the surface, they need it underground where the Temple was. For the close-in neighborhoods, why not have a referendum to determine their ultimate disposition, say ten or fifteen years down the road. That way the Israelis can say they preserved their sovereignty and yet Palestinians can feel they would eventually get it (*ibid*: 693).

- 35 According to Edelist, Clinton was more explicit and angry with Arafat when he told him:

Barak is offering real deals under the guise of concessions. And you do not offer anything. You missed the opportunity in '47, and in '78, and now you will again remain without a state. You should realize that our relationship has come to an end. The Congress will vote to stop the aid and will declare that you head a terrorist organization. You want to keep in your pocket what Barak has, as it were, offered, but this will not work. (Edelist, R., *Ehud Barak*: 383).

- 36 For the irrelevance of cultural differences, see my "The Other Edward Said," *Masharef*, 23, 2003: 218–55 (translated in *EJOS*).

- 37 Regarding Arafat general attitude, Hillary Clinton said that:

... He has been unwilling to prepare his people for any sacrifices for peace. He has undermined moderates in his own coalition. His willingness to use anti-Semitism and not erase anti-Semitic teachings from his textbooks drive home that point ("Speech to the Broome Jewish Community," March 12 2002).

Emanuele Ottolenghi had a similar vision: Arafat

...[H]ad to choose peace over war, independence over dreams, a prosaic future of state building over a glorious past of revolution. He had seven years to prepare his people for the price of independence. Instead, he deceived them and inflamed their delusions. He preferred history to the future, recrimination to vision ... As armed militants and explosive-laden terrorists rampaged, Arafat chose to exploit the situation, condemning violence in the western media while encouraging it at home. He thought he could both remain Israel's sole interlocutor, and be the leader of the revolution. He gave terrorists free rein and thereby relinquished the monopoly of force over his society ("This futile struggle," *The Guardian*, December 20 2002).

I disagree with her vision. In my opinion, it was indeed Arafat's policy and not a misconception of his part. The most critical of Arafat's policy was perhaps Edward Said in many of his publicist works. See *The End of the Peace Process—Oslo and After*, 2001: 40–3, 66–8, 105–7, 295–9, and 380–2.

Chapter Two

- 1 John Lister proposes a probable rationale of Arafat's behavior:

The difficulty looms in the nature of Arafat's rule, the foundations of his legitimacy, and the complex relationship between Arafat (who has maintained almost complete authority despite decades spent in exile and nearly ruinous political miscalculations) and the Palestinian people. While the United States viewed Arafat as the man who could both

make compromises and get Palestinians to accept them, in fact, Arafat's concerns for maintaining his rule and its legitimacy ironically made it less likely that he would do so ("Looking again at the peace process," *Middle East Policy*, 9 (3): 22–33).

- 2 In *The Missing Peace*, Ross contends:

Did we ultimately fail because of the mistakes that Barak made and the mistakes that Clinton made? No, each, regardless of his tactical mistakes, was ready to confront history and mythology. Only one leader was unable or unwilling to confront history and mythology: Yasir Arafat. Anwar Nusseibeh decried the Mufti of Jerusalem as someone who succeeded as a symbol and failed as a leader. Tragically, for Palestinians and Israelis alike, these words captured the essence of Arafat fifty-three years later: 758.
- 3 The official Palestinian negotiators were Yasser Arafat, President, Mahmud Abbas, Secretary General, PLO Executive Committee, Ahmed Qurei, Speaker, Palestinian Legislative Council, Yasser Abed Rabbo, Minister of Information and Culture, Nabil Sha'ath, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Saeb A'reikat, Minister of Local Government, Akram Hanieh, Advisor, Col. Mohammed Dahlan, Chief of Preventive Security in the Gaza Strip, Hassan A'sfour, Minister of State, and Khalid Salam, Economic Advisor. Ron Pundak admits that there were contradictory positions within the Palestinian delegation. See Pundak, R., "From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?" 41.
- 4 Dahlan, M., "We'll choose our leaders," *The Guardian*, July 2 2002. Edelstein quotes Abu-Mazen as having suggested, as part of the efforts for creating a positive peace-atmosphere, "to take the heads of refugees' families on a tour through Israel to show them that their houses actually do not exist any more" (*Ehud Barak*: 380). Regarding frictions in the Palestinian delegations, also see Judy Dempsey, "Palestinian leaders divided over strategy," *Financial Times*, August 31 2000.
- 5 The philosophical problem of the distinction between will and capability does not concern us here. Here we are concerned only with the instrumental meaning of the distinction according to the way in which Ross distinguishes between the two concepts. The philosophical question concerns the distinction between Will, wish and capability. To wish or desire something is not yet to have the Will, that is, the readiness to realize your wishes and dreams. If you lack this readiness, you lack the Will, and if you lack the Will, you lack the capability. Will is a practical power that cannot be detached from capability.
- 6 Yossi Beilin's opinion is the same as that of Agha and Malley: "The mistake was to put all the blame on Arafat, not only because he did not deserve it, maybe he deserved part and maybe it is true that the Palestinians

- did not initiate ideas, but it was a tactical mistake to put all the blame on one side" (Quoted by Kristof, N., "Arafat and Peace: the Big Myth," *The New York Times*, June 24 2002).
- 7 Kissinger, H., *A World Restored*: 197.
 - 8 Hanieh, A., "The Camp David Papers:" 75–97.
 - 9 Cf. Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 693.
 - 10 According to Drucker, the pressure on Barak came mainly from Ben Ami. He even tried to persuade Clinton to exert pressure on Barak. See *Harakiri*: 242–3.
 - 11 Pipes, D., *The Hidden Hand*: 24. Arafat was arrested in a sweep against the Muslim Brotherhood, of which he was a member, after their attempt to assassinate Nasser while he was making a speech in Alexandria. See Aburish, S. K., *Arafat*: 28–30.
 - 12 When discussing the allegation that political conspiracy theories are based on a paranoid way of understanding politics, it is said that Golda Meir, when she was accused by Henry Kissinger of being paranoid for hesitating to grant further concessions in the negotiations held with Egypt in 1973 said that "even paranoids have enemies" (quoted by Stanley Schneider in "Peace and Paranoia:" 208.) Schneider has a circular way of argumentation. He says, "the implication in Meir's statement was that Israeli fears and behavior were based on real feelings of persecution" (*ibid.*). What is paranoia if not a real feeling of persecution? For a discussion of this question and about other topics regarding paranoia in politics, see R. Hofstadter's, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*.
 - 13 Pigden, Ch., "Popper Revisited": 6.
 - 14 Pipes, D., "Dealing with Middle Eastern Conspiracy Theories," *Orbis*, 36 (1) 1992: 42.
 - 15 Pipes, D., *The Hidden Hand*: 251–2.
 - 16 Quoted from Kramer, M., *Hezbollah's Vision of the West*: 7. Pipes, D., *The Hidden Hand*: 254.
 - 17 Pipes, D., "If I Forget Thee," *New Republic*, 216 (17) 1997: 16.
 - 18 See Balaban, O. and Avshalom, A.: "The Ontological Argument Reconsidered," *Philosophy Research Archives*, 15, 1990: 279–310.
 - 19 See my criticism of Barbara Tuchman's *The March of Folly in Politics and Ideology*: 199–210.
 - 20 Cf. Pipes, D., *The Hidden Hand*: 262.
 - 21 I am paraphrasing from Collingwood, R. G., *Essays on Political Philosophy*: 155–6.
 - 22 Cf. Spinoza, B., *Ethics*, Part I, *Appendix*. See "Neutrality and Dogmatism," *Chapter One*, and "Models of Reality," *Chapter Nine*.
 - 23 Bacon, F., *The New Organon*, Bk. I, aph. 95.

- 24 See Machiavelli, N., "Of Conspiracies," in *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy*: Bk. 3, Ch. 6.

Chapter Three

- 1 Eban, A., "Camp David—The Unfinished Business," *Foreign Affairs*, 57 (2) 1978: 343.
- 2 Hanieh recalls the end of Camp David in words that express clearly Arafat's mood at Camp David:

As they looked back at the retreat from the windows of their cars, the Palestinian negotiators heaved a deep sigh of relief. They had stated a clear No to the United States on U.S. territory. There was no bravado. It was a No that was politically, nationally, and historically correct and necessary to put the peace process on the right track ("The Camp David Papers:" 97).
- 3 Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 690.
- 4 "[T]hat commands volition of the means for him who wills the end" (Kant, I., *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*: 71).
- 5 See Strauss, M., *Volition and Valuation*, 1999: 110–9.
- 6 See for example Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's declaration during a visit to Kabul: "Under the Bush administration, 'arrogance' about American power had taken over. That clouded Washington's judgement about its own interests. But Iran remained hopeful, he said, that 'America will put aside this arrogance, and see the realities as they are'" (Burns, J. F., "Iranian President Says U. S. Leaders 'Misused' Sept. 11," *The New York Times*, August 14 2002.) I will not enter into a discussion here about the political message within this declaration; I only want to point out how arguments about unconscious interests can be used manipulatively.

Chapter Four

- 1 Another, similar version appears in Sher, G., *Just Beyond Reach*, 2001: 189, although it is cited not as an Israeli proposal, but as an American one. In any case, this may be close to Barak's real proposal.
- 2 Cf. also *ibid*: 193.
- 3 Tom Friedman, following and quoting Stephen P. Cohen, also assumes a kind of utopian claim by Arafat: His demand of two Palestinian states. He is right, however, in his opinion that Arafat

...[D]ecided to give up the monopoly of force within the Palestinian areas. A monopoly of force is the definition of a state, or a 'Palestinian Authority.' Mr. Arafat gave up that monopoly so Hamas and Islamic Jihad could carry out suicide attacks against Israel to pressure Israel into

accepting his terms—but in a way that he wouldn't have to take responsibility for. In doing so, Mr. Arafat undercut any notion that he could be a responsible sovereign for a Palestinian state. Who would trust a leader who gives up his authority whenever it suits him? (“Dead Man Walking,” *The New York Times*, January 30 2002).

- 4 See my “A recipe for Regional Deterioration,” *Ha'aretz*, June 4 2002.
- 5 On May 10 1994, in a mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa, Yasser Arafat said this about the Oslo accords: “This agreement, I am not considering it more than the agreement which had been signed between our prophet Mohammed and Koraish, and you remember the Caliph Omar had refused this agreement and [considered] it a despicable truce.” The agreement with Koraish allowed Mohammed to pray in Mecca, which was under Koraish control, for ten years. When Mohammed grew stronger two years later, he abrogated the agreement, slaughtered the tribe of Koraish and conquered Mecca. See “Arafat’s Johannesburg Speech,” *Information Regarding Israel’s Security* (IRIS).
- 6 The use of the bi-national state as an ideal may have precisely the opposite meaning. It is indeed used in the meaning of reconciliation by Arafat’s opponents, for example Edward Said. See my “The Other Edward Said,” *Masharef*: 218–255. Yakir Plessner believes that Arafat may want to keep the conflict going “in order to justify a less than democratic regime at home” (Plessner, Y., “The Conflict Between Israel and the Palestinians: A Rational Analysis,” *Jerusalem Letter*, 448, February 15 2001). This understanding does not contradict my above “speculations” about the way his regime supports other international policies. Moreover, it may explain why they are allowed and supported.
- 7 See Ortega y Gasset, J., “Conversacion en el golf o la idea del *dharma*” [Spanish]: 630.
- 8 For Dan Meridor, member of the Israeli delegation, Arafat denial of the existence of the Temple, showed only its practical intention: “either Arafat is not interested in an agreement, or that he really believed that the idea of a Jewish Temple is a fabrication, in which case there will never be an agreement” (Bar-Tal, D., “Camp David, Oslo and the Future—Interview with Dan Meridor:” 65).
- 9 Barnea, N., “Speaking under Fire,” *Yediot Aharonot*, June 24 2001.
- 10 Marwan Barghouti and Hussein al-Sheikh were the West Bank heads of Fatah, Arafat’s own political party, who were orchestrating the violence. Barghouti has since been arrested by Israeli troops and is currently on trial for launching dozens of terrorist attacks.
- 11 Cf. my “Saddam’s French Connection,” *The Jerusalem Post*, January 9 1991.

- 12 On January 3 2002, the Israeli Navy seized control of a ship that was sailing in international waters on its way to the Suez Canal. This ship, the “Karine A,” carried weapons intended for the Palestinian Authority. Senior figures in the Palestinian Authority were involved in the arms smuggling. The shipment included both 122 mm. and 107 mm. Katyusha rockets, which have ranges of 20 and 8 kilometers respectively. It also contained 80 mm. and 120 mm. mortar shells, various types of anti-tank missiles, anti-tank mines, sniper rifles, Kalashnikov rifles and ammunition. From Gaza, the 122 mm. Katyushas could have threatened Ashkelon and other Israeli coastal cities; while from the West Bank, Ben-Gurion International Airport and several major Israeli cities would have been within their range. The shipment also included rubber boats and diving equipment, which would have facilitated seaborne attacks from Gaza against coastal cities.
- 13 Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 775.
- 14 *The Guardian*, September 29 2000.
- 15 This is Hamas’s military wing. Generally, it takes its decisions independently from the political wing that was headed by Sheik Ahmed Yassin. Hamas was formed in 1987 as an outgrowth of the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It employs both political and violent means, including terrorism. Some of its activities to recruit members, raise money, organize activities and distribute propaganda are conducted clandestinely, while others are conducted openly through mosques and social service institutions. Hamas’s strength is concentrated in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. It has also engaged in peaceful political activity, such as running candidates in West Bank Chamber of Commerce elections. Hamas’s activists, especially those in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, have conducted many attacks—including large-scale suicide bombings—against Israeli civilian and military targets. In the early 1990s, they also targeted their *Fatah* rivals. Hamas increased its operational activity during 2001–2002 by claiming numerous attacks against Israeli interests.
- 16 See Hanania, R. “How Sharon and the Likud Party nurtured the rise of Hamas,” June 30 2002, *Independent Media Centre Ireland*.
- 17 Cf. Schulze, K. E., “Camp David and the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*: An Assessment of the State of the Israeli–Palestinian Peace Process, July–December 2000,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 24: 215–233, 2001.
- 18 Albright, M., *Madame Secretary*, 2003: 494.
- 19 Clinton, B., *My Life*: 924.
- 20 Shlomo Ben Ami, in an attempt to defend Arafat as if he did not take the initiative of a violent response, said that Arafat chose to mount “the tigers back.” See *Briefing by Acting Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami to the Diplomatic Corps*, October 12 2002 and *The Guardian*, September 29 2000.

Ehud Ya'ari, Israel's *Channel 2 TV* Arab affairs analyst, was asked if Arafat was not simply riding a tiger—weathering what would otherwise turn into a revolt against him, a revolt provoked by bitterness and by criticism of the corruption in his administration. Ya'ari's answer was that:

All the fabrications about the tiger are part of a pathetic attempt to defend Arafat as if he did not have any choice. These are not the facts. The time when it was possible to sell such theories is over. Maybe you can use such a theory to explain the intifada, which had a dimension of popular protest. There are no more theories. There are facts. Arafat planned a round of great violence and he made preparations for it. I can tell you the day and the time. He personally gave the orders to his people, before the first drop of blood was spilled. I have just had a conversation with a very highly placed Palestinian who confirmed all the facts for me. I can't reveal his name, but he is very highly placed. He confirmed that the orders came from Arafat. It is true that in the field there were factors that were ready to move to a round of violence, and these factors were also present within Fatah. But to claim that Marwan Barghouti compelled Arafat to take the armed option is to claim that the tail is wagging the dog. This is simply nonsense ("An Interview with Ehud Ya'ari," *Globes*, May 14 2002.).

Itamar Rabinovich supports Ben Ami's approach. Rabinovich says that "the available evidence suggests that Arafat did not order the violence" (*Waging Peace*: 154.) I wonder what should be regarded as "available evidence." If it means that to find some written documents or spoken words alone disregarding the context and the instrumental meaning of words, then the effort to find political evidences is doomed to failure. Take the following example of an interview with Yasser Arafat. The interviewer asked him, "After the intifada started, why didn't you give clear orders to your people to stop it?" Arafat's response was "I gave it, I gave it." The quite smart interviewer replied: 'You know, Amos Gilad tells it like this: Mr. Arafat is calling Barghouti, he puts money, and says "Allah maak" [God be with you], and [Marwan] Barghouti understands that he has to start terrorism" (Landau, D. and Eldar, A., "A Jewish State? 'Definitely'," *Ha'aretz*, June 18 2004). See the *Introduction-Problems of Interpretation*. Yossi Beilin, in an attempt to justify Arafat's policy, says that "no special intellectual effort is needed to understand that [Sharon's] visit ... caused the intifada" (*Manual for a Wounded Dove*: 162). Aaron Miller, who participated in Camp David, said on the contrary, after explaining that the Palestinians had not a unified, coherent strategy of any kind:

There is no strategy. But it's no excuse for what did happen: Arafat either by intention or design permitted his monopoly over the sources of violence in his own society to be dissipated. No government can allow armed elements within their own society to act against them (or) their

neighbors (Miller, A., "Interview," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 14 2003).

Aaron Miller was Deputy Special Coordinator for Middle Eastern Affairs at the State Department since 1993 until 2002. For the discussions between the supporters of the strategy of violence and their critics, see the detailed analysis of Hillel Frisch, "Debating Palestinian Strategy in the al-Aqsa Intifada," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 15 (2) 2003: 61–80. According to this well documented work, many Palestinian leaders were against the armed uprising, which is the best indication that it was not a spontaneous outburst, but that it was planned in advance.

- 21 Quoted by J. Schanzer, "A Visit Here, A Visit There—Why Did One Prompt Violence?" *Jewish Exponent*, August 22 2002. However, Schanzer does not explain Sharon's motivation, although he rightly asserts that the Palestinian side could have reacted in a different way. Nevertheless, his argument remains unconvincing. He compares the reaction to Sharon's visit with the non-reaction to a "visit" by a member of the Israeli Parliament in 2002. He omits only to inform his readers that Michael Kleiner's "visit" was only an *attempt* to visit the Temple Mount. Kleiner was unable to enter the Temple Mount because it had been closed to non-Moslems since Sharon's visit.
- 22 The Mitchell Report, officially called the Sharm al-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Final Report, was presented to President George W. Bush on April 30 2001, and signed by Suleyman Demirel, President of the Republic of Turkey; Thorbjørn Jagland, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway; George J. Mitchell, Chairman, Former Member of the United States Senate, and Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, European Union.
- 23 Clinton says that he "hoped Barak would prevent Sharon's inflammatory escapade, but Barak told me he couldn't" (Clinton, B. *My Life*: 924).
- 24 *The Jerusalem Post*, October 4 2000.
- 25 Quoted by Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 728.
- 26 *CNSnews.com*, October 4 2000.
- 27 *The Jerusalem Post*, October 4 2000.
- 28 *Fatah* was founded by Arafat, with Salah Khalaf (aka Abu Iyad), Khalil Al-Wazir (aka Abu Jihad), Mahmud Abbas (aka Abu-Mazen) and Faruq Qaddumi (aka Abu Lutof) in 1959. It joined the PLO in 1968 and won the leadership role in 1969. Its commanders were expelled from Jordan after violent confrontations with Jordanian forces in 1971. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 led to the group's dispersal to several Middle Eastern countries. It includes *Force 17* and the *Western Sector*. Two of its

- leaders, Abu Jihad and Abu-Iyad, were killed; the first by Israeli forces in 1988, and the second (probably) by Arafat's loyal supporters in 1991.
- 29 *The Jerusalem Post*, September 28 2000. There is an almost consensus about this argument. The timing of Sharon's visit coincided with the decision by Israel's Attorney General and Comptroller not to pursue charges against Netanyahu, who was under investigation for allegedly committing acts of corruption and graft when he was prime minister. See Ruebner, J., "Middle East: Domestic Politics and the Peace Process—Proceedings of a CRS Seminar," December 13 2000: 16.
- 30 As a symptom of Barak's surrender to his rivals, it is noteworthy that Efraim Inbar notes that he was surprised by Barak's going along with Beilin's and Ben Ami's trend. See "The Misguided Slogans of the Left," *The Jerusalem Post*, October 16 2000. Yossi Beilin was against the Camp David summit. He said that Barak's pushing for the summit was:
- ...[O]ne of the biggest mysteries ... He kept telling us that in order to work out a real deal with the Palestinians, he needed to sit with Arafat and convince him about the need for an agreement. But then, when he got to Camp David he never met with him. He could never explain this behavior. *Barak* was committed to peace, was ready for a historical compromise, but knew nothing about how to do it" ("An Interview with Yossi Beilin," *Tikkun*, 18 (6) November–December 2003).
- 31 *Jerusalem Times*, June 8 2001. It is noteworthy that on July 12, the *Israel Army Radio* reported that the Israeli Government might deport Marwan Barghouti—the West Bank leader of the Tanzim militia—first to Lebanon and then on to exile in Europe, in exchange for Israeli prisoners held by the Lebanese-based Hezbollah group of Shiite militants. The negotiations for the prisoner swap were mediated by Germany with support from the United States. His expulsion to Lebanon and exile to Europe would have raised his international profile. Moreover, it was decided that his trial would take place in a civilian court. "The West Bank Fatah-Tanzim leader should be tried in a civil rather than a military court," Israeli Justice Minister Meir Shetreet was quoted as saying only a couple of days after Marwan Barghouti's arrest. "From a political point of view at least," Shetreet said, "I think we have to put (Barghouti) on trial in a civil court, to try to present before the world all the evidence and documents regarding his activities. The effect of the trial is no less [important] than the trial itself" (*Al-Ahram Weekly*, 583 April 25 2002). Later, on January 2004, Israeli intelligence officials received reports indicating that
- ...[T]hose who helped dash hopes for Barghouti's release include Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat... True, Israeli spokesmen declared in response to speculation about Barghouti that there was no intention of releasing him as part of a deal with Hezbollah. Yet it turns

out that these denials were not enough for Arafat. Reports suggest that Arafat relayed a message to Hezbollah asking the organization not to include Barghouti in its list of demands from Israel... one explanation of Arafat's behavior is his desire to ensure that Barghouti's star does not rise among the Palestinian public. As things stand, the imprisoned Fatah leader leads in public opinion surveys whenever residents in the territories are asked about who they would want to replace the aging PA chairman (Harel, A. and Stern, Y., *Ha'aretz*, January 16 2004).

Barghouti was eventually not released. Amnesty International believes that the decision to move to a civil trial was thanks to the activities of all its members who took action in the case. *Amnesty International*, Index: MDE 15/118/2002 July 17 2002. Retrieved January 31 2004, from www.amnesty.org.

- 32 Contrary to Barak's position, at Camp David II, Ben Ami and Lipkin-Shahak proposed to divide the city. See Drucker, R., *Harakiri*: 218–9.
- 33 According to Abu Mazen, it was not a signed agreement but a paper presented by Beilin and discussed without agreement. The main articles of the Beilin-Abu-Mazen paper regarding Jerusalem are as follows: § 3 in art. VI divides the city into a Palestinian "borough" and an Israeli "borough" in a proportion to be updated to reflect a demographic balance. The city will be divided (under a Joint Higher Municipal Council) into two sub-municipalities—an Israeli sub-municipality, elected by the inhabitants of the Israeli boroughs, and a Palestinian sub-municipality, elected by the inhabitants of the Palestinian boroughs (§ 5). The sub-municipalities will be delegated with strong local powers, including the right to local taxation, local services, an independent education system, separate religious authorities, and housing planning and zones (§ 6). The city will also be divided by their names. "Yerushalayim" will be the name for the Jewish part, and "al-Quds" will be the name of the Arab Eastern part of the city, under Palestinian sovereignty (§ 7). Each side will recognize the other part of the city as the Capital of their respective states. The Old City Area will be granted an unspecified "special status" (§ 11). Part of this special status is that the State of Palestine shall be granted extra-territorial sovereignty over the Haram al-Sharif under the administration of the al-Quds Waqf (§ 13). The Church of the Holy Sepulcher shall be managed, initially, by the Palestinian sub-Municipality, but it shall be examined the possibility of assigning extra-territorial status (although not expressly stated—to the Vatican) for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (§ 14). Supervision of persons and goods transiting through both cities shall take place at their borders ("exit points") (§ 15).
- 34 Cf. *The Jerusalem Post*, September 29 2000.

- 35 See Lefkovits, E., "Rabbinate postpones Temple Mount Synagogue Debate," *Jerusalem Post*, August 8 2000.
- 36 Cf. *al-Quds*, August 14 2000.
- 37 Serving on the panel were the Mufti of Jerusalem, the two imams of al-Aqsa Mosque, Taysir Tamimi and Mohammed Hussein, Archimandrite Atallah Hanno of the Greek Orthodox Church, and Bishop Munif Yunan of the Roman Catholic Church. See *Ha'aretz*, August 17 2000.
- 38 See *Ha'aretz*, August 9 2000.
- 39 Arafat's proposal was that the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) should hold the sovereignty over the Haram Al-Sharif. With countries like Iran and Iraq as members of the OIC, Israel would have no assurance about the protection of its interests. This was, according to Ross, "probably Arafat's idea and he was hoping to condition us to it" (Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 721).
- 40 *Al-Quds*, August 28 2000.
- 41 *Ha'aretz*, August 26 2000.
- 42 *BBC News*, Retrieved on September 7 2000, from www.news.bbc.co.uk.
- 43 *Al-Hayat al-Jadida*, September 14 2000.
- 44 *Al-Quds*, September 17 2000.
- 45 See *Ha'aretz*, September 17 2000.
- 46 *The Jerusalem Post*, September 11 2000.
- 47 Goldenberg, S., "Israel Says UN Should Take Over Temple Mount," *The Guardian*, September 25 2000.
- 48 The idea was raised again in Taba, where "various suggestions were examined, including handing over sovereignty for a limited period to the five members of the UN Security Council, plus Morocco" (Gresh, A., "Proche-Orient, la paix manquée," *L'Monde Diplomatique*, September 2001: 14).
- 49 "Talks of Ben Ami in Cairo focus on framework agreement," *Arabic news.com*, September 25 2000. Retrieved January 31 2004, from www.arabicnews.com. "Understanding each other" is a recurring formula in the history of the conflict. Some negotiators use it in order to justify the impossibility of reaching an agreement that is based precisely on mutual understanding. For an example of this, see: Beilin on Taba: "The wisdom of Taba was that we could refer to the two narratives in the evolving Palestinian refugee problem, without accepting either of them. The mere fact that we could refer to them and respect both narratives was enough to satisfy both sides that their story is not being ignored" (Eldar, A., *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture*, 9 (2) 2002: 12.) Moshe Dayan, one of Beilin's political mentors, and who was interested in the "sincere" and "nationalistic spirit" of the Arab poetess from Nablus, Fadua

- Toukan, wrote: "We might still remain divided in our views, but at least we would understand one another" (Dayan, M., *Story of My Life*: 332).
- 50 Mohammad Sid-Ahmad says that in this regard: "One is entitled to ask whether Sharon acted alone or in collusion with Barak" ("Why, Finally, a Summit Is Possible," *Al-Abram*: 441, October 12 2000).
- 51 Herb K., "Ben Ami heads to Egypt, Jordan," *The Jerusalem Post*, September 25 2000.
- 52 *WETA Television Station*, September 14 2000, transcript by *Al-Musawar*, September 21 2000.
- 53 *Arabic news.com*, "Talks of Ben-Ami in Cairo focus on framework agreement," September 25 2000. Retrieved January 31 2004, from www.arabicnews.com.
- 54 According to Beilin's version, the author of the idea of giving sovereignty over the Temple Mount and the Western Wall to the UN Security Council was President Mubarak and was rejected by Arafat. His source is Dahlan in a personal talk. See *The Path to Geneva*: 177. Since Beilin's version is too favorable to his own policy, I tend to be skeptic with it.
- 55 *Al-Musawar*, September 28 2000.
- 56 Ehud Barak, quoted by Makovsky, D. and Harman, D., "Interview with Prime Minister: Peace without Illusions," *The Jerusalem Post*, November 4 1999.
- 57 *The Path to Geneva*: 190.
- 58 Sid-Ahmad, M., *Al-Abram*, October 12 2000. These kinds of collusions have two meanings. One is the political meaning, the other is theoretical. Both meanings are in conflict with each other, since the theoretical explanation may be easily used with political intentions, thereby condemning the researcher to modify his views in order to prevent the political use of his words, especially when it contradicts, as in my case, his own values. This is also another example of the conflict between political participation and neutral analysis. Arafat, for example, makes use of this idea but in order to state that Barak and Sharon, and to label them as conspirators against the Palestinian cause. See Shahin, M., "The Arafat Interview," *Middle East*, 322, April 2002: 21.
- 59 Beilin, Y., *The Path to Geneva*: 192. If politics means the application of values to specific facts in order to modify them, then timing is not only a kernel factor for Sharon, but for political decisions in general. It is for this reason that we can learn about policies by paying attention to timing-dependent decisions.
- 60 *The Jerusalem Post*, September 12 2000.
- 61 "...[Y]ou have to proceed carefully, step by step, and not overreach yourself. Any attempt to tackle the Jerusalem issue was bound to fail—and bring

- down with it the whole proposed agreement” (Avineri, S., “Learning from the Debacle,” *Internationale Politik—Transatlantic Edition*, 2 (2), December 2000: 52).
- 62 On July 15, at the starting of the negotiations on Jerusalem, Clinton proposed: “We should regulate a co-existence in the city for a period of ten years. At that time we will wonder why it was so difficult. There are too many smart and skilled lawyers here” Quoted by Drucker, R., *Harakiri*: 200. Later on, he changed his position, proposing to postpone the negotiations for two years.
- 63 Cf. Gold, D., “Jerusalem in International Diplomacy: The 2000 Camp David Summit, the Clinton Plan, and their Aftermath,” *Jerusalem Letter*, 447, February 1 2001.
- 64 Inbar, E., “Jerusalem: The Forgotten Fort,” *The Jerusalem Post*, January 8 2001.
- 65 Akram Hanieh complains:
 The Palestinians had to sit through the absurd theories of ‘the danger from the East’ as the basis for the strong Israeli military presence in the West Bank. In other words, an outside threat was conjured up to justify the means to confront it—bases, patrols, and, finally, early-warning stations in the Jordan Valley along the Jordanian border. Israel would also impose strict restrictions on the military personnel and capabilities of the State of Palestine” (Hanieh, A., “The Camp David Papers:” 82).
 He does not offer an explanation about his argument that it was merely an excuse.
- 66 Gilead Sher states that Barak considered evacuating nearly 10,000 houses to make way for the refugees. See *Just Beyond Reach*: 206.
- 67 Itamar Rabinovich contends that Arafat failed the test of statesmanship. He defines “statesmanship” as the “ability to read correctly the trends of unfolding history, to make the right decisions in that context and to build the requisite support for implementing those decisions” (*Waging Peace*: 177.) The assumption, as Rabinovich recognizes it, is that “Arafat had been guided primarily by the desire to establish a Palestinian state” (*ibid.*). The clear conclusion should be, even according to Rabinovich’s own analysis that Arafat was against the establishment of a Palestinian state. What he regards as Arafat’s mistake should be perfectly regarded as part of his political wisdom.
- 68 The original proposal included, for instance, that the Jordan Valley would remain leased to Israel for 99 years to assure strategic depth until the peace was established in the Middle East. See Edelist, R., *Ehud Barak*, quoting Danny Yatom: 353.

- 69 For a full analysis of the Taba negotiations, see the “Special Document File—the Taba Negotiations (January 2001),” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 31 (3) 2002: 79–89. The delegations were led respectively by President of the Palestinian Legislative Council Abu Ala’, and Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben Ami. The members of the Palestinian delegation were Nabil Sha’ath, Saeb A’reikat, Yasser Abed Rabbo, Hassan A’sfour, Muhammad Dahlan; the Israeli delegation comprised Yossi Beilin, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Gilead Sher, Israel Hassoun and Yossi Sarid.
- 70 Beilin’s version is unclear about the difference between sovereignty and control over the Temple Mount, and is unclear about the difference between the Temple Mount and other “holy places.” The sovereignty over the last “remains open, lingering somewhere between the Clinton proposal and internationalization” (*The Path to Geneva*: 246).
- 71 In Beilin’s version there is not a schedule for the withdrawal but only an “international presence” in the Jordan Valley (*Ibid.*).
- 72 Beilin’s version states only that “almost full agreement was reached with respect to principles for resolving the problem” (*Ibid.*: 247).
- 73 See Sher, G., *Just Beyond Reach*: 216. Sher refers to about 15,000 refugees, but a Palestinian source supportive of Arafat refers to about 100,000. See Rahman, A. A., “Revisiting Israeli-Palestinian Peace Negotiations on the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1991–2000” (n.p.), working paper for the *BADIL Expert Forum*, Ghent University, Dept. Third World Studies, May 22 2003: 15. The source however quotes from a speech by Abu-Mazen at a meeting of the PLO’s Palestinian Central Council, in September 9 2000. According to Clinton, Arafat insistence on the right of return, “was a deal breaker.” “There are not going to be two majority-Arab states in the Holy Land” (*My Life*: 943.) Akram Hanieh resumes the Israeli position in the lines stated here. See “The Camp David Papers:” 83–85. See also Drucker, R., *Harakiri*: 198.
- 74 Cf. Edelist, *Ehud Barak*: 364–5. See also Bar-Tal, D., “Camp David, Oslo and the Future (Interview with Dan Meridor)”: 67. There are indications of the inner struggle in the Palestinian team also in the issue of Jerusalem. Ross tells that Dahlan was ready to postpone the negotiations on Jerusalem. For Dahlan would be enough if “[We] should start only with a general outline on Jerusalem in any paper we initially offered.” Abu Ala’, on the contrary, like Arafat, was against “going ‘light’ on Jerusalem” (Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 659).
- 75 Quoted by Charles Enderlin, in *Shattered Dreams*: 232. He quotes also Mubarak as believing that the issue of Jerusalem should be postponed since no Arab leader can accept the division of the Sanctuary/Temple: 237.

- 76 Barak, quoted by Edelist, R., *Ehud Barak*: 364–5.
- 77 Quoted by Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 665.
- 78 In a round of talks after the summit, when Ross proposed to Barak some ideas elaborated with Amru Moussa, Barak “stressed that Israel could not surrender sovereignty over the Temple Mount to the Palestinians” (Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 617). Ross comments: “That was an interesting formulation, implying that Israel might not demand exclusive sovereignty or even require sovereignty as an outcome” (*ibid.*).
- 79 “Barak had modified a seemingly unshakable dogma: he envisaged, for the very first time, the partition of unified Jerusalem, decreed Israel’s ‘eternal capital’ in 1967. The city could now become the capital of two states, even if it was not clear who would own what” (Gresh, A., “The Middle East: How the peace was lost,” *L’Monde diplomatique*, September 2000).
- 80 Moratinos, M., “Taba Negotiations: The Moratinos Non-Paper,” January 28 2001, *MidEastweb*.
- 81 *Ibid.* The “P5” are the permanent members that exercise vetoes over the Security Council’s decisions. Currently only five countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and France—hold permanent seats on the council.
- 82 Shlomo Ben Ami probably made this proposal. See his interview with Shavit, A., “End of a journey,” *Ha’aretz*, September 14 2001.
- 83 Quoted by Lefkovits, E., “Sharon’s planned visit to Temple Mount angers Palestinians,” *The Jerusalem Post*, September 27 2000.
- 84 Beilin, Y., “The Paradox of Jerusalem,” *Ha’aretz*, April 1 2003. In this review, he also asserts that the Camp David summit failed, not because the Palestinians did not offer counter-proposals, but because their demands were rejected by Israel. He also proposes the division of Jerusalem (“in order to free ourselves from ruling over 220,000 Palestinians who do not want us.”) While in Camp David was being discussed the issue of Jerusalem, Beilin pressured the delegation for concessions to the Palestinians by organizing a tour on July 23 for some members of the Parliament and other public figures in order to show them that the city is divided de-facto and should be divided de-jure. The message to Arafat was that he has partners for the division of the city. Arafat, encouraged by Beilin’s message, on July 25 Arafat rejected Clinton’s proposal for Jerusalem. (Beilin, *The Path to Geneva*: 166). In Beilin’s mind, it should be divided since it is divided:

...[W]hen you come to Jerusalem, you see how divided it really is, and it becomes clear that it was never actually united. This is the greatest illusion—that it is a united city. There are areas which you cannot visit. You cannot collect taxes. You never send the police there—it is simply

beyond the horizon. And this is under both Likud and Labor municipalities. It is an illusion that has been put past the Jewish people for decades. They are paying lip service to a united city which has never actually be united (*ibid.*: 166.)

- 85 For an Israeli source of Clinton's words, see "Israeli Notes from December 23 meeting with Clinton," *CNN.com*, January 5 2001. See *Al-Hayat*, December 28 2000, and *Newsweek*, December 30 2000. President Clinton outlined his proposal during a speech to the Israel Policy Forum on January 7 2001, which was published by *Reuters* the same day. The Palestinian reservations about the proposal were published in *Al-Ayyam* on January 2 2001. The Israeli reservations have not been published. Dennis Ross included Clinton's proposal in the appendix to his *The Missing Peace*: 801–5. See Ruebner, J., "Israeli-Palestinian Permanent Status Negotiations: Bolling AFB and Taba Talks," February 13 2001. Clinton's own recount of his words appeared later in his biography: *Territory*: "94 to 96 percent of the West Bank for the Palestinians with a land swap from Israel of 1 to 3 percent ... the land kept by Israel would include 80 percent of the settlers in blocs." *Security*: "withdraw over a three years period while an international force would be gradually introduced with ... a small Israeli presence in the Jordan Valley could remain for another three years under the authority of the international forces." The Israelis would "maintain their early-warning station in the West Bank with a Palestinian liaison presence. In the event of an 'imminent and demonstrable threat to Israel's security,' there would be provision for emergency deployments in the West Bank." The Palestinian state: "would be 'nonmilitarized,' but would have a strong security force; sovereignty over its airspace, with special arrangements to meet Israel training and operational needs; and international force for border security and deterrence." On Jerusalem: Arab neighborhoods will be "in Palestine and the Jewish neighborhoods in Israel ... the Palestinians should have sovereignty over the Temple Mount/Haram and the Israelis sovereignty over the Western Wall and the 'holy space' of which it is a part, with no excavation around the wall or under the Mount, at least without mutual consent." On refugees: the new state of Palestine,

[S]hould be the homeland for refugees displaced in the 1948 war and afterward, without ruling out the possibility that Israel would accept some of the refugees according to its laws and sovereign decisions, giving priority to the refugee population in Lebanon. I recommended an international effort to compensate refugees and assist them in finding houses in the new state of Palestine, in the land-swap areas to be transferred to Palestine, in their current host countries, in other willing nations, or in Israel. Both parties should agree that this solution would

satisfy UN Security Council Resolution 194... the agreement had to clearly mark the end of the conflict and put an end to all violence. I suggested a new UN Security Council resolution saying that this agreement, along with the final release of Palestinian prisoners, would fulfill the requirements of resolutions, 242 and 338 (Clinton, B., *My Life*: 836–7).

- 86 *MidEastweb*. Retrieved January 28 2004, from www.mideastweb.org.
- 87 Drucker, R., *Harakiri*: 307. According to Drucker, the members of this cabinet decided to “give him (Barak) a lesson.” This book contains a plethora of information, including plenty of naïve explanations like this one.
- 88 Bodansky, Y., *The High Cost of Peace*: 419.
- 89 Quoted by Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 737.
- 90 Dennis Ross, a professional negotiator, who therefore, tends to avoid controversies, as much as possible, says that the real purpose at Taba “was not to reach agreement, but on the Israeli side to try to constrain what Sharon could do and on the Palestinian side to try to get the Bush administration to buy into the Clinton ideas” (*The Missing Peace*: 757.). It is worth to note that according to Ross’s explanation of the purpose of the negotiations, the negotiators were not trying to do something for the sake of Barak’s victory. It was already clear that he would lose the elections, and the question was whether it would be a real defeat or merely an honorable loss.
- 91 *CBS news*, January 22 2001. Retrieved January 28 2004, from www.cbsnews.com.
- 92 Morris contends, “Barak proposed Israeli-Palestinian condominium or UN security council control or ‘divine sovereignty’ with actual Arab control” (Morris, B. “Peace? No chance,” *The Guardian*, February 21 2002). I will treat with caution the idea that Barak thought about the UN Security Council as an option, since it is contrary to every other declaration Barak has made. Regarding the other two proposals, they indeed are in accordance with his other declarations. Jerusalem mayor Ehud Olmert and Ziad Abu Ziyad backed the idea of “divine sovereignty” (Lefkovits, Keinon, and Lahoud, “Olmert backs ‘divine rule’ for Temple Mount,” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 31 2000). King Hussein proposed this solution on April 18 1994: “Address on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Restored Dome of the Rock.”
- 93 *Financial Times*, January 29 2001. Unintentionally, Ron Pundak discloses the inner struggle at Barak’s government, when he said that “even though the Prime Minister earlier had announced his Camp David proposals to be

- null and void. ... The subsequent Israeli proposals came much closer to a possible fair deal" ("From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?" 43).
- 94 Quoted by Yossi Beilin in "An Interview with Yossi Beilin," *Tikkun*, 18 (6) November–December 2003.
- 95 For Yossi Beilin's bitter criticism of Barak, see his *Manual for a Wounded Dove* and *The Path to Geneva*. Beilin also supported Arafat's leadership even after the *Camp David II* summit. See "A Partner for the Future—Why Israel Still Needs Arafat," *L'Monde Diplomatique*, January 2002. In an attempt to de-legitimize Barak's policy, he states that Barak was against Taba precisely because of its success: "The reopening of the negotiations would expose him to new Palestinian ideas which he would be unable to accept and which would nullify his achievements at Camp David" (*The Path to Geneva*: 179). Under Beilin's interpretation, Barak is uninterested in peace but in a struggle for prestige. This is either Beilin's childish assumption or Barak's childish behavior. Since both options appear to be far-fetched, they are really an expression of Beilin's disapproval of a policy that he is not ready to reveal.
- 96 This conclusion is supported by Edelist, *Ehud Barak*: 454–60. According to Edelist, members of the Israeli delegation to Taba—especially Beilin and Ben Ami—offered personal proposals on their own initiative, even against Barak's directives.
- 97 *CNN.com*. Retrieved January 28 2004, from www.cnn.com.
- 98 *Palestinefacts.org*. Retrieved January 28 2004, from www.palestinefacts.org. Thomas Friedman reports that "Mr. Arafat's performance at Davos was a seminal event, and is critical for understanding Ariel Sharon's landslide election ... the press is asking exactly the wrong question about the Sharon election. They're asking, who is Ariel Sharon? The real question is who is Yasir Arafat?" ("Sharon, Arafat and Mao," *The New York Times*, February 8 2000).
- 99 *CNN.com*, January 30 2001. Retrieved January 28 2004, from www.cnn.com.
- 100 To learn about Peres's efforts to "convince" Barak to resign and to become the candidate even three days before the elections, see Beilin, Y. *The Path to Geneva*: 216–9. It should be clear that this scenario was unlikely to occur, and that Peres could not believe in it. The meaning of his efforts was to turn the defeat into a rout.
- 101 Clinton said that if Arafat would not reject an agreement "Barak might be able to come back and win the elections, though he was running well behind Sharon in the polls, in an electorate frightened by the intifada and angered by Arafat's refusal to make peace" (*My Life*: 943.) He adds: "Arafat never said no; he just couldn't bring himself to say yes I

- warned Arafat that he was single-handedly electing Sharon and that he would reap the whirlwind" (*ibid.*: 944).
- 102 *The Path to Geneva*: 219.
- 103 Agha, H. and R. Malley, "The Last Negotiation:" 13.
- 104 Clinton's proposals, December 23 2000, reported by Palestinian sources to *Ha'aretz*. *L'Monde diplomatique*.
- 105 Agha, H. and R. Malley, "The Last Negotiation": 14.
- 106 See "The Palestinian position, Remarks and Questions from the Palestinian Negotiating Team Regarding the United States' Proposal," January 1 2001, *L'Monde diplomatique*.
- 107 See Moratinos, M., "Taba Negotiations: The Moratinos Non-Paper," January 28 2001, *MidEastweb*, art. 4.5.
- 108 "We Confirmed the Absolute Right of Every Refugee to Return within the Green Line," reported by Hamad, S., *Al-Hayat*, February 2 2001.
- 109 See his interview with Ari Shavit, "End of a Journey," *Ha'aretz*, September 14 2001.
- 110 For a comprehensive study of the problem of military strategic depth in Israel, see Allon, Y., "Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders," *Foreign Affairs*, 55 (1) 1976: 38–53. See my "The Political Meaning of the Neutron Bomb and Israel's Nuclear Policy," *Annals of the Oranim Circle*, 2, 1978, and my "Causes and Results of Political Assassination: On Rabin's Legacy," 2000: 245–58.
- 111 O'Sullivan, Arich "Israel navy seeks strategic role," *The Jerusalem Post*, December 12 2003.
- 112 Peres, S. and Littell, R., *For the Future of Israel*: 112. Israel had "built a nuclear option not in order to have a Hiroshima but an Oslo." "I think without it [the nuclear option], we would not have the Oslo Agreement" (Quoted by Yudelman M., "Peres Indicates Israel's Nuclear Capability," *The Jewish News Weekly of Northern California*, Jul 14 1998). Dimona was a "moral choice founded upon a realistic basis," he says, which helped persuade Egypt to sign a peace deal in 1979 at Camp David. "Israel's nuclear capacity is a matter of suspicion, but as long as suspicion can serve as a deterrent [to Arab attack], then it is a deterrent" (Quoted by Peterson, S., "Israel's Only Option Is Peace, Says Ex-Premier," *Christian Science Monitor International*, August 6 1997). "The suspicion about the presence of nuclear weapons in Israel is the best deterrence factor against Iraq and Iran" (*Al Hamishmar*, September 29 1994).
- 113 Sharon, A. and Chanoff, D., *Warrior*: 381.
- 114 For an extensive analysis of the threat posed to Israel by a strategy based on nuclear deterrence, see Maoz, Z., "The Mixed Blessing of Israel's Nuclear Policy," *International Security*, 28 (2) 2003: 44–77. As much as I know, he

- brings there the best arguments against a nuclear policy including operative proposals how to put it to an end. See also "Israeli's March of Folly," *Ha'aretz*, November 15, 1996.
- 115 Allon, Y., "The Case of Defensible Borders:" 43.
- 116 Kissinger, H., "What We Can Do," *Newsweek* 139 (13) January 4 2002.
- 117 Riedel, B., "Camp David—The US-Israeli Bargain," *Bitterlemons.org* (26), July 15 2002. Riedel was the President's Special Assistant for Near East and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council.
- 118 *Ha'aretz*, July 6, September 14 2001. See Tovy, J., "Negotiating the Palestinian Refugees," *The Middle East Quarterly*, 10 (2) 2003: 39–50.
- 119 Sher, Just Beyond Reach: 216. Arafat's reaction to the "Marshall Plan" was, "I do not need your money" (Quoted by Enderlin, C., *Shattered Dreams*: 204).
- 120 Shavit, A., "Taba's Principle of Return," *Ha'aretz*, July 11 2002.
- 121 UN Resolution 194, General Assembly, December 11 1948.
- 122 Shavit, A., "Taba's Principle of Return," *Ha'aretz*, July 11 2002. See *Israel Resource Review*, July 11 2002.
- 123 *Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved January 31 2004, from www.mfa.gov.il. The words in square brackets are the additions or changes of the same text as they appear in the appendix of Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 804. The words in italics are skipped in Ross's version.
- 124 Austin J. L., *How to Do Things with Words*, edited by J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà, Harvard University Press, 1975.
- 125 Heller, A., *A Theory of History*: 30.
- 126 Clinton states in his biography, that his proposal of December 23 2000 "would satisfy" UNCR 194, and proposed a new UN Security Council resolution. *My Life*: 937.
- 127 Beilin, Y., "What really happened at Taba," *Ha'aretz*, July 16 2002.
- 128 *UN Resolution 194*, art. 7.
- 129 Clinton's proposals, December 23 2000, reported by Palestinian sources to *Ha'aretz*. *L'Monde diplomatique*.
- 130 Edelist, R., *Ehud Barak*: 342. Yossi Beilin however, insisted, in an interview with Akiva Eldar, basing his proposal on UN resolution 194: "194 was not just a basis upon which the solution will be established, but that the solution we suggested is already the implementation of 194 and from then on there would be no more claims." "No more claims," means here no more than what was stated by 194. In any case, his proposal does not come instead of 194. See Eldar, A., "The Refugee Problem at Taba [Interview with Yossi Beilin *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture*, 9 (2) 2002:13.
- 131 Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 675.

- 132 Judging by the fact that Sher was Barak's advisor, it seems that he was manipulated by Ben Ami. However, I have no proofs for this contention.
- 133 Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 678.
- 134 See *M and B I*, par. 125–6. The Israeli team at the negotiations with Syria included Netanyahu himself; then Minister of Defense Yitzchak Mordechai; Uzi Arad, the prime minister's diplomatic adviser; and Danny Naveh, the cabinet secretary. Others involved included Ya'akov Amidror, an aide to Mordechai, and Brigadier General Shimon Shapira, military secretary to the prime minister. On the Syrian side, Assad depended primarily on Foreign Minister Faruq Ash-Sharia' and Walid Mualem, his ambassador in Washington. Cf. Pipes, D., "The Road to Damascus: What Netanyahu almost gave away," *New Republic*, July 5 1999. See also Rabinovich, I., *Waging Peace*: 128–9.
- 135 It is remarkable that this apparently insignificant meeting took place before the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, and therefore deserves fuller treatment than is not possible here.

Chapter Five

- 1 On March 4 2002, following the deaths of 21 Israelis in two attacks at the weekend, Sharon promised "continuous military pressure" against the Palestinians and vowed that there could be no negotiations before the Palestinians are "badly beaten...so they get the thought out of their minds that they can impose an agreement on Israel that Israel does not want" (*Time*, March 5 2002).
- 2 The same logic applies to Shimon Peres when he publicly revealed that Mohammed Dahlan was holding talks with Hamas's leaders in order to put an end to terrorist attacks. Dahlan was forced to deny the "accusation." For an account of all these events, see Eldar, A., "Someone is not Telling the Truth," *Ha'aretz*, September 24 2002.
- 3 See Nusseibeh, S., "What Next?" *Ha'aretz*, September 24 2001. Balaban, O., "To be against Nusseibeh Means to Cooperate with Arafat," *Ha'aretz*, July 16 2002.
- 4 Sharon, A., Interview, "Moked," *Israeli TV channel 1*, December 16 1987. His proposal included investing in housing, education and development of infrastructures for the Palestinians.
- 5 *Yediot Aharanot*, February 26 1988. Azmi Bishara wrote a documented article on Sharon's policy. Making a distinction between the facts, the quotations and Bishara's own stance, makes it a very informative piece: Bishara, A., "Sharon's Palestinian 'state'," *Al-Abram*, 648, July 24 2003.

- 6 See Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the events at the refugee camps in Beirut, February 8 1983.
- 7 A paradox of medieval logic concerning the behavior of an ass that is placed equidistantly from two piles of food of equal size and quality. If the behavior of the ass is entirely rational, it has no reason to prefer one pile to the other and therefore cannot reach a decision over while pile to eat first, and so remains in its original position and starves. The so-called “Buridan’s ass paradox” does not appear in Buridan’s writings. It may, however, have originated as a caricature against Buridan’s theory of action, which attempts to find a middle ground between Aristotelian intellectualism and Franciscan voluntarism by arguing that the will’s freedom to act consists primarily in its ability to defer choice in the absence of a compelling reason to act one way or the other. See Spinoza, B., *Ethics*, II, prop. 49, sch. I.
- 8 See, for example, Schelling, T., *Strategy of Conflict*, *passim*.
- 9 See Aguinis, M., “Quien siembra vientos,” *3 Puntos*, Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, April 25 and May 3 2002. See also Morris, B., “Peace? No Chance,” *The Guardian*, February 21 2002.
- 10 *Madame Secretary*, 2003: 494–5.
- 11 Beilin, Y., “Be Ready for the Next Speech,” *Ha’aretz* December 19 2003. For the same idea, see Agha, H. and R. Malley, “The Last Negotiation”: 12.
- 12 Rabinovich, I., *Waging Peace*: 160.
- 13 See Walsh, E., “The Prince,” Interview with Prince Bandar bin Sultan, *The New Yorker*, 79 (5) March 24 2003: 48–61.
- 14 See Silver, E., “Mr. Oslo—Interview with Uri Savir,” *The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*, October 27 2000.
- 15 See Pundak, R., “From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong? *Survival*, (43) 3 2001: 31–45.
- 16 See Podhoretz, N., “Intifada II: Death of an Illusion?” *Commentary*, 110 (5) December 2000: 27–38. “Oslo: The Peacemongers Return,” *Commentary*, 112 (3) October 2001: 21–33.
- 17 See Klein, M., “The Myth of Camp David,” *Ha’aretz*, July 11 2002.

Chapter Six

- 1 The “Defensive Shield Operation” took place in the Jenin refugee camp on 9 April 2002. It was launched by IDF following a series of terror attacks inside Israel culminating in the suicide attack on the Park Hotel in Netanya on 27 March 2002, which claimed the lives of 29 Israelis. The fighting in the city of Jenin and its adjacent refugee camp persisted for ten days, from 3–12 April. By the end of April 12, the predefined targets were occupied, many explosives laboratories and weapon-manufacturing work-

shops were exposed, and numerous armed Palestinians were detained. Documents captured during the operation prove that the Fatah movement and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades are one and the same. The documents clearly indicate that not only are the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades a pseudonym for taking responsibility for terrorist attacks carried out by Fatah. According to the captured documents, at the head of the pyramid was Yasser Arafat. One of the documents, which concerns a request to aid detained or wanted terrorists (belonging to the Fatah and the Palestinian security apparatuses) is addressed by the Fatah and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades to Yasser Arafat personally. At a delicate time, when General Zinni was trying to convince Arafat to agree to a cease fire, two suicide attacks were carried out inside Israel. According to the document, these attacks put Arafat “in a difficult position” vis-à-vis General Anthony Zinni. Arafat opened the meeting by saying that “the two attacks, today and yesterday, came at an inappropriate time because of Zinni’s presence” (i.e. Arafat is not criticizing the very perpetration of suicide attacks directed at civilians, but only the tactical difficulties caused by their timing). For source and documentation, see “Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center” at the *Center for Special Studies* (C.S.S). Retrieved March 21 2004, from www.intelligence.org. Initially, officials of the Palestinian Authority claimed that the Israelis had deliberately massacred 3,000 people, and were burying them in mass-graves. However, on April 30, Kadoura Mousa Kadoura, the director of Yasser Arafat’s Fatah movement for the northern West Bank dropped the death toll to 56 people, including armed combatants. Further investigation by the United Nations and international reporters confirmed that only 52 Palestinians were killed in the operation, 22 of whom were civilians. In late April and on May 3, 2002, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch respectively released their reports about the IDF incursions into Jenin. They agreed with the total casualty figures provided by the IDF but claimed a higher proportion of the civilian casualties. To settle the contradictory claims, a fact-finding mission, was proposed by the United Nations on April 19 2002. Israel initially agreed to co-operate with the enquiry, but put up a set of conditions to do so. Among these were that the mission should include anti-terrorism experts, that UN desisted from its right to prosecute Israeli soldiers for potential violations of international law and limited its scope exclusively to events in Jenin. The UN refused to accept the last two conditions and ultimately disbanded its mission. Source: *WorldHistory.com*. Retrieved March 20 2004 from www.worldhistory.com.

- 2 For the discussion on the right of return see chapter 4 § 3.

- 3 See Strauss, M., *Volition and Valuation*: 117–8.
- 4 Eldar, A., “What we are fighting for?” *Ha’aretz*, April 24 2001. See also *M and A I*: par. 24. Barak always referred to the alternatives of reaching a peace agreement or exposing the Palestinians’ “real face.” This is Beilin’s version. See *The Path to Geneva*: 151.
- 5 Itamar Rabinovich says, cautiously, that if Barak’s intention was to pull the mask off Arafat’s face, “he cast a shadow on the sincerity of his own (genuine) quest for a definitive agreement” (*Waging Peace*: 177).
- 6 See Pundak, R., “From Oslo to Taba: What Went Wrong?” *Survival*: 31.
- 7 In an interesting remark, contrary to the semi-official belief that neither Peres nor Rabin were aware of the Oslo negotiations, Madeleine Albright contends that it was Peres who “initially launched the Oslo negotiations” (*Madam Secretary*: 291). Her version contradicts Beilin’s version, who recalls that Rabin was against negotiations with Palestinians who are not members of their delegation in Washington. In order to not put Peres into an uneasy situation with Rabin, Beilin, so he alleges, decided not to tell him about the Oslo track. See Beilin, Y., *Touching Peace*: 58.

Chapter Seven

- 1 Hegel Contends that a judgment is an identical relation between subject and predicate, only for abstract and everyday thinking. Actually, when both sides of a judgment are regarded as being in concrete relations with other concepts, the subject has a number of determinations other than that of the predicate, and also the predicate is more extensive than the subject, and therefore the subject is not the predicate and even contradicts it. He recognizes that the nature of the judgment appears paradoxical and bizarre for those who are not familiar with philosophy. Cf. *Science of Logic*, I (Note 2).
- 2 Cohn, J., “Reality and Contradiction”: 383.

Chapter Eight

- 1 Agha, H. and R. Malley, “The Last Negotiation”: 10–18.
- 2 Akram Hanieh describes Arafat’s policy as oriented toward the internationalization of the conflict. He recalls that at *Camp David II*:
 Every morning, Planning and International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath would take from his pocket a long list of telephone numbers of people he had to call, and he would give each and every one of them a briefing on the situation. Among those he would call were the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia; the Saudi

ambassador to the United States; the European Union's Middle East envoy, Miguel Moratinos; and a number of Russian and French officials. Every day new names would be added to the list, such as Algerian and United Arab Emirates officials. President Arafat then added two more names and numbers: the Syrian charge d'affaires and the Lebanese ambassador in Washington. Arafat had sensed how the Americans would try to twist his arm and took precautions ("The Camp David Papers:" 89).

3 Kissinger, H., *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* 165.

4 Cf. The following were Rabin's words in a radio interview regarding an eventual peace agreement with Syria:

There are four major components which have still not been resolved: the depth of the withdrawal, the schedule for the withdrawal, that is, its duration; the third matter, obviously, involves the stages in the implementation of peace; as with Egypt, we insist that there be a protracted phase of normalization in other words, open borders and embassies, even before we complete our withdrawal to a yet undetermined line, and the fourth issue is security arrangements that is, those things connected with the changes required by peace, such that Israel and Syria are shielded from the unexpected (*Israeli Radio Interview*, August 1 1994).

Cf. also the words of Ehud Barak in an interview on January 23 1996:

I believe that we should stick to the formula negotiated by the late Prime Minister Rabin. It said the depth of withdrawal would be commensurate with the depth of peace. Namely, if we can get full normalization, full open peace with open trade, open transportation, free flow of goods and people over the border, and if we get compliance, namely including Lebanon and other states, if we get into regional economic projects and if attention will be given to our security needs, then we would be able to consider what is the depth of withdrawal that we can afford (Retrieved January 13 2004, from www.mfa.gov.il).

5 Gordon, E., "One-sided concessions," *The Jerusalem Post*, July 14 1998.

6 Quoted by Kissinger, H., *Years of Renewal*: 378.

7 *Clio and the Doctors*: 125.

8 See my "Time, Understanding, and Will," *Diogéne*, 190, 2001: 3–27.

9 Agha, H. and R. Malley, "The Last Negotiation": 11.

10 As a further ratification of their stand, see their analysis of Sharon, Arafat and Abu-Mazen in a late article in the *NYRB*. There they argue:

The so-called *Road Map* for peace is a document manufactured elsewhere, chosen by others for the three of them to continue their decades-old fight through different means. They have been at it for long enough; they have seen proposals like these come and go. So they will adjust. But in truth it is an odd and awkward choice. Sharon sees the roadmap as a nuisance, Arafat as a diversion; Abu-Mazen alone views it as worthwhile, but then again principally as a potential way out of the

current mess. None of the three sees it for what it purports to be: a plan designed to reach a final settlement within three years. Not one of them truly believes in the logic of its gradualist, staged approach to peace-making, which amounts to Oslo under a different name. Like so many plans before it, it is not its direct practical outcome that matters so much as its political effect—how its various actors will exploit it to maximize their very different, even contradictory goals (Agha, H. and R. Malley, “Three Men in a Boat,” the *NYRB*, 50 (13) August 14 2003).

The only operative conclusion here is an imposed peace. It is clear that beyond changes in circumstances, their stand remains the same.

- 11 Agha, H. and R. Malley, “The Last Negotiation”: 12.
- 12 For the text of the Road Map, see A Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.
- 13 For the text, see *The Geneva Accord—Draft Permanent Status Agreement*. Malley explains, however, that Alexis Keller, with the financial support of his father, a retired Swiss banker, “was the engine that wouldn’t allow this process to fail” (Elaine Sciolino, “Diplomatic Amateur Primes Unofficial Israel-Palestinian Talks,” *The New York Times*, December 4 2003). The *Geneva Accord* is also inspired in Miguel Moratinos’s nonpaper. See “Taba Negotiations: The Moratinos Non-Paper,” January 28 2001, *MidEastweb*.
- 14 For a commentary of the operative meaning of the *Road Map*, see Inbar, E., “Compass for a Road Map,” *The Jerusalem Post*, March 9 2003. See also his “The Allon Plan via the Road Map?” *The Jerusalem Post*, June 8 2003.
- 15 Agha, H. and R. Malley, “The Last Negotiation”: 16.
- 16 Oren, M. B. and Klein Halevi, Y., “Fantasy,” *New Republic*, 229 (24) December 15 2003: 21.
- 17 Cf. Ross, D., *The Missing Peace*: 733–5.
- 18 As reported by Aluf Benn, *Ha’aretz*, January 2 1996.
- 19 *Ha’aretz*, December 9 1995.
- 20 It is interesting to remark, that when Beilin explained his opposition to Barak’s proposals regarding Jerusalem, he quotes Ehud Olmert, the mayor of Jerusalem, saying to Barak: “You will see that you cannot divide it—because people will have to go through four sovereignties in order to get from one place to another, from your workplace to your home, and this is crazy” (As quoted by Beilin in *The Path to Geneva*: 165.) Beilin adds that “Barak had indeed not prepared a plan of the contiguity of Jerusalem.” However, Beilin believes that such a plan is impracticable and the city should actually be divided. See *ibid*: 162–6.
- 21 See R. Malley and H. Agha’s criticism of the *Road Map* in “A Durable Middle East Peace,” *The American Prospect*, 14 (10) November 1 2003.

- See also their "Let Israelis and Palestinians Vote on a Final Settlement," *The Guardian*, September 8 2003, where they say: "The Road Map will fail, but there is a better way."
- 22 Oz, A. "We Have done the Groundwork of Peace," *The Guardian*, October 17 2003.
- 23 "Remarks by president Clinton at Israel Policy Forum Gala," *L'Monde Diplomatique*, January 7 2001.
- 24 See "Be prepared for Sharon's next Address," *Maariv*, December 19 2003.
- 25 Referring to the Middle East, Henry Kissinger said that "the beginning of wisdom is to recognize the impossibility of a final settlement under current conditions. Some crises can only be managed, not solved" (Kissinger, Henry, "What We Can Do," *Newsweek*, 139 (13) January 4 2002). Dan Meridor even thinks about a peace agreement in which Jews will be allowed to live as a minority in a Palestinian State:
- I don't see any reason why a Jew can't choose to live in Hebron. Schem (Nablus), Tel Aviv or London. It's all the same. People should be allowed to live anywhere, and a Jew should be allowed to live anywhere, particularly if it's in the Land of Israel. However, if a Zionist wants to live in a (Palestinian) state, where the Jews are not the majority, he should have the right to do so, but he cannot dominate it. Arrangements should be made about these issues, though I don't want to go into details here (Bar-Tal, D., "Camp David, Oslo and the Future (Interview with Dan Meridor):" 67).
- 26 Bishara, M., "The Geneva Accord: A Critical Assessment," *The Daily Star*, December 1 2003.
- 27 Steinitz, Y., "The Growing Threat to Israel's Qualitative Military Edge," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, 3 (10) December 11 2003.
- 28 Ross, D. and D. Makovsky, "The Fence Need Not Be the End of the Road," *Financial Times*, October 13 2003.

Chapter Nine

- 1 Hanieh, A., "The Camp David Papers:" 81.
- 2 Dahlan opposition to Arafat is well known. He declared that if it is necessary, he is prepared to disarm the militias by force (*BBC News*, April 25 2003), and on September 29 2003, *CBS News* reported that "As thousands marched to mark the three-year anniversary of the revolt, the ousted Palestinian security chief said his people were better off before they launched their uprising against Israel." Abu-Mazen, in an address before the PLO leadership in Gaza Strip, also expressed his view that the intifada brought more damage to the Palestinian cause than benefit. See *Ha'aretz*, November 27 2002. In a TV interview, he also said:

We will make every effort and utilize all our resources in order to put an end to the militarization of the *Intifada*, and we will succeed. The armed *Intifada* must be ended and we must use nonviolent means (originally: “Wasa’il Silmiyah” – peaceful means) in our effort to end the occupation and the suffering of the Palestinians and the Israelis, in order to build the Palestinian state... our goal is clear and we will implement it resolutely and uncompromisingly, namely (bring about) the complete cessation of the violence and terror ... and we will act vigorously against the incitement to violence and hatred, in every possible way and using all possible means. We will take steps to ensure that the Palestinian institutions carry out no incitement (*Abu Dubai TV*, June 4 2002).

Abu-Mazen told the Palestinian Legislative Council in Ramallah on April 23 2002 that: “Ending the armed chaos, which carries a direct threat to the security of the citizen, will be one of our fundamental missions ... There is no place for weapons except in the hands of the government ... There is only one authority” (See the Official Website of the Palestinian National Authority. Retrieved January 28 2004, from www.pna.gov). A’sfour was also against the *Intifada*. He stated:

But despite all the destruction and reoccupation of the Palestinian lands, the people have decided not to turn Sharon’s dreams into facts, realizing that the price will be high, and may be very high when it comes to the number of Palestinians killed as martyrs or injured or detained. We do realize the importance of not letting the Zionists win (Hassan A., “Resistance, but with a Vision of Peace,” *Al-Abram*, September 26 2002).

- 3 Albright, M., *Madame Secretary*, 2003: 485.
- 4 Aaron Miller, the US negotiator, says that this idea was, in part, the motive behind the Camp David summit: “President Clinton decided to convene Camp David in part due to an impending fear of a serious confrontation if no agreement was reached by September” (“The Israeli-Palestinian Crisis,” *The Middle-East Forum*, October 26 2000).
- 5 The negotiations were going on and off throughout 2000; various impasses were reached and work-arounds were found. The chronology included these events:
 - November 14 1999: Barak and Arafat met in Tel Aviv.
 - January 4 2000: Steering committee agreed on 5% redeployment, part of the second redeployment.
 - January 30 2000: Multilateral track of Madrid Framework resumed in Moscow.
 - March 9 2000: Barak-Arafat Ramallah agreement on completing the second redeployment; permanent status talks to resume.

- March 21 2000: Palestinian and Israeli negotiators resumed permanent status negotiations at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington, DC.
 - April 11 2000: Clinton-Barak met in Washington, DC.
 - May 15 2000: Interim Agreements Steering and Monitoring Committee met in Jerusalem after new fighting.
 - May 22 2000: Barak cut off talks due to violence in territories.
 - June 6 2000: US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with Barak and Arafat (separately) to push for progress toward framework agreement.
 - July 5 2000: President Clinton invited Barak and Arafat to summit at Camp David.
- 6 Between the need to choose to argue that Clinton and Barak were aware of this simple fact or that they made a big miscalculation, namely, between the need to argue for their Machiavellianism or their political immaturity, Kissinger opted for the second choice: Clinton and Barak’s “belief” “proved to be an extraordinary miscalculation” (Kissinger, H., *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?* 177).
 - 7 Maj. Gen. Amos Malka was Director of Military Intelligence (1998–2001), and Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad was head of research in Military Intelligence between 1996–2001. See Drucker, R., *Harakiri*: 204. Margalit, D., “Unnecessary Excitement on the Left,” *Maariv*, June 15 2004. Harel, A., “Military Intelligence Points Finger at Arafat,” *Ha’aretz*, June 8 2001.
 - 8 At this point, I do not need to enter into the details of Barak’s proposal and the difference between the Palestinians and Israel regarding the total amount of land under discussion. However, for those details see Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem, “The Withdrawal Percentages: What Do They Really Mean?” January 2001. Retrieved March 8 2004 from www.poica.org.
 - 9 According to Madeleine Albright, Arafat did not made any effort in his Arabic speeches to prepare his people for compromise and a new Palestinian consensus (*Madame Secretary*, 2003: 483).
 - 10 See Gambill, G. C., “The Peace Process after Camp David,” *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, 2 (7) August 5 2000. The third deployment was part of “phase three” of the Wye River memorandum, or “phase two” of the Sharm El Sheik memorandum, signed on September 4 1999. The redeployments that were accorded were
 - a. On September 5 1999, to transfer 7% from Area C to Area B;
 - b. On November 15 1999, to transfer 2% from Area B to Area A and 3% from Area C to Area B;
 - c. On January 20 2000, to transfer 1% from Area C to Area A, and 5.1% from Area B to Area A.

The redeployments were conditioned on the taking of efficient and effective actions against terrorism, violence and incitement. All of the necessary measures should be taken in order to prevent such occurrences. The Wye River and Sharm memoranda always remained a matter of dispute.

- 11 Nigel Parry, while trying to make an effort to defend the idea that Arafat did make a counterproposal, has no proof of that, other than general statements about Palestinian concessions over the time. See “Misrepresentation of Barak’s Offer at Camp David as ‘generous’ and ‘unprecedented,’” *The Electronic Intifada*, March 20 2002.
- 12 According to Albright, Barak believed that “in the “pressure cooker” environment of a summit, President Clinton would be able to “shake” Arafat into an agreement” (Albright, M., *Madame Secretary*, 2003: 482).
- 13 Shavit, A., “End of a Journey,” *Ha’aretz*, September 14 2001.
- 14 According to David Matz, the Taba talks were probably proposed by Shimon Peres during a Peace Cabinet meeting on January 16 2001, and “Barak seems not to have given a clear mandate to the whole negotiating team, so each negotiator inferred their own” (Matz, D., “Trying to Understand the Taba Talks—Part I,” *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics Economics and Culture*, 10 (2) 2003: 97).
- 15 See Ehrenfeld, R., “Down and Out in Palestine,” *The Washington Times*, March 14 2001. Also see from the same author, “Intifada Gives Cover to Arafat’s Graft and Fraud,” *Insight on the News*, 17 (26): 44, July 16 2001, and *Funding Evil*, 2003.
- 16 Interview with Rachel Ehrenfeld, *Frontpagemag.com*, January 15 2004.
- 17 Ehrenfeld, R., “And a Thief, Too—Yasser Arafat Takes what he Likes,” *National Review*, 54 (14): 30, July 29 2002.
- 18 For a very detailed account of this struggle along the history of the conflict, see Nimrod, Y., *War or Peace?*
- 19 Kissinger, H., *Years of Renewal*: 377–8.
- 20 Said, E., “What Can Separation Mean?” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 455, November 11 1999.
- 21 Avineri, S., “Peacemaking—the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs*, 57 (1) 1978: 69.
- 22 Michael Ignatieff writes: “When terrorist strike against constitutional democracies, one of their intentions is to persuade electorates and elites that the strengths of these societies—public debate, mutual trust, open borders, and constitutional restraints on executive power—are weaknesses. When strengths are seen as weaknesses, it is easy to abandon them” (*The Lesser Evil*: 80).

- 23 David Fromkin, early in 1975, asserts that the nature of terror as a political strategy “has not yet fully been appreciated” (“The Strategy of Terrorism,” *Foreign Affairs*, 53 (4) 1975: 684).
- 24 Collingwood, R. G., *Essays in Political Philosophy*: 179.
- 25 Gaugele, v. J., “Der Terror darf unser Leben nicht verändern” (Interview with Javier Solana), *Bild am Sonntag*, March 21 2004.
- 26 Bastasin, C., “L’Europa vincerà la paura con le armi della politica” (interview with Romano Prodi), *La Stampa*, March 15 2004.
- 27 As quoted by Tremlett, G., “Kofi Annan calls Aznar Author of his Own Defeat,” *The Guardian*, March 18 2004. As the title explains it, the UN Secretary General adds his voice to this line of thought, believing that it was not Bin Laden who won the elections in Spain, but it was Aznar’s anti-terrorist policy that defeated him.
- 28 Zakaria, F., “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy,” in *Foreign Affairs*, 76 (6) 1997: 22–43. He developed his point of view in a later work, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*.
- 29 Zakaria, F., “America’s New World Disorder,” *Newsweek*, September 15 2003.
- 30 Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) was a military strategy that began to emerge after the Kennedy administration. MAD reflects the idea that one’s population could best be protected by leaving it vulnerable so long as the other side faced comparable vulnerabilities. The doctrine assumes that each side has enough weaponry to destroy the other side and that either side, so that neither side will dare to launch a first strike because the other side will launch on warning (also called fail deadly) resulting in the destruction of both parties. The payoff of this doctrine is expected to be a tense but stable peace. The doctrine was satirized in the 1964 film *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. See Kissinger, H., “NATO: The Next Thirty Years,” *Survival* 21 1979: 264–68. Parrington, A., “Mutually Assured Destruction Revisited: Strategic Doctrine in Question,” *Airpower Journal*, 11 (4) 1997: 4–20.
- 31 Shimon Peres sustains the same idea: “After World War II, the central problem was communism. Today it’s terrorism. The distinction favors communism, because it was never as aggressive as terrorism” (“An Israeli View,” interview, *Bitterlemons.org*, 46, December 23 2002).
- 32 Zakaria, F., “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy”: 36.
- 33 Zakaria, F., “The Radicals Are Desperate,” *Newsweek*, March 15 2004.
- 34 Ignatieff, M., “Lesser Evils,” *The New York Times Magazine*, May 2 2004. In *The Lesser Evil*, Ignatieff makes efforts to cope with the real paradoxes and complexities of defending democracy when terrorism tries to force

- democracies to betray their own principles by using anti-democratic means to defend themselves. See mainly pp. 82–144.
- 35 Hoffman, B., “Terrorism and Counterterrorism,” *U. S. Foreign Policy Agenda*, 6 (3) 2001: 24.
- 36 Ignatieff, M., “Lesser Evils,” *ibid.*
- 37 Cf. Hoffman, F. G., *Homeland Security*: 18.
- 38 Shimon Peres agrees with Zakaria also in this point: “I don’t believe in Huntington’s clash of civilizations; within every civilization there’s a clash” (“An Israeli View,” interview, *Bitterlemons.org*, (46), December 23 2002).
- 39 Huntington, S. P., “Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3) 1993: 22–48. See also *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*: 183–245.
- 40 Byman, D. L., and Pollack, K. M., “Democracy in Iraq?” *The Washington Quarterly*, 26 (3) 2003: 124.
- 41 *Ecclesiastes* 1:9.
- 42 Hume, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature*: Bk. 2, Pt. 3, Sec. 9, Par. 20/32: 444.
- 43 Eban, A., “Camp David—the Unfinished Business,” *Foreign Affairs*, 57 (2) 1978: 343.
- 44 Mandel, N. J., *The Arabs and Zionism*: 150.
- 45 Cohen, M., Interviewed by A. Rabinovich, “How Jews Fared ‘Under Crescent and Cross,” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 17 1997. See his discussion of historical myths in *Under Crescent and Cross*: 3–15.



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