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**THE ROLE OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN ACTORS IN THE MIDDLE
EAST PEACE PROCESS (1967-2020)**

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Resul YALÇIN

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**ORTADOĞU BARIŞ SÜRECİNDE İNGİLİZ VE AMERİKAN
AKTÖRLERİN ROLÜ(1967-2020)**

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**Danışman
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Resul YALÇIN**

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ABSTRACT

Palestine as a geopolitically important location in the world has been focus of the Western countries since the 19th century. The rise of colonial struggles between the Great Powers in the 20th century has led them to latch onto Palestine, and develop their ambitious strategies for regional governance. The Jewish immigrations accelerated after the Balfour Declaration by Britain in 1917 and the establishment of Israel 1948 have caused endless conflict in the region.

The initial focus of the study is first to gather evidence regarding the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and analyze the peace plans on Palestine-Israel conflict after the World War II. The study later evaluates the role of the British and American actors, in the Middle East peace process between 1967-2020. Third, the discussion focuses on some of the critical junctures in the peace process: UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, Camp David Accords in 1978, Oslo Agreement in 1993, Camp David Summit Meeting in 2000, Taba in 2001, Geneva Accord in 2003, and lastly the Trump Peace Plan in 2020. The study focuses on the explanation and interpretation of past events based on available materials. Therefore, the analysis applies “Historical Research Method” in order to comprehend complex nuances, communities, concepts, events, and even thoughts and ideas of the past that have an impact on the present.

The results of the research reveals that the development of the problem has been largely based on the way the regional and global powers have been involved in the issue. Compared to regional states, global powers, especially Britain and the USA, have been more decisive in the course of events since they had a greater impact on the past, present and future of the problem. Despite the involvement of various actors in the peace process, the solution of the Palestinian issue still remains uncertain. Britain as the root cause of the Palestinian issue due to the Balfour Declaration has been actually concerned about the protection of its regional interests rather than a sustainable peace since the beginning of the process. Similar to Britain, other Western powers such as the United States and France have failed to produce stable and consistent policies towards

the peace process since they have primarily given weight to their own interests. The course of event in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict demonstrates that peace and cooperation plans have not solved the conflicts in the past, nor do they offer hope today.

Keywords: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Middle East, Peace process, Historical research method.



ÖZ

Ortadoğu'nun merkezinde jeopolitik öneme sahip Filistin, 19. yüzyıldan itibaren Batı ülkelerinin odak noktası haline gelmiştir. 20. yüzyılda büyük güçler arasındaki sömürge yarışı, yarışın taraflarının Filistin'e odaklanmalarına ve bölgesel hakimiyete yönelik stratejilerini geliştirmelerine neden olmuştur. 1917 yılında İngiltere'nin Balfour Deklarasyonu'nu ilan etmesi ve 1948'de İsrail'in kurulmasından sonra hızlanan Yahudi göçleri bölgede sonu gelmez çatışmalara yol açmıştır. Anlaşmazlığın çözümü için İngiltere ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri başta olmak üzere Batılı devletler işbirliği planlarını hayata geçirmek için büyük çaba sarf etmişlerdir.

Bu çalışmanın birincil odak noktası, İsrail-Filistin çatışmasının tarihsel arka planına ilişkin kanıt toplamak ve II. Dünya Savaşı sonrası Filistin barış planlarını analiz etmektir. Çalışma sonrasında İngiliz ve Amerikan hükümet makamlarının nihai hedeflerini, büyük vizyonlarını ve Filistin'e ilişkin faaliyetlerini değerlendirmektedir. Üçüncü aşamada, çalışma BM Güvenlik Konseyi'nin 242 sayılı Kararı (1967), Camp David Anlaşmaları (1978), Oslo Anlaşması (1993), Camp David Zirvesi (2000), Taba Anlaşması (2001), Cenevre Anlaşması (2003) ve son olarak 2020 yılındaki Trump Barış Planı olmak üzere barış sürecindeki bazı kritik dönemeçlere odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, tarihin mevcut olaylar üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmek amacıyla, geçmiş olayların gerçeklere ve olayların nedenlerine dayalı olarak açıklanması ve yorumlanmasına odaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, analiz, günümüz üzerinde etkisi olan karmaşık nüansları, toplulukları, kavramları, olayları ve hatta geçmişin düşünce ve fikirlerini anlamak için "Tarihsel Araştırma Yöntemini" kullanmaktadır.

Araştırmanın sonuçları, İsrail-Filistin meselesinin gelişiminin büyük ölçüde bölgesel ve küresel güçlerin konuya nasıl dahil olduğuna bağlı olduğunu göstermektedir. Küresel güçler, özellikle İngiltere ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, bölgesel devletlere kıyasla, sorunun dünü, bugünü ve geleceği üzerinde daha fazla etkiye sahip olduğunda olayların gidişatında daha belirleyici olmuştur. Barış sürecine çeşitli aktörlerin dahil olmasına rağmen, Filistin sorununun çözümü hala belirsizliğini korumaktadır. Balfour Deklarasyonunun ilanı ile Filistin sorununun kökünü oluşturan

İngiltere, sürecin başlangıcından bu yana sürdürülebilir bir barıştan ziyade kendi bölgesel çıkarlarının korunması nedeniyle endişe etmektedir. İngiltere'ye benzer şekilde, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Fransa gibi diğer Batılı güçler, öncelikle kendi çıkarlarına ağırlık verdikleri için barış sürecine yönelik istikrarlı ve tutarlı politikalar üretememiştir. İsrail-Filistin ihtilafındaki gidişat, barış ve işbirliği planlarının geçmişteki ihtilafları çözmediğini, ve barış sürecinin bugün de geleceğe dönük umut vermediğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İsrail-Filistin çatışması, Ortadoğu, Barış süreci, Tarihsel araştırma yöntemi.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Cooperation
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	General Assembly of the United Nations
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Bayt al-Maqdis is a geopolitically important location in the World. It has been one of the most controversial political issues facing with the Western countries' interest since the 19th century. The colonial struggles between the Great Powers has led them to dispose of Palestine, one of the lands of the Ottoman Empire. The diplomatic and political attempts of the Western countries have resulted in the never-ending Palestine tragedy.

The aim of Britain was to secure the transportation routes with its colonies in the East and strategic waterways in the Mediterranean. Britain had, therefore, tried to maintain good relations with the Ottoman Empire until the end of the 19th century to advance its interests in the region. By the WWI, Palestine and its surroundings were still part of the Ottoman Empire. This continued until some Arab forces supported by the British revolted against the Ottoman Empire. Britain annexed the region after the war in 1918. With the resolution of the League of Nations adopted on 25 April 1920, Britain was given the mandate authority to administer Palestine and the Transjordan regions, both of which had been part of Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years, but lost to Britain after the First World War.

Britain's strategic interests in Palestine paved the way for the Balfour Declaration in 1917. British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour sent the letter called the "Balfour Declaration" to the Zionist leader Lord Rothschild on 2 November 1917. There were promises in Balfour's letter that Britain would use its best endeavours to establish a national home for Jewish people in Palestine. With the occupation of Jerusalem by British General Allenby on 11 December 1917, British military rule began in Palestine. On 24 July 1922, the League of Nations sanctioned British annexation of Palestine at a private meeting at St. James Palace in London. Britain accepted the Palestine mandate by releasing a 25-article memorandum on 16 September 1922

(Kasalak 2016: 71). First Britain seized the former Ottoman lands in the “Middle East” in 1917, and then established a mandate in 1922.

By supporting Zionism, Britain has guaranteed her long-term interests deriving from an alliance between Jews and Britain (Torlak 2010: 32). The organization called the Lovers of Zion began to organize the immigration of Jews to Palestine in the 1880s. The immigrations to Palestine by the “Zion Lovers” had an important impact on laying the foundations of the Zionist ideology (Deveci 2017: 4). The synchronization of the Zionists’ goals of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine and Britain’s pursuit of dominance in Palestine enabled the illegal Jewish settlement in the region while expelling Palestinians from their homelands.

Moreover, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 181 adopted on 20 November 1947, divided the Palestinian lands between Jews and Arabs. Before the vote for the Resolution in the General Assembly, the American administration and the Zionist lobbies all over the world exerted pressure on many states and even forced and threatened them to vote positively (Aral 2021). This was the explicit violation of Article 2/4 of the United Nations (UN) Founding Treaty, which prohibited states from resorting to military force or the threat of force in their international relations. On the other hand, the UNGA does not have the right to establish a state and its resolutions are not binding. Although the majority of the people living in the Palestinian territories in 1947 were Arabs, the partition plan left more than half of the Palestinian territories to the Jews. Furthermore, as a result of the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War, Israel captured a large part of the historical Palestinian lands. The UN Founding Treaty prohibited the use of military force in international relations and the acquisition of a country as a result of the use of “a fortiori” military force. Israel’s illegal territorial gains led to the implementation of the occupying and aggressive Israeli policies until today. Since the Resolution recommended to create independent Arab and Jewish States and a Special International Regime for the city of Jerusalem, the issue of Palestine turned into the Arab-Israeli conflict and gained an interstate and multidimensional character.

In order to settle the conflict, Western states, especially Britain and the United States (US), have made a great effort to implement cooperation plans. However, peace

and cooperation plans have not solved the conflicts in the past, nor do they offer hope today. For this reason, the role, influence and activities of British actors in the Middle East peace plans has been a matter of interest. In this context, this study tries to answer what kind of ultimate goals, grand visions and specific activities inextricably related to Palestine the British and American governmental actors have. This question helps the analysis further comprehending to what extent these actors have accelerated the peace process. Lastly, the study discusses how certain the future of the peace process will be. In search for answers to these questions, this study aims to understand the British policies towards Palestine and examine the root causes of conflict. Therefore, this thesis examines the involvement of the British actors in the Middle East Peace process and assess their roles in the peace process. The study also provides an analysis of various strategies adopted by Britain to examine, control and resolve the conflicts.

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the 20th century, the increasing colonial struggles between the Great Powers triggered their imperialist ambitions on Palestine, one of the lands of the Ottoman Empire. Palestine as a geopolitically important area in the world turned into the center of the international competition and endless oppression of the Israeli occupation. What kind of developments are main reasons of occupation, strife and violations of human rights in Palestine? What are the debates over the issue of Palestine? Although the dominant idea in the literature, especially in the Western sources considers the Palestine issue as the Israeli-Arab or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this study has different arguments. The beginning of the Palestine issue was the process by which Britain occupied the former Ottoman lands, with Jerusalem in its center, then defined the region as "Palestine" and established a Palestinian mandate in 1922. In the second half of the 20th century, the USA has taken over the responsibility of the issue and its disproportionate and unconditional support to Israel became the primary reason of protracted deadlock in the region. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the role of the British and American actors' ultimate goals, grand visions and specific activities

inextricably related to Palestine. This study aims to analyze the historical background of the Palestine issue and the British and American governmental actors' place in the development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Middle East peace process. In this study, it is questioned how the peace process turned into a state of protracted Middle Eastern deadlock. Accordingly, it is aimed to contribute to the related academic literature by presenting a critical analysis of the British and American policies toward Palestine in order to understand the development of the Palestine issue.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis will attempt to answer the following questions.

- ❖ What are the British and American governmental actors' ultimate goals, grand visions and specific activities inextricably related to Palestine?
- ❖ What is the primary role of the British and American actors in the issue of Palestine?
- ❖ To what extent have the British and American actors accelerated the peace process?
- ❖ What kind of developments can be considered as critical junctures of the peace process?
- ❖ How certain is the future of the peace process?

1.3. RESEARCH AIMS

Research aims of this study are;

- ❖ Discovering the emergence of the Palestine issue in the historical perspective,
- ❖ Understanding how the Jewish settlement have been encouraged in the occupied Palestinian territory,
- ❖ Trying to comprehend responsibilities of the British and American policies for a Jewish pseudo-homeland in Palestine and the establishment of Israel,
- ❖ Analyzing the reasons behind the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the turning points in the strife,

- ❖ Exploring the British and American governmental actors' ultimate goals, grand visions and specific activities inextricably related to Palestine,
- ❖ Explaining the primary role of the British and American actors in the development of the peace process,
- ❖ Analyzing the key developments that can be considered as critical junctures of the peace process,
- ❖ Discussing the current position and future prospects of the peace process.

The Palestinian issue has developed in the framework of the isolation of the Palestinians from the global system, and more specifically, the passive attitude of the peace negotiations toward the occupation, armed intervention, covert operations and grave human rights violations in Palestine. Negotiations between Great Britain and the US with regard to Palestine resulted in the British Mandate in May 1922. The Mandate for Palestine enabled the immigration of Jews living mainly in Europe into Palestine. The Jewish settlements with the help of Britain forced Palestinians out of their lands and homes in huge numbers while making them refugees in their own country. The settlements triggered civil disturbances and conflict in the region and the peace efforts have since remained hopeless due to the United States' unequivocal support for Israel.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

According to the 22nd Article of the League of Nations Convention, which was signed in 1919 and entered into force in 1920. The temporary mandate regimes were formed by Britain and France in the region after the withdrawal of the Ottoman forces from the Middle East at the end of the World War I. It was stated that people living in these lands would be able to establish their own independent states. In other words, Britain would give Palestinians the right for self-determination as soon as the people of Palestine was ready to determine their own future an independent Palestine state would be established. The right of self-determination, as a post-WWI concept, predicted that the will of the majority would be decisive on behalf of the human community, which had the right to independently determine its own future in a certain country (Aral 2021).

Accordingly, in the independence process of countries such as Iraq, Syria and Jordan, the right of self-determination was put into practice on the basis of the will of the Arab majority. On the other hand, the principle of self-determination was explicitly violated when the British mandate for Palestine (1922-1948) enabled Jews from all over the world to settle in Palestine and gave them broader privileges despite the fierce opposition of the Arabs. The settling Zionists started to expel Palestinians from their homes.

However, many Western researchers describe the Palestine issue as the fight between the Palestinians and Jews for the control of Bayt al-Maqdis and establishment of their national states. This research provides a comprehensive approach to the root of the problem based on the critical analysis of the British and American actors' role in the development of the issue and the peace process. This study combines the regional and international perspectives with a historical approach and tries to understand the current position and the future prospects of the issue. As indicated earlier, looking from the Western perspective and analyzing pro-Western studies cannot contribute to explain the primary reasons behind the Palestine issue. Therefore, the significance of this research is to provide different perspectives to the historical analysis of the issue and the critical approach to the peace process.

1.5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on the explanation and interpretation of past events based on 'facts' and cause of events with the aim of analyzing the impact of history on the present events. Therefore, the analysis applies "Historical Research Method" to recover the nuances, social groups, concepts, and events of the past in a systematic way and their effects on the present (Berg and Lune 2012: 305). The study uses a qualitative research method through developing a narrative explanation of findings obtained from reports, official records, the secondary resources such as academic writings, newspapers and internet archives about the related debates.

Although there are different opinions about the scientific validity and reliability of historical research method, the literature agrees on the method's contribution to the field in respect to understanding reason, date and course of past events (Bhatt and Bhatt 1994: 156). To answer the questions of "How?", "When?" and "Why?" provide a comprehensive perspective of the present followed by the predictions of future scenarios. Since the conflicts in Palestine is still on the international agenda, historical research method helps us to interpret the evidence regarding the past for our understanding of the issue of Palestine.

The hypotheses tested in the study are;

- ❖ The Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate System for Palestine until 1948 was the root of the Palestine issue.
- ❖ The British and American governmental actors have been actually concerned about the protection of their regional interests rather than a sustainable peace since the beginning of the process.
- ❖ The two-state solution or the one-state solution dominated by Israel is the approach of states and international organizations that support the Zionist state, or at least do not openly oppose it.

1.6. RESEARCH SCOPE

Since the Middle East War of June 1967, there have been many peace plans and negotiations like UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, Camp David Accords in 1978, Oslo Agreement in 1993, Camp David Summit Meeting in 2000, Taba in 2001, Geneva Accord in 2003, and lastly the Trump Peace Plan in 2020. Western actors have developed a variety of methods that can control, resolve, and examine the roots of conflicts. Especially Britain and then the United States of America (USA) played a significant role to determine the fate of Palestine. This research primarily gathers evidence regarding the historical background of the issue of Palestine, and the British and American governmental actors' role in the peace process. The study later analyzes the peace plans on Palestine after the World War II (WWII) and evaluates the plans for

interpretations and critiques of the British and American actors' ultimate goals, grand visions and activities related to Palestine.

1.7. THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several primary and secondary sources have been used in this research. Although many resources are accessible with the help of advanced technologies and digital libraries today, not all academic researches are published in open access sources. The research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the lockdowns and measures to prevent the spread of the virus, some print sources could not be obtained. The books such as *Israel's Colonial Project in Palestine* by Elia Zureik, *Araftaki Filistin* (Palestine in Limbo) by Süleyman Seydi and Can Deveci, *The Case for Palestine: An International Law Perspective* by John Quigley, *The Politics of Empire: The US, Israel and the Middle East*, James Petras and *War against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification* by Jeff Halper could not be reached through open access libraries.

1.8. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of this study presents the historical roots of the issue of Palestine. Additionally, it illustrates the role of the British and American actors in the peace process. While many studies treat Israel as a “normal” state, this study explains the establishment of Israel as a colonial-settler state as a result of the former British Mandate of Palestine strengthened with the international support of the USA in the second half of the 20th century.

The book titled *Kudüs: Tarih, Din, Siyaset* (Al-Quds: History, Religion, Politics) edited by Abd al-Fattah el-Awaisi and Muhittin Ataman consists of three main parts: “historical and religious background”, “theoretical and legal framework” and “political developments and current issues”. The book includes ten articles related to religious, historical, legal, strategic and political importance of al-Quds. In the book, authors claim that the issue of Bayt al-Maqdis is not just a Palestinian problem. The book

argues that at a time when the USA ignores the main principles of the international order built under its leadership, the future of the Middle East has become more uncertain and sensitive than ever before. Israel's arbitrary, unilateral and therefore unlawful policies threaten not only regional stability but also the continuation of the global order. The decisions of the USA and Israel regarding Jerusalem pave the way for other regional and global powers to follow a similar path, to ignore the rule and norm-based global system, and to maximize their own national interests through the use of force. Therefore, the authors find essential to criticize and examine the unlawful acts in order to prevent or discourage other states or international actors from following the violent political discourse. The book concludes that illegitimate and unilateral political moves will hinder themselves in the long term. The book presents an invaluable contribution to the history of Palestine and indicates how Israel illegally occupied the Palestinian territories by violating the rights of Palestinians. The book does not directly analyze the country-specific policies, especially the British and American strategies, towards the issue. Therefore, this research fills the gap by combining the British and American foreign policies on Palestine and Israel's existence in the region.

In *Uluslararası Politikada Orta Doğu* (The Middle East in World Politics), Yılmaz explains the imperial plans on the Middle East and the role of British and American actors in serving Zionist aspirations for Palestine. The book chronologically explains the important events in the Middle East to provide a better understanding how the British mandate over Palestine prepared the ground for the establishment of Palestine. Yılmaz presents a detailed analysis of the Jewish lobbies and the Western actors to make Palestine into a national home for Jews. The book claims that the sensitivity of Palestine originates in the ethnic, religious and political diversity. However, the issue of Palestine is the result of the dominant powers in the world politics like Britain and the USA. The regional and international competition to control the region culminated in the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The book adopts an explanatory approach rather than a critical view. Therefore, it lacks proper suggestions regarding solutions for the issue.

Fahir Armaoğlu critically discusses the conflict between Arab states and Israel until 1980s in his book *Filistin Meselesi ve Arap-İsrail Savaşları* (The Issue of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Wars). The book starts with the question of “Where is Palestine?” and first presents the historical examination of Palestine. Armaoğlu explains the Arab-Israeli conflict within the context of the establishment of Israel, the 1956 Suez War, the 1962-1970 Yemen Civil War, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the Camp David process. Armaoğlu calls the issue of Palestine as the “Unfinished Symphony” of the age that the Arab-Israeli conflict is the longest of the modern age. The author associates the unfinished conflict between the parties with the authority gap caused by the end of the Ottoman rule in the region. The book contributes to the literature through the critical analysis of the failure of the Arab regimes.

Siyonizm Düşünden İşgal Gerçeğine Filistin (Palestine from Zionism Dream to the Reality of Occupation) also evaluates the issue of Palestine as the Israeli invasion of the region and displacement of the Palestinian people as a result of the Western actors’ intervention. Yaşar et al. (2010) claims that Israel both disrupted the regional order and motivated the Arab unity. However, the Arab states remained weak to unify against Israel. As a result of the wars in the region, Israel became politically stronger and forced the Palestinian people to migrate. According to the authors, the main obstacle to regional peace and order is the arbitrary policies of Israel and the Jewish-Anglo-saxon alliance. On the other hand, the book argues that the Palestine issue was not adopted by the Muslim world in the international arena. Therefore, the authors call Palestine as “the orphan of the Islamic ummah”. The author makes a substantial contribution to the literature by critically questioning the role of the Muslim states in the peace process. Nevertheless, this critical analysis is perceived as a neglect of the Western and Zionist ambitions over Palestine.

Similarly, Khalidi (2006) questions why the Palestinians failed to establish an independent state before the establishment of Israel in 1948. Therefore, his book titled *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* tries to analyze beyond the conflict. Khalidi (2006: 182) states the Palestinians failed in establishing an independent state and possessing “a contiguous, clearly demarcated territory” (Khalidi

2006: 182). On the other hand, the author highlights the impact of Great Britain and the Zionist movement on a series of traumatic impositions on the Palestinian people. The book has a different approach to the issue with the question of why the Palestinian people could not emerge as an independent Arab nation in the history. In 2020, Khalidi published book titled *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017* to evaluate turning points in the struggle over Palestine. The main goal of his book is to highlight the colonial nature of wars on Palestine, and the indispensable role of external powers in waging it (Khalidi 2020: 20). The book has a first-person dimension excluded from scholarly history since it reflects the personal recollections and analysis of the author. This research contributes to Khalidi's analysis through including the chronological development of the peace process together with the role of Britain and the USA in the fate of Palestine.

Aral's (2018) work, "A Critical View of the Scholarly Discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian Problem" has a vital importance in the literature that evaluates the legal side of the scholarly discourse about Israel. He explains why the establishment of Israel cannot be treated as a "normal" state. Aral considers Israel as a colonial-settler state. The state owes its political and legal existence to the former British Mandate of Palestine. It is claimed that the international organizations such as the UN, remained insufficient to utilize the potential of international law while dealing with the Palestinian issue. According to Aral, the majority of the scholars are influenced by the Zionist lobby in the issue of Palestine. Therefore, the literature lacks to offer comprehensive solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In "Understanding the Middle East Peace Process: A historical institutionalist approach", Dannreuther (2010) claims that an attempt to analyze the Palestine issue by strategic competition or by the power of domestic lobbies fails to explain adequately explain the role of the external actors involved in the Middle East Peace Process. According to the author, the scholars should adopt an institutional approach to the development of the peace process. Although Dannreuther (2010) aims to present a practical framework to the peace process by considering it as an institution, its practicability-oriented approach cannot provide convincing arguments. The author

states that the institutionalist approach fosters a framework that enables Israel to cooperate based on a commitment and exchange territory in order to provide peace with the Palestinians and the Arab states. However, the recent decades showed that the Israeli occupation of more lands could not guarantee peace for the Arab states and the Palestinians.

Erkmen (2019) presents a brief historical background of the Palestine issue and the peace process in his work “Ortadoğu Barış Süreci” (Middle East Peace Process). He describes the Middle East peace process as a process based on sovereignty, identity, recognition and territory between Arab states and Israel, which expands with the involvement of the parties involved in the solution of the issue. According to Erkmen, currently the issue is not only related to the establishment of the State of Palestine. The Palestine issue has turned into a problem of Arabs and Jews living in the same geography permanently in peace. In this context, Erkmen evaluates the peace process as a multilateral but inoperative peace mechanism that concerns not only Israel, Palestine and its neighbors, but also all Arab countries and all regional/non-regional countries interested in the process. The author claims that although it was decided that the two-state solution would emerge as a result of bilateral agreements within the framework of the Oslo Accords, the bottleneck in the peace process pushed the Palestinian Authority to take a unilateral step. However, the article does not include the legal aspects of the peace process to discuss why the Palestine administration had to struggle for the independence and peace unilaterally. The discussion needs to touch on the legal gaps and nonconformities during the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The analysis omits the links between self-determination and Palestine, or international law and the establishment of Israel.

In “20. Yüzyıl Başlarında İngiltere’nin Politikası” (The British Policy on Palestine at the Beginning of 20th Century), Eryaman (2016) argues that the main purpose of the British foreign policy since the 16th century has been to reach India and China. Especially after the construction of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the efforts of the Great Powers in Europe to gain a strategic power in the Middle East, the importance of Palestine increased. At the beginning of the 19th century, with the escalation of the

colonial struggles of the Great Powers and the signs of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the British focused on the future of Palestine and began to develop plans in line with its imperialist ambitions. According to Eryaman, Britain supported Zionism to maintain its influence in Palestine. The main argument of the article is that the ultimate aim of Britain was to establish a completely independent Jewish government in Palestine under the British auspices and to have a safe zone on the eastern side of the Suez Canal. Therefore, the reality behind the emergence of Israel has been the British imperialism. Eryaman makes an important contribution through providing a comprehensive analysis that furnishes the literature with the historical evidence to understand the role of the British mandate in the evolution of the issue of Palestine.

1.9. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This master thesis consists of five chapters including introduction and conclusion parts. The rest of the study following the introductory chapter discusses the British and American actors' ultimate goals, grand visions and specific inextricably activities related to Palestine. For this discussion, the second chapter first evaluates a brief historical background of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Based on the timeline of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the chain of events that resulted in the proclamation of a Jewish state in Palestine, the main objectives and results of the British and American foreign policy towards Palestine are examined. The third chapter focuses on the primary peace plans and negotiations regarding Palestine such as UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, Camp David Accords in 1978, Oslo Agreement in 1993, Camp David Summit Meeting in 2000, Taba in 2001 and Geneva Accord in 2003. The fourth chapter is projecting the future of the peace process and potential impact on the British and American actors' on future scenarios. The concluding chapter respectable reveals findings and their relations to the literature. The chapter also considers the contribution of the study to the literature and makes suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

The struggle between the Zionists and the Palestinians developed from one of the longest conflicts in the world. The last 100 years have brought to Palestine colonialism, exile and military occupation that have ultimately turned into the struggle for the right to self-determination for Palestinians in the process of time. Since the World Zionist Congress organized by Theodor Herzl held in Basel in 1897 to establish a Jewish State in Palestine, Jews have invaded Palestine with the help of the European states corresponded to their aims in the Balfour Declaration in 1917. The British Empire to provide a homeland for Jews in Palestine triggered Jewish immigration (Khader 2017: 22) in huge numbers to Palestine.

Accordingly, Jewish immigration to Palestine was accelerated under the British Mandate System since the Balfour Declaration. The Jewish immigration to the region starting in 1922 in huge numbers caused conflicts between the Palestinian Arabs and Jews. Britain intervened in conflicts, mainly because of its individual interests – the control over Suez Canal- or for restoring order in the region (Terry 2017: 189). Conflicts between the Palestinian Arabs and Jews became more intense after the Arab general strike in Mandatory Palestine of 1936 to protest Jewish immigration (Hughes 2009: 313), and Britain realized how difficult to administer the region.

The pan-Arab idea and a vigorous Jewish nationalism (Zionism) in Palestine presented far more complex issues for the Western countries, especially for Britain (Campbell 1961: 17). Therefore, the post-WWII international dynamics has launched an institutionalized coordination for the Middle East peace process (Dannreuther 2010: 190). To provide a comprehensive approach to changing balances and the main goals of

the British and American actors in the region, the historical background of the conflict may explain the origins and significance of events.

Although the issue of Palestine has been linked to the UNGA Resolution 181 (the partition plan of Palestine in 1947) and the establishment of Israel in May 1948 (Erkmen 2019: 1), the conflict in the region has a considerably longer and detailed history (Sommerlad 2021). This chapter presents a brief timeline of the a) Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the chain of events that resulted in the proclamation of a Jewish state in Palestine, b) British foreign policy over the region and the strategies of the British and American actors related to Middle East.

2.1. A BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE PALESTINE ISSUE

The Holyland have special importance due to the city of Jerusalem within its borders, which is considered holy to Islam, Christianity and Judaism. For this reason, the region has almost always attracted attention around the world. Palestine, which came under the Ottoman rule with the annexation at the end of the year 1516, experienced the 400 years of peace and stability under the Ottoman administration, ending in 1917 (*Osmanlı Arşivi Yayınları* 2009: 5). The timeline in this chapter reviews the period of Palestinian history extending from Napoléon's call for Jews to "reclaim their ancestral lands" in 1799 (Dowty 2019: 43) to the present day (Figure 1).

The name of Palestine derives from the Philistines who came to the region from Europe by sea during the migration of tribes in B.C. XII. Century (Karaköse 2018: 151). Since then, the territories have been ruled by various peoples such as Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Seljuk Turks, Crusaders, Egyptians, Mamelukes, Ottomans, British (Karaman 1996). Palestine came under the Ottoman rule during the Egyptian campaign of Yavuz Sultan Selim in 1516 until the defeat of the Ottoman army in the Battle of Jerusalem in December 1917 (Kemal 2014). In 1799, the French military and political leader Napoléon Bonaparte issued the destruction of "ghetto walls" that Jewish people had been urged to live and called them to return their ancestral lands (Dowty 2019: 43).

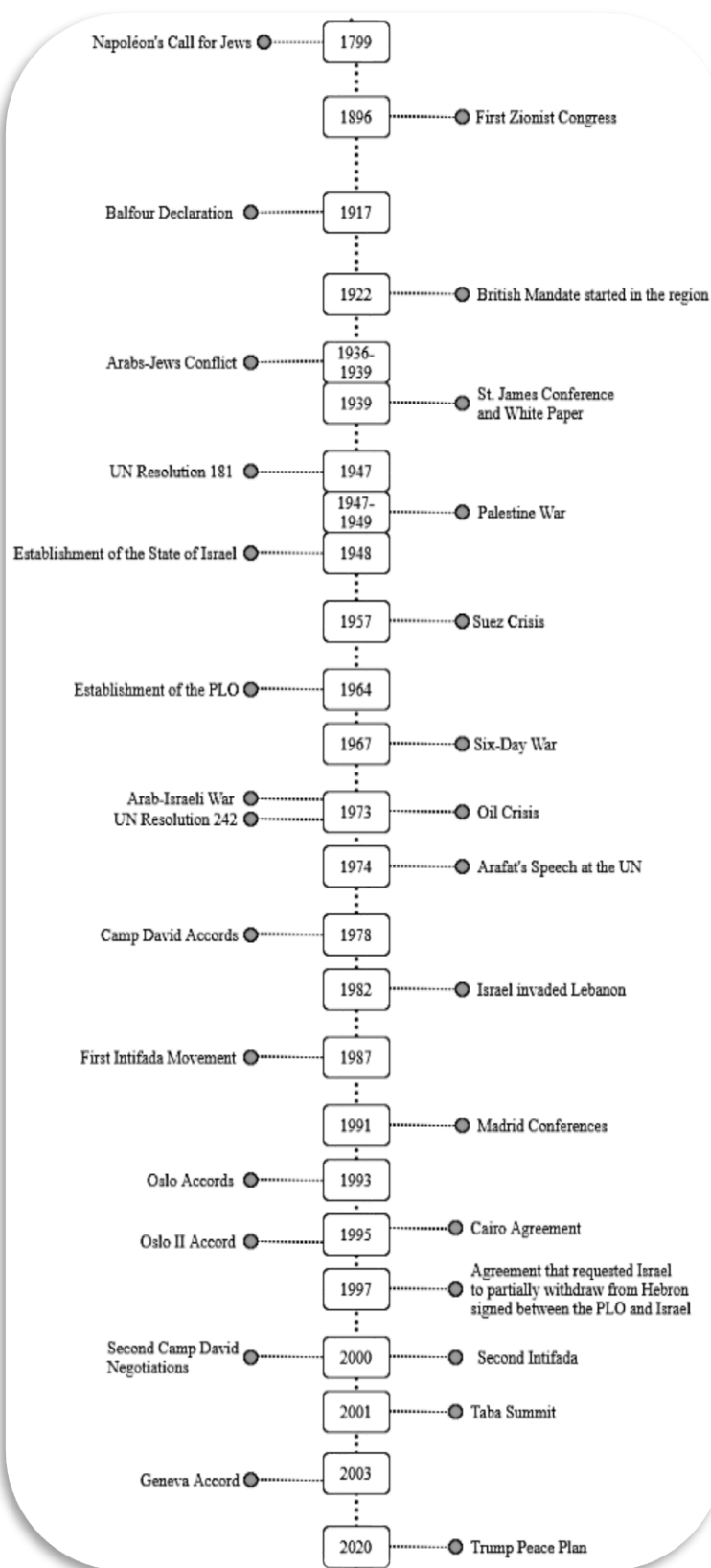


Figure 1: A Brief Timeline of the Zionists-Palestinian Conflict

Source: Figure created by author.

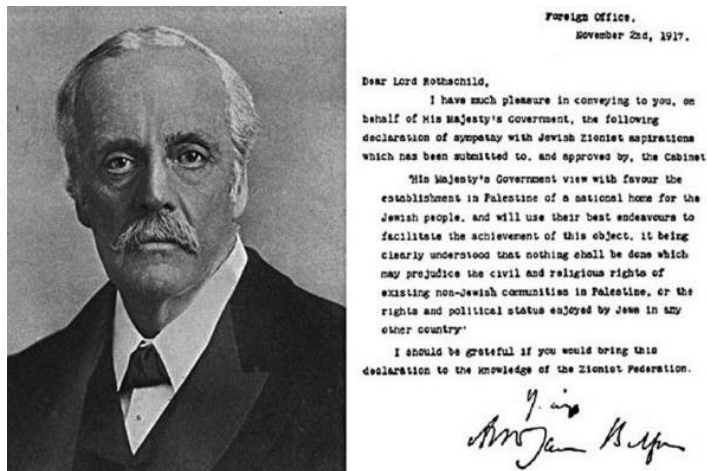
Thus, France was the first state to make imperialist plans regarding the Jews in Palestine. France took the lead in the Palestine project by trying to cut off the contact of this country with British colonies due to the rivalry between two countries over the region. France aimed to seize the dominance of the region after Napoléon Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798. However, after Napoléon had been defeated by the Ottoman and British troops, he planned to reinforce his troops by taking advantage of Jews in the region (Mason 1970: 43-44). Therefore, he made a declaration related to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine on 22 May 1799. The declaration was not supported by Jews because they believed that Napoléon was trying to be effective in Egypt and Jordan (Mason 1970: 183). In parallel with this idea, Napoléon was planning to block Britain's trade route to India (Torlak 2010: 16).

One of the turning points in the history of the region was the French effort to occupy the Holy Land in the late 18th century. The Ottomans were not only that the French occupation affected, but the British interest were also challenged due to its commercial routes in its eastern colonies. Therefore, Britain attempted to control the region again since the crusades. Britain established its influence on the Holy Land with evangelical Protestant groups (El-Awaisi 2020). Because these groups had little representation in the region, the Jews were a means of performing the British interests in the region. A century after Napoléon's call, the First Zionist Congress met in Basel, Switzerland. The journalist Theodor Herzl published a book called "Der Judenstaat" (the Jewish State) in 1896. The Congress discussed his ideas. Herzl was defending the establishment of his own state by the Jews and set forth the idea against the rising anti-Semitism sentiments in Europe (Reimer 2019: 1). Herzl initially requested the support of the Ottoman Sultan. He wrote in his book if the Ottoman Sultan gave Jews Palestine, Jewish people would reciprocate by regulating finances of Turkey. Herzl believed that there should be "a wall of defence for Europe in Asia" and a settlement of civilization "against barbarism" (Polkhein 1975: 76). Since he could not find the expected answer from the Sultan, he turned to Great Britain in 1900. At the end of the First Zionist Congress, the Basel Program was published. The Basel Program conceived of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and the activation of the World Zionist Organization to achieve this goal (Reimer 2019) as well as the Jewish settlements in Palestine and the organization and uniting of all Jews by means of local and international institutions.

The efforts of Herzl were, in fact, vain because Sultan Abdulhamid II prohibited Jews from settling in Palestine with a law enacted in 1888 and limited the stay of Jews as visitors with three months (Karaköse 2018: 152). In support of this idea, the code dated April 22, 1898 was sent by Ali Faruk Bey, the Ottoman ambassador in Washington, to Tahsin Bey, the First Clerk of the Mabeyn and the code stated that a secret Jewish community with its headquarters in America was engaged in activities aimed at establishing an independent state in Palestine (Kürkçüoğlu 1982). Despite the prohibitions of Sultan Abdulhamid, the Jews continued to make various attempts to get more land from Palestine in the following years. For example, they did not neglect to use economic power as a weapon by establishing the “Bank of Jewish Expropriation Zones” and the “Board of Nationalizing Palestine” in 1898, and “the Jewish National Fund” in 1901 (Çelik 1993).

By the WWI, Palestine and its surroundings were still part of the Ottoman Empire. Britain annexed the region after the war, in 1918. With the resolution of the League of Nations adopted on 25 April 1920, Britain was given the mandate authority to administer Palestine and the Transjordan regions, both of which had been part of Ottoman Empire for almost 400 years, but lost to Britain after the First World War. Three conflicting promises were made in this process. In 1916, the British administrator in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, promised independence to the Arabs in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which was secretly signed between France and Britain in 19 May 1916, divided the region between themselves, and it was envisaged to establish an international administration in Palestine (Friedman 1973). In 1917, the British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour promised to establish a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine and stated that the British administration was supporting the promise (Kılıç 2017). The letter sent to Lord Rothschild, one of the leaders of the Zionists, included the promise of a Jewish homeland. This letter is called known as the Balfour Declaration (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Balfour Declaration



Source: Habeeb and Stefanini, 2017: 3.

The Declaration was not just a British policy that many Western governments agreed to the draft such as the USA, France and Italy (Ahmed 1990). Later, the League of Nations ratified the formalization of the Declaration in the 1922-1923 Mandate for Palestine on 24 July 1922 (Mathew 2013). This ratification meant that the recognition of the Jewish claims to the Land of Israel and gave a command to Britain to implement it. Therefore, it was not just a British promise.

After the declaration of Palestine as a national home for the Jews as a result of the Balfour Declaration, a Jewish Brigade was sent to Egypt and then to the Palestine to fight with the British against the Ottomans (Nedim 1995: 2). The British forces defeated the Ottoman Empire and managed to enter Jerusalem in December 1917 (Üzen 2009: 329). The Balfour Declaration led to a brand new era and discussion for the future of Palestine. Before 1917, Zionism was trying to find ground for itself with immigration movements and some political initiatives, but the Declaration brought up Zionism to the international agenda (Ediz 2015). Although the issue of Palestine is referred to the Arab countries' declaration of war against Israel established in 1948 after the UNGA's partition plan for Palestine, it was, in fact, based on the British foreign policy towards the Middle East after the WWI, especially Britain's commitment to establish a "Jewish national homeland" in Palestine with the Balfour Declaration in 1917 (Kemiksiz 2018: 127). An article titled "Zionism in World Politics" by a Jewish magazine published in Pest in 1918 attached great importance to the Balfour Declaration and stated that the British government would make Palestine a Jewish homeland, and that all Allied

Powers had agreed on this issue (Eryaman 2016: 17). Therefore, the Balfour Declaration is of great importance in examining Britain's role in the conflict in Palestine.

The Sykes-Picot Agreement (16 May 1916) signed between Britain, France and Russia during the WWI called the Palestinian territories the “brown area” including Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nazareth, Tiberias, and Gaza (Kramer 2016). Three countries decided to have a special international administration in the brown area under the supervision of European states (Karal 2011). The reason behind this status considered for Palestine was disagreements between the Allied Powers. France wanted to include Palestine in Syria so that the territories would come under its influence. On the other hand, Britain opposed this idea and Russia refused to be excluded from Palestine as a defender of Orthodoxy in the region (Karaköse 2018: 156). The agreement, therefore, focused on a multi-partner international regime in the region (Kasalak 2016). However, the process resulted in Britain’s favor. Under the 22nd article of the League of Nations Convention signed in June 1919, temporary independence was granted to the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire under the British mandate (Karaköse 2018: 157). Subsequently, Britain assumed responsibility in Palestine at the San Remo Conference held in April 1920, and started his duty as the high military commissioner of the civil mandate administration (Bayur 1991). Jews were appointed to important positions in the British mandate administration and encouraged for the immigration to the territories and land acquisition (Karaköse 2018). These supports provided Zionists an economic and political power at the earliest opportunity (Dursun 1995).

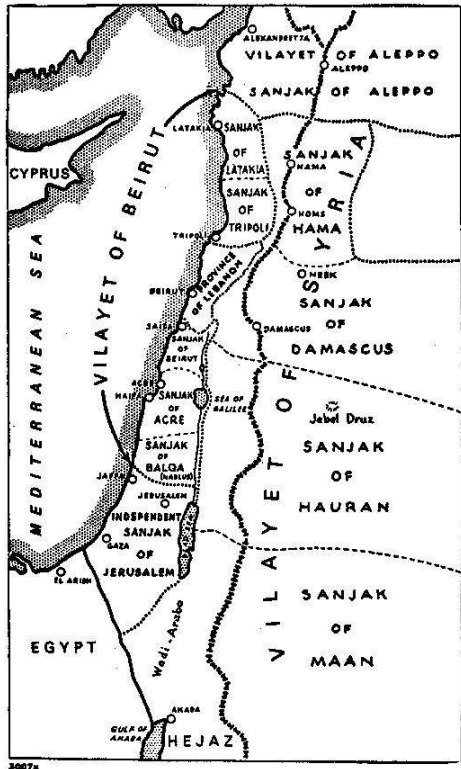


Figure 1: Palestine and Syria in 1915

Source: United Nations, 2002.

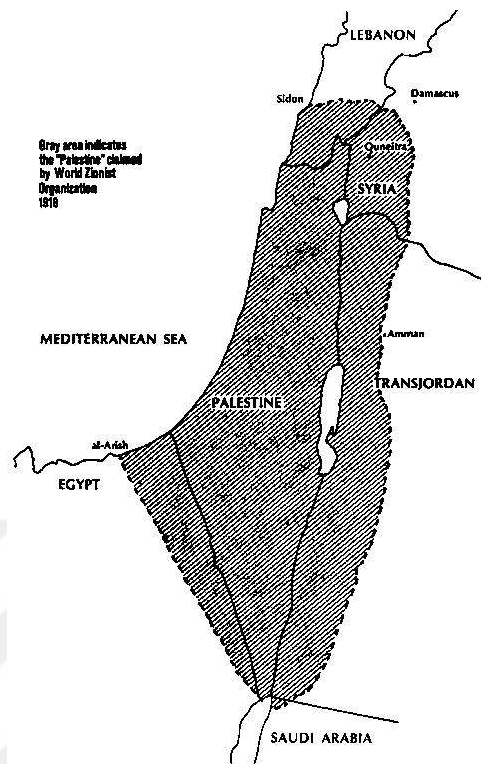


Figure 2: "Palestine" claimed by World Zionist Organization, 1919

Source: United Nations, 2002.

A British census in 1922 showed that the number of Jews in Palestine reached 11 percent of the population of 750,000 (Security Council Report 2007). However, the rising population and influence of Jews was not welcomed by the Arabs and the conflicts began between Arabs and Jews, then Arabs, Jews and the British Administration (Erkmen 2019: 1). The continued military and diplomatic power of imperial Britain followed by extreme economic dependence and limited military capabilities restricted state options for the Arabs (Hinnebusch 2003: 77). For this reason, the British colonial rule and increasing number of Jewish immigrant triggered mass protests escalated into violence. Thus, the 1929 Buraq Uprising displayed how the foreign intervention in the region became such a tragedy that hundreds of Arabs and Jews were killed and injured in August 1929 at the Buraq Wall (Cohen 2015; Ross 2004: 22). Sheikh 'Izz al-Dīn al-Qassām, an icon of the nationalist struggle against the British and subsequently Israel, was killed by the British forces on 20 November 1935 (Moubayed 2006: 392). The Arab reactions turned into civil disobedience with the widespread general strike in 1936. Already by that time, the militant Zionist organization Irgun Zvai Leumi had been carrying out attacks on Palestinian and British

targets for the purpose of “liberating” Palestine (Security Council Report 2007). In July 1937, a Royal Commission in England, chaired by Lord Peel, the former minister of state for India, proposed dividing the region between a Jewish state and Arab states (Stein 1990).

To reduce tension between the parties and encourage stability, Britain undertook the diplomatic responsibility and tried to take a concrete step to bring Jewish and Palestinian Arabs together at the beginning of 1939 (Penkower 2014: 594). The St. James [Palace] Conference was organized to discuss the proposals of all parties, but due to reaching no agreement, Britain established its own policy to extend the British Mandate in Palestine and published the White Paper of 1939 (Cohen 1977: 589). The White Paper limited Jewish immigration to the region and land acquisition, so the policy, dubbed as “the Black Paper” was met with resistance and protests by Zionists (Penkower 2014: 660). The Arab-Jewish conflicts could only be suppressed by the reinforcements sent from Britain in May 1939. However, the outbreak of the WWII forced Britain to reconsider its foreign policy towards Palestine (Ross 2009: 11).

In the post-WWII era, arbitration as a solution for the conflict between Arabs and Zionists shifted from the unilateral efforts by one Great Power to the institutionalist approach (Dannreuther 2010: 191). Britain ruled Palestine since 1920, but relinquished responsibility for resolving the Zionist-Arab conflict to the United Nations in 1947. Hundreds of thousands of Jews fled the Nazi persecution in Europe. These Jewish immigrants arrived in Palestine and made the resolution of the conflict more urgent. United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was established by the UNGA to study the issue. The UNSCOP proposed the partition of Palestine between Palestinian Arabs and immigrant Jews. The Committee also suggested that two separate states- Jewish and Arab – should be established and joined by economic union, with the Jerusalem-Bethlehem region. This region would be under international administration.

The UNGA Resolution 181 on 29 November 1947 was taken after Britain announced its intent to withdraw from Palestine. The Resolution recommended the establishment of the independence of the Arab and Jewish States in the territories. According to Article 14 of the UN Charter, the General Assembly may make recommendations for the peaceful regulation of any situation without regarding origin. These recommendations may also include situations that exist as a violation of the

provisions of the present Charter. Because, as stated in the resolution, the General Assembly “considered that the situation in Palestine is of a nature that would harm the public welfare and friendly relations between nations” and recommended that necessary measures could be taken to remedy this situation through peaceful means. The recommendation of the General Assembly was the adoption and implementation of the Partition Plan, which visualized the establishment of an Arab and a Jewish state in the Palestinian territories and the City of Jerusalem as a corpus separatum (Bektaş and Alan 2020: 368). However, Aral (2021) states that the UNGA Resolution 181 is illegal and illegitimate for many reasons. First, before the voting in the General Assembly on 29 November 1947, the American administration and the Zionist lobbies all over the world exerted pressure on many states and even threatened some of them to vote positively. This is an explicit violation of Article 2/4 of the UN Founding Treaty, which prohibits states from resorting to military force or the threat of force in their international relations. Second, the UN General Assembly is not entitled to partition a piece of land and create a political entity. There is no provision in the UN Founding Treaty to give such a right to the UNGA. Third, the decisions of the General Assembly are not binding. Finally, although two-thirds of the population living in Palestine in 1947 were Arabs, this so-called partition plan allocated only 43 percent of Palestinian lands to Arabs, while leaving 56.5 percent to Jews (Aral 2021).

Britain proclaimed its intention to cease its mandate in Palestine and withdrew on 14 May 1948 the day after the declaration of the State of Israel by Jewish Agency Chairman David Ben-Gurion (Erkmen 2019). Also, the US supported more Jewish refugees to settle in Palestine. This was a sign of increasing American support for Zionism. Both the Arabs and Jews were preparing their forces in case of a war. The ethnic “cleansing operations” organized by the Jewish militia forces in Arab villages in December 1948 pushed the Arab populations into the Gaza Strip (Pappe 2006).

The conflicts that started at the end of 1947 proceeded to another stage after the declaration of the state of Israel on 14 May, 1948 and the First Arab-Israeli War began on May 15, with the involvement of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria in favor of the Palestinians (Erkmen 2019). As a matter of fact, the newly established Arab armies, despite their well-equipped structure, could not defeat Israel because they lacked military discipline and war experience (Laffin 1982: 3). An exception in this sense, the Arab Legions loyal to King Abdullah of Jordan were not completely involved in the war. Only 10% of Arab Legion troops, which was commanded by the British General Glubb, were involved in the 1948 war (Bailey 2019).

This war ended at the beginning of 1949 when Israel signed a ceasefire agreement with each state separately. The State of Israel expanded far beyond what was envisaged in the UN partition plan and took control of approximately 80% of the former Palestinian Trusteeship (Figure 5) (Thrall 2018). The 1947-1949 Palestine War

consisted of two phases. The first phase following the UN Resolution 181 in November 1947 was under the British Mandate, who undertook the obligation of order and stability in the region (Urofsky 1982: 282). The expiration of the British Mandate and the establishment of Israel resulted in the second phase of the war through the involvement of the neighboring Arab states. The War ended up with the defeat of the Arab armies and the 1949 Armistice Agreements signed between the involving parties under the supervision of the United Nations (Herzog 1971).

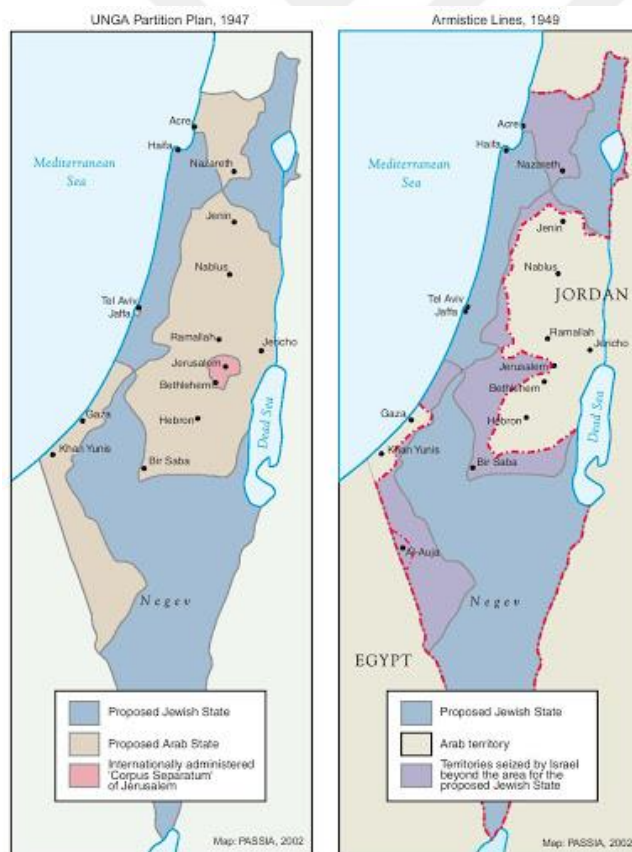


Figure 3: Jewish Territories in UNGA Partition Plan, 1947 vs. Armistice Lines, 1949

Source: PASSIA, 2002.

The State of Israel was announced in Tel Aviv on 14 May 1948. The decision took effect the next day, when the last British troops left the region. Palestinians refer to May 15 as “Al Nakba” or “Nakba Day”, that is, the “Day of Catastrophe/Disaster” since they lost a huge part of their territories (Milshtein 2009: 47). Al-Khalidi (1992: xix) stated that 418 Palestinian settlements were destroyed. After the establishment of the State of Israel, yet more Jewish immigrants brought to the region and illegally settled on the lands which belonged to the Palestinians. The majority of Jews emigrated especially from Europe, as well as Iraq, the USSR and the USA to the newly established state (Erkmen 2019).

On the other hand, with the effect of the Arab-Israeli War in the 1950s, Arab Nationalism also started to rise. This process, which gave its first important result with the Free Officers Movement that brought Gamal Abdul Nasser to power in Egypt in 1952, paved the way for the second war after a while. After the Arab-Israeli war, the monarchies in the Arab states were considered as the reason for the defeat of the Arab armies against the Israeli forces. Moreover, the British role in the establishment of Israel brought “Anglophobia” (opposed to or hostile toward British aspects) and opposition to King Faruk, with whom he had close relations, to the highest level (Özdemir 2016). By 1952, public order began to get out of control and almost all British businesses and institutions witnessed rebellions (Bayraktar 2020: 611). The military cadres who carried out the coup had taken an active role in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and grew up in families with low economic income. Those who carried out the coup were, therefore, perceived as the representatives of the large masses in Egypt and the coup did not encounter any mass objections (Özdemir 2016: 34). In short, the Palestine issue and Zionism plainly became the problem of all Arab states.

In January 1950, Israel declared Western Jerusalem (*Al-Quds*) the capital, ignoring the UN resolutions, and moved its official institutions and government buildings to Jerusalem [Al-Quds] (Karaköse 2018: 160). This move has further increased the tension in the region. In 1956, when Egypt closed the Strait of Tiran to Israeli ships, the Suez Crisis broke out and the 1956 War began between Israel and Egypt, with Britain and France providing support for Israel. Despite Israel’s military advance in the Sinai Peninsula, the war was stopped by the political and diplomatic pressures of the USA and the USSR. As a result, Israel had to withdraw from the Sinai

Peninsula and Egypt also reopened the Suez Canal to Israeli ships (Erkmen 2019). This war enabled the USA and the USSR to be involved in the Arab-Israeli conflicts. Although Egypt suffered military losses in the war, Nasser emerged politically stronger. The most important aspect of the War was that the two countries' mutual perception of security threat peaked. This situation catalyzed the war in 1967.

In 1960s, different organizations were established to fight against the dominance of Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in Al-Quds in 1964. The PLO was subsequently recognized by the Arab states. The Arab states primarily wanted the PLO to continue to be under their control. But the Palestinians desired a genuinely independent organization. Yasser Arafat took over the leadership of the organization in 1969 in accordance with the same desire. The PLO was gaining fame with its operations against Israel.

The rising tension between Israel and Arab states paved the way for the 6-Day War. The War began on June 5, 1967. Israel took Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria (Security Council Report 2007). Israel eliminated Egypt's air force on the first day of the war. Israeli planes destroyed the Egyptian air force before it could even take off. The UN Security Council adopted resolution 242. In the resolution, the acquisition of land by war was rejected, and Israel was requested to withdraw from the places it had captured in the last battles (Erkmen 2019). Palestinians became refugees in the War and migrated to Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.

The last Arab-Israeli War took place in 1973. The war, also known as the "Yom Kippur War", unlike the previous one, this time started with a joint surprise attack by Egyptian and Syrian troops on Israel in October 1973 (Erkmen 2019). Egypt and Syria aimed to take back the lands that they lost in the war in 1967 and could not regain through diplomatic means (Armaoğlu 2017: 320-337). Initially, the Arab states had the upper hand in the war, but Israel quickly restored the balance (Erkmen 2019). Israel eventually went beyond the borders determined by the 1967 ceasefire in some places. Israeli forces crossed the Golan Heights and began to gain ground in Syria, though. In Egypt, Israeli forces gained territory, crossed to the West Bank of the Suez Canal. The war ended through the engagement of the USA and USSR to provide a ceasefire, and initiated what has been introduced as the Middle East peace process (Rynhold and

Spyer 2007: 138). The UN Security Council Resolution 338 was confirmed on the basis of Resolution 242 in 1967. Resolution 242 included Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. The acceptance of the Resolution was regarded as concessions to the Arabs (Torlak 2010: 70). However, there was no change in the lands captured by Israel in the 1967 War. Although the region has not witnessed an Arab-Israeli war again after another critical juncture was added to the Middle East Peace Process after Israel's invasion of the south of Lebanon in 1982 (Erkmen 2019).

The 1973 War intensified the reaction of the Arabs towards the Western countries. This reaction adopted by oil producer Arab countries resulted in an increase in crude oil prices and the implementation of an oil embargo against some countries (Torlak 2010: 48). Within the framework of the reaction, the countries were classified as "hostile countries" (those countries that supported Israel, became subject to embargo), "friendly countries", and "neutral countries." The Netherlands, the USA and the European Union (EU) member was evaluated in the first group due to their support to Israel, and the United Kingdom (UK) was evaluated in the second group together with France (Embel 2014: 83).

The politicization of oil and the increase in oil prices by the producing countries caused a panic in Western Europe and Japan. Thereupon, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (EEC) published a declaration including the provision that every state should live within its own borders with its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence (Torlak 2010: 48). On the other hand, the oil embargo adopted by the Arab countries against the Western countries and especially to the USA continued. However, this attitude did not bring about any change in the US policy toward the Middle East. The USA threatened this countries with a military intervention in the Persian Gulf or there should be a solidarity in the provision of oil through the International Energy Agency established within the framework of the European Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Armaoğlu 2017: 727).

Due to the high level of energy dependence on the Middle East, the fact that a political conflict in the region could radically threaten Europe's economic security has manifested itself (Embel 2014: 83). The 1973 Oil Crisis was also one of the first manifestations of the North-South divergence in security (Mockli 2009: 184-185).

Therefore, the EU decision-makers felt obliged to focus on the political problems in the Middle East, which they avoided as a reflection of the lack of joint policy making, and to take a definite stance on this issue.

Palestinian organizations (except the PLO) organized a series of actions against Israel and other targets in the 1970s. Abu Nidal's organization, also known as Black September, killed 11 Israeli athletes in demonstrations staged at the 1972 Munich Olympics (Security Council Report 2007). Arafat, the leader of the PLO, on the other hand made his first speech at the UN in 1974, describing that he advocated a peaceful solution. This speech contributed to the international recognition of the Palestinians. A year later, Harold Saunders from the US State Department stated that the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people should also be taken into account in the Arab-Israeli peace process (Buheiry 1978: 30). However, this has never materialized and remained as a made promise of an empty word.

One of the most important junctures during the peace process in the region was Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel on 19 November 1977. Sadat was the first Arab leader to recognize Israel despite his role in launching the 1973 War only four years ago. The rapprochement between Egypt and Israel under the supervision of the USA entered a critical turn in 1978 with the Camp David Agreement. The Agreement had importance in the history of the Middle East Peace Process (Torlak 2010: 49). The Camp David Agreement was signed between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin and entered into force in 1979. The Camp David Agreement consisted of two separate agreements, "Framework Agreement for Peace in the Middle East" and "Framework Agreement for Israel-Egypt Peace" (Brecher 2017: 283). The former was related to the Palestinian issue and sought a collective solution in the axis of Resolution 242. The latter focused on the abandonment of the occupied territories between Israel and Egypt, and the improvement of recognition and mutual cooperation. Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula on the ground it will be demilitarized and Egypt recognized Israel. However, the Arab League, in response to this agreement, removed Egypt from membership and moved its headquarters from Cairo to Tunisia (Erkmen 2019: 3).

In order to completely eliminate the independence of Palestine, on 29 July 1980 Israel annexed Eastern Jerusalem. Israeli soldiers occupied the Golan Heights in

December 1981 and Beirut in June 1982 (Torlak 2010: 50). Israel has deployed troops to the south of Lebanon to protect its illegal settlements close to the borders from potential attacks. However, the Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon led the army to the capital, Beirut and drove the PLO out of the country. After the occupation of Beirut, members of the PLO and Palestinian guerrilla organizations had to take shelter in different Arab countries.

Although peace was made between Egypt and Israel, this could not bring a solution to the issue of Palestine. Thus, conflicts between the PLO and Israel continued throughout the 1980s. Losing Egyptian support and greatly weakening its presence in Jordan, the Palestinians initiated the Intifada Movement (First Intifada) in 1987, which started as civil disobedience against Israel in the West Bank and Gaza rather than open military conflict, but then turned into low-intensity conflict (Erkmen 2019: 3). Hamas, which was established in this period, later became one of the most important actors in the Palestinian issue. In the same period, Israel could not cope with the Intifada despite all suppression attempts and security measures. During the uprisings in the West Bank, Israeli products were boycotted, disobedients wrote slogans on the walls, and roadblocks were erected. While Palestinians were only throwing stones, the Israeli soldiers responded with heavy weapons. This asymmetric power between parties drew international attention.

In 1991, the Cold War came to an end and a process began for finding a solution for the Palestine issue through negotiations. The USA played a leading role in this process and shifted its intervention in the “Middle East” through diplomacy (Aras 1997: 92). For the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the USA Foreign Minister James Baker organized trips to the Middle East and aimed to include the Arab countries in the peace process (Torlak 2010: 81). As a result of these developments, the Madrid Conferences started on 30 October 1991. Before the conference, the Israeli government did not want to come into direct contact with the PLO and this problem was overcome by ensuring that the Palestinians were represented in the Jordanian Delegation (Torlak 2010: 81). The second round was held on 4 December 1991, followed by the third round on 28 January 1992. By 25 February 1992, Israel still refused to negotiate with the PLO. Because the Madrid Conferences failed to reach out a successful solution for the conflict, the secret meeting of the parties were organized in Oslo in 1993 (Erkmen

2019). At the end of this process, Israel had to negotiate with the PLO leadership and the “Oslo Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements” was signed. The Declaration of Principles produced the basic ideas for a Palestinian interim self-government in the West Bank and Gaza (UN Peacemaker 1993). The Declaration of Principles projected a two-phased solution. The first solution was the five-year-period for the solution toward the Palestine issue. The second was to implement permanent arrangements that had to be handled no later than three-year-period in the sense of the status of Jerusalem and the refugee problem (King 1994: 2).

Israel and the PLO signed the agreement on how to initially implement the Declaration of Principles in Cairo on 4 May 1994. According to this agreement, Israel had to withdraw from Gaza and Jericho, leaving the area to the Palestinian Authority within three weeks. From that date on, the security of the area would be the responsibility of the Palestinian police. The Palestinian Authority consisting of 24 members would have legislative, executive and judicial powers. The PLO would inform the Israeli government about the designated members and would make joint decisions by informing Israel of the changes made (Ari 2005: 680-681). Israel was leaving most of the Gaza Strip. Only the Jewish settlements and the lands around these settlements would have an Israeli presence. The city centre of Jericho was left to the Palestinians. The negotiations were hardly accomplished with, and a massacre in the city of Hebron almost led to the interruption of the peace process.

To ease the tension in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, the Oslo II Accord was signed on 28 September 1995 by Arafat, Rabin, Clinton, Mubarak and King Hussein. The Accord was also known as “The Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip”. The Agreement conceived of a Palestinian interim self-government, but did not guarantee the independence of Palestine. As a result of the meeting held on 15 October, Israel transferred the Jenin region and four more regions in the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority (Torlak 2010: 85). On the other hand, the agreement envisioned the division of the Palestinian territories. This agreement divided the West Bank into three: A, B and C. District A made up 7 percent of the West Bank, left the major Palestinian settlements, except East Jerusalem and Hebron, to the Palestinian administration. District B left under the joint control of Israel and the

Palestinians constituted 21 percent of the West Bank. District C would be controlled by Israel.

Another partition proposal under the Oslo II Accord and the creation of separate sovereignty areas and legal orders in these lands implied the nature of the peace process. Oslo II and the following treaties served *the policy of separating the occupied territories into cantons*. Although Israel withdrew from separate regions and conveyed some of its powers to the Palestinian Authority, it continued to build Jewish settlements. By 1996, the Jewish population living in settlements had increased by 48 percent in the West Bank and by 62 percent in the Gaza Strip. Therefore, the peace agreements have served to reestablish Israel in a different way since 1967, rather than creating an autonomous Palestine (Ayman 2009: 173).

In 1996, the conflict between two sides was again leading to bloodshed. Hamas organized a series of suicide attacks in Israel. Israel bombed Lebanon for three weeks. Peres narrowly lost to right-wing Benjamin Netanyahu in the May 29 elections. Netanyahu was against the Oslo agreements and was working on the thesis of “peace in security.” Netanyahu enraged Arabs by lifting the decision to freeze settlement construction in the occupied territories. When he gave permission for a tunnel to be dug under the Al-Aqsa Mosque for “archaeological purposes”, the backlash got even stronger. Despite its criticism of the current peace process, Israel handed over 97 percent of the city of Hebron to the Palestinians in January 1997, thanks to increasing pressure from the US. The Wye River Memorandum, signed in the USA on October 23, 1998, envisaged the continuation of the withdrawal from the West Bank (Arı 2005: 708). However, the Memorandum met with reaction that eventually caused the collapse of the ruling right-wing coalition in Israel in January 1999. Ehud Barak from the Labor Party was the winner of the elections on 18 May. The new Prime Minister promised to end the 100-year-old feud between Israelis and Arabs. The five-year transitional period stipulated in the Oslo agreements ended on 4 May 1999. But Yasser Arafat was discouraged from the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state. The aim was to renegotiate with the new administration in Israel.

All the diplomatic efforts unfortunately remained fruitless because the withdrawal from the occupied territory did not proceed. The reason behind the failure of the process was that the final status negotiations such as the situation of Jerusalem,

refugees, settlements and borders were inconclusive. In this context, the “Second Camp David Negotiations” were launched under the leadership of the US President Bill Clinton in order to resolve the final status issue and reach a comprehensive peace. As a result of the negotiations, the parties could not reach to an agreement. In this process, the “Second Intifada” was triggered after the entry of Ariel Sharon, the main opposition leader in Israel, into Al-Aqsa Mosque on 28 September 2000. The Second Intifada continued for five years until the meeting between Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas, the head of the Palestinian Authority after Arafat’s death in 2004 (Erkmen 2019: 4).

Before 2004, there were attempts to enhance the final status negotiations and provide peace between Palestinians and Israelis. The first attempt was the 2001 Taba Summit held in Egypt from 21 to 27 January 2001. Despite the previous negotiations, the Taba Summit did not include any outsider and the parties came closer to an agreement (The Taba Negotiations 2002). Since there was an election in Israel, the Summit was suspended, but the new administration in Israel did not return to the Summit. Another important key in the peace process was the Geneva Initiative (the Geneva Accord) in 2003. The Geneva Accord had a unique characteristic that it was developed as a non-governmental initiative and welcomed by the international community despite the heavy criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (Myre 2003).

Former US president Donald Trump made a statement that supported the Israeli goals about the city. He declared that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and he gave the order to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. Putting this statement into effect on 14 May 2018, America moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The transfer led Palestinians to declare a nationwide general strike expressing their grief and anger triggered the clashes between the Palestinians and Israeli security forces. Moreover, the Trump Administration suggested a proposal to resolve the Palestine-Israel conflict. The proposal, titled “Peace to Prosperity”, was declared at a White House press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on 28 January 2020. However, the Palestinian representatives were not invited to meeting making it a self-styled meeting between Trump and Netanyahu. The main suggestions made by Trump can be summarized as:

- Jerusalem will be the undivided capital of Israel.

- The USA will recognize the territories left to Israel in the conceptual map of the Plan. Trump said Israel would also make some concessions.
- Palestinian lands will double. The capital of the Palestinian state will be in a village of Eastern Jerusalem beyond the Wall and the USA will open an embassy there. Although Trump stated that the Plan would enable the Palestinians to establish their own independent state, the details remained unclear.
- According to the Plan, no Israelis or Palestinians will be displaced. Therefore, the existing Jewish settlements will remain as they are.
- Israel will work with Jordanian King Abdullah bin Hussein to ensure that the current status of holy places such as Masjid al-Aqsa and Haram al-Sharif is preserved. Suggesting that al-Aqsa Mosque will be opened to all regions, though.
- The lands given to the Palestinians on the map of the Trump Peace Plan will not be changed for 4 years. In this process, the Palestinians will negotiate with Israel and fulfill the conditions of the Plan in the direction of establishing an independent state.

Nevertheless, the current situation demonstrates that various initiatives launched by either international actors or regional contacts have failed to bring peace and tranquility to the region. The final status problems inherited by the Oslo Declaration of Principles still persists and new ones may be in place due to the running battle between Palestinians and Israelis. On 7 May 2021, the Israel's decision to force the Palestinians in the Sheikh Jarrah District to leave their homes increased escalated tensions with the raid on Masjid al-Aqsa. After the 11-day attacks of Israel on the besieged Gaza Strip, 232 people, including 65 children and 39 women, lost their lives, at least 75 thousand people were displaced and 1800 houses were completely destroyed (Okuducu an Mahmud 2021).

2.2. OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS OF THE BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINE

The literature on the British foreign policy towards Palestine mostly focuses on the early 20th century (Kemiksiz 2018; Eryaman 2016; Kasalak 2016). However,

Friedman (1973: 1) treats Colonel Charles H. Churchill, a staff officer in the British Expedition to Syria between 1842 and 1852, as the first Englishman to recognize strategic importance of Palestine to British national interests. He claimed that Palestine must either have become English, or there would have to be established a new independent State (Friedman 1973: 1). Colonel Churchill considered the Jews as a future potential actor in Palestine's revival and found necessary the support of the European powers to the Jews. Similarly, Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple), the Foreign Secretary from 1855 to 1858 and from 1859 to 1865, promoted Jewish establishment in Palestine to protect Ottoman and British interests while preventing the future rise of the Governor Mehmed Ali or his successor in the region (Friedman 1968: 31-35).

Britain opened a consulate in Jerusalem in 1838 and became interested in the project of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine (El-Awaisi 2019). The Damascus affair of 1840, also known as Blood Libel, paved the way for Britain's protectorate of Jews (Torlak 2010: 18). The Jewish community in Damascus was accused of murdering Father Thomas, a Christian monk, and his servant, and using their blood to bake bread (Lipman and Lipman 1985: 133). This accusation played Christian and Muslim communities off against Jews. A delegation consisting of British and French representatives received assurances from the Ottoman State for the protection and security of Jewish people's life and property, and Britain and France eventually assumed the protectorate of the Jewish community. British Jews focused on buying land for the establishment of colonies. They aimed to form the basis for the establishment of the Jewish state. As a result of their efforts in this regard, they succeeded in purchasing land in the west of Jerusalem for the first time in 1855 (Torlak 2010: 19). The Jews, who accelerated their activities by establishing the Zionist Organization of the British Jews in 1917, sent a delegation to Abdulhamid II to obtain permission for Jewish colonization, but their attempts were inconclusive.

Britain tried to protect its national interests by defending the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire until the 1890s. On the other hand, Germany and Russia increased their activities in the Middle East and took non-Muslim communities under their protection to guarantee their share in case the Ottoman Empire collapsed. However, the first Jewish colonies established in Palestine were under the auspices of

Germany (Torlak 2010: 19). Thanks to the Germans, who first established foundations, churches and schools in the region, Jews started to settle in Palestine as from 1860. However, Abdulhamid II realized that the situation was developing against the Ottoman Empire, and banned all immigration and land purchase in Palestine in 1878 (Torlak 2010: 19).

Moreover, Germany completed its political union in 1871 and further accelerated its industrialization efforts. The great momentum in Germany's industrialization pushed the newly united state to seek raw materials and markets. The rise of Germany's interests in the Ottoman lands became concrete with the Baghdad Railway Project (Eryaman 2016: 12-13). Abdülhamid II invited German engineers to Istanbul in order to build railway lines in large areas where the Empire had no roads in Asian lands during his time. The first railway line established in Anatolia was the Anatolian railway line stretching from Istanbul to Konya in 1869. This line was later extended to Baghdad. After the extension, the name of the Anatolian railway was changed to the Baghdad railway, and Wilhelm II, the German Emperor, became the patron of the Baghdad railway (Alperen 2018: 6). The Baghdad railway project would provide cheaper and faster transportation than the sea route. In other words, the Suez Canal would lose its importance, thus the Railway was posing a threat to Britain's trade route to and strategic communication with India (Halloum 1989: 145; Duman 2010: 66). Furthermore, the Germans would have the opportunity to compete with British shipping in the Persian Gulf and would make every effort to abolish Britain's privileged position in these waters (Uluğbay 2003: 77). In short, the intentions of Jews on Palestine gained importance for Britain, and Britain's realized the need for a Jewish state in Palestine for its own interests in the Middle East. However, Germany did not neglect the importance of Palestine in world politics, and tried to become one of the leading actors in the region (Özmen 2001: 5).

On the other hand, there was a political and economic rivalry between England and France in the Middle East since the 19th century (Besalel 2001: 94). France had chosen Syria as the base of action for its influence in the Near East. Syria had a strategic rather than commercial value that a state dominating Syria would obtain a great advantage to block the routes of other Great Powers with their full and semi-colonies. Therefore, France was paying attention to Syria due to its commercial and strategic

value (Adamof 2001: 27-28). At the beginning of the 20th century, the French policies towards the Middle East caused some British parties complained of increasing the French colonies close to the Suez Canal, so that Palestine would create a buffer zone between the Canal and Syria under the French control (Besalel 2001: 94). Britain realized that the success of the British operations designed for the Middle East was depending on reconciling with France (Topur 2004: 96). For this reason, England felt obliged to share the Middle East with France during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire (Armaoğlu 2017: 31). Thereupon, Britain started negotiations with France in November 1915 to share the Middle East (Topur 2004: 97). The negotiations came to a conclusion with the Sykes-Picot Agreement on 16 May 1916 (Arı 2005: 139). As a result of these negotiations, Britain and France agreed on an independent Arab state or a confederation of Arab states “under the suzerainty of an Arab chief” (Rogan 2015). According to the Agreement, Palestine would be under an international administration (Acar 1989: 19-23). France demanded that Palestine should be included in Syria and left to her sphere of influence while Britain did not want French presence on the way to India after the WWI (Fromkin 2004: 156-157). Since Britain was trying to keep the French out of the Suez Canal, Palestine would be an international territory (Fraser et al. 2011: 84).

Nevertheless, the course of events has indicated that an international administration did not serve the British interests. Britain gave the greatest support to Zionism and led the Jewish settlement in Palestine in terms of British interests in the Middle East since the 19th century (Parlar 2006: 39). Therefore, British politicians dealt with the project of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine from the 1840s (Kocabaş 1994: 127). The military and political environment during the WWI enabled Britain to adopt Zionism as a “state policy” in a short time (Öke 2002: 227). According to Eryaman (2016: 15), despite the alliance with France, Britain supported Zionism for three reasons. The first is British and American expectations with regard to receiving financial support from Jews during the WWI and construction of the Baghdad-Haifa railway. Secondly, British politicians believed that the presence of a Jewish state in Palestine would not pose a danger to herself and ensure the security of Egypt. If Britain had attempted to annex Palestine directly, it would have caused both the emergence of some rivals and the emergence of crisis between Britain and her allies. Britain expected

completely neutral Palestine to come under the British influence. Third, Britain tried to gain affection of Jews so that they could play a critical role to change balances in the region in favor of the British interests. British politicians aimed to use the Jewish lobby in the US, and gain the support of Jewish financial circles. Britain wanted to keep Russia in the war (WWI) by using strong Jewish population in the Bolshevik movement in Russia. The ultimate goal of Britain was to neutralize farmosan cadres in Istanbul and Zionist cadres in Jerusalem (Topur 2004: 97).

Pappe (2009) states that the main factor underlying the British decision to support Zionsism was the rise of Russian Jews' after the reforms of the Czar administration in Russia. Britain considered the Russian support in the WWI necessary in order to force Germany surrender. The British administration wanted Russian Jews to become agents of British propaganda in Russia. Thus, the Russian government would fight on the side of the Allied Powers. On the other hand, some researchers claim that this argument greatly exaggerated the importance of Russian Jews in the Russian Empire (Eryaman 2016: 13). There is no evidence to prove the influential role of Jews in the Russian Empire. Another argument for Britain's support for Zionism is based on the Jewish influence on the Bolshevik movement. Accordingly, the British officials hoped that giving support for Jewish nationalism in Russia would stimulate a pro-British policy within the Bolshevik organization. However, there is still no direct evidence that the Bolshevik Jews were nationalist and influenced by Zionism (Eryaman 2016: 13). There is consensus in the literature – regardless of whether there is evidence to support a specific argument on Britain's approach to Zionism – that the British policy towards Palestine was based upon her geopolitical interests.

With the start of the WWI, the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed strategies to occupy Palestine. After the Ottoman Empire had joined the Central Powers, Britain began to implement its strategies produced for Palestine. In this process, Britain called Chaim Weizmann, the President of the World Zionist Organization, and the family of Sheriff Hussein, representing the Arabs, as allies. Britain's strategic interests in Palestine paved the way for the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. There were promises in Balfour's letter that Britain would use its best endeavours to establish a national home for Jewish people in Palestine. These promises can be outlined as the British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, cooperation between Britain and

Jews, and the protection of rights and status of Jews in a non-Jewish lands (Yaşar, Özcan and Kor 2010: 53).

Since Britain drew the reaction of the Arabs after the Declaration, the British actors in the region tried to prevent an Arab-Jewish conflict by establishing cooperation between the parties. The cooperation agreement was signed in London between Faisal I of Iraq and Chaim Weizmann, the leader of the World Zionist Organization, on 3 January 1919 (Karsh 2016). The parties approved the establishment of a Jewish administration in Palestine. However, this agreement did not last long. A congress convened in Damascus in March 1920 declared that Palestine would be part of Syria and Jews would not be allowed to immigrate to the region. In other words, the British policy for an Arab-Jewish alliance was doomed to failure in a short time (Bozkurt 2008: 41-42). Britain did not want any crisis in the region because of the strategic location of Palestine on the roads to the British colonies, especially India. That the parties of the Balfour Declaration pledged a Jewish national home in Palestine would require a British presence in the region while pushing France away from the lands adjacent to the Suez Canal (Cleveland 2015: 271). In short, Britain's strategic interests were aligned with the goals of Zionists towards Palestine.

In the wake of the Balfour Declaration, the San Remo Conference was held in April 1920. The League of Nations, established in 1920 with the suggestion of US President Wilson, divided the Middle East lands of the Ottoman Empire between Britain and France at the San Remo Conference on 24 April 1920, within the framework of the mandate system created by the new world order. As a result of the Conference, Syria and Lebanon were assigned to France, and the mandate for Palestine and Iraq were given to Britain. Thus, the British military rule in Palestine, which had been since the 1917 occupation, left its place to the civilian mandate. Lloyd George appointed Herbert Samuel, who was a British Zionist and took an active part in the World Zionist organization, to govern Palestine from 1920-1925. Between these years, Samuel's main task was to implement the Balfour Declaration (Deveci 2017: iii). Undoubtedly, the Balfour Declaration played a key role in the British mandate over Palestine instead of an international administration. Britain also undertook to implement the provisions of the Balfour Declaration in Palestine. The joint project over the Middle East adopted by France and Britain artificially divided Arab territories without regarding independence

of Arab communities (Kemiksiz 2018: 130). In this regard, 1920 would be considered as the first “Great Disaster” (Al Nakba) for Arabs before the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003: 84). The British mandate over Palestine raised concerns of Palestinians stemming from the Balfour Declaration.

The Balfour Declaration was referring to “Jewish people”, but Palestinians, who constitute the majority of the population, were not mentioned by name. In 1922, Palestinians had a population of 700 thousand and Jews had a population of around 93 thousand (Cleveland, 2015: 282). The constitutional framework of the Mandate regime based on the Balfour Declaration neglected national and political rights of the Palestinian majority (Khalidi 2006: 32-33). Whenever Palestinians demanded their national and political rights, they were urged to accept the Mandate constitution as a prerequisite for changing their constitutional positions. Ironically, the constitution which Palestinians were asked to accept, was denying rights of Palestinians and treating them as inferior in rights and status to Jews (Khalidi 2006: 33). The Palestinians also declined to participate in political-administrative entities established by Britain for Jewish-Arab cooperation, since their participation would mean to implicitly accept the Mandate constitution and the Balfour Declaration. Therefore, the British policy towards the region was the initiator of the issue of Palestine. Thanks to the Declaration, Jews took advantage of the British mandate and opened the door to make the idea of settling in Palestine. The Declaration also served Britain to crush the Arab influence down in the Middle East while strengthening the British dominance over the region.

By supporting Zionism, Britain has guaranteed her long-term interests deriving from an alliance between Jews and Britain after the WWI (Torlak 2010: 32). On 24 July 1922, the League of Nations ratified British control of Palestine at a private meeting at St. James Palace in London. Britain accepted the Palestine mandate by releasing a 25-article memorandum on 16 September 1922 (Kasalak 2016: 71). According to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, some communities that formerly belonged to the Turkish Empire have developed as independent nations. Therefore, these communities can be provisionally recognized with an assistance by a Mandatory. The Covenant suggested these communities to consider the selection of the Mandatory.

During the Mandate administration between 1923 and 1929, Britain adopted policies conflicting with the interests of Jews. There was a decrease in Jewish

immigration to Palestine because Britain had set some quotas and strictly enforced Jews to follow these quotas. However, the British policy has changed radically since the rise of anti-Semitism in Poland and Germany in the 1930s (Kasalak 2016: 22). Britain realized that the the mandate in Palestine was not an easy task. Western countries believed that the Jewish question would be solved by expelling Jews from Europe and exporting the question to the Muslim world (Öke 2002: 415). According to Weizmann's Zionist plan, the surroundings of the lands cultivated by the Arab peasants would not be sold, instead, the unused barren lands would be cultivated with scientific farming methods to increase their productivity (Kasalak 2016: 72). However, the Arab landlords were eager to sell their fertile lands to Jews in exchange for large amounts of money in 1920s (Tyler 1989). Jewish buyers were marking land prices up that Arabs could sell their lands for 40 to 80 times higher than standard purchase price.

Jewish immigration to Palestine was followed by several conflicts in the region. The first was caused by the Buraq Wall riots of 1929. Since Jews went to the Western Wall to commemorate the ancient temple of Solomon resulted in an Arab revolt starting in August 1929. After the Buraq Wall riots of 1929, Britain investigated causes of the events. The Shaw Commission established in 1929 determined that the reason of tension was the creation of a landless Arab class and Palestinians' concern that Jewish immigration would lead to a Jewish-dominated Palestine. The Commission, therefore, recommended increasing control over Jewish immigration (Cleveland 2015: 284-285). The 1930 Passfield White Paper recommended preventing Jewish immigration and restricting Jewish land purchase. The report stated that certain areas had no room for further transfers of Arab land. Moreover, such transfers must be limited in which Arab cultivators were maintaining their existing standards. The report tried to prevent the creation of a landless Arab population. The report drew a great reaction from the World Zionist Organization, so Britain had to withdraw the White Paper (Yılmaz Şahin 2016: 47).

Throughout the 1930s, Palestinian Arabs continued to revolt against the immigration of Jews to Palestine. Since the British High Commissioner in Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel, was a Zionist, and the British mandate was in favor of Jews and Jewish immigration, Palestinians started the Great Arab uprising on 15 April 1936. National committees were established in all cities to manage the uprising. These committees

came together on 25 April 1936 and formed the “Supreme Arab Committee” (Kasalak 2016: 74). The committee had three main demands: “Stop Jewish immigration, stop selling land to Jews, and establish a national government accountable to an elected popular assembly” (Kızıloğlu 2012: 55). The Committee would not stop fighting until these three demands would be fulfilled. The 1936 uprising was the first organized Palestinian uprising.

After the 1936 Arab revolt in Palestine, Britain assigned the Peel Commission to investigate the events. The Commission’s report suggested the partition of Palestine as Arab and Jewish states because a unitary state could not be created due to contradictory obligations of the Balfour Declaration (Sayigh, 1997: 7). In short, the administration of Palestine was becoming more and more costly and complex for Britain. However, the increasing importance of the Middle East due to its oil resources and efforts to prevent Arab countries from siding with Germany forced Britain to reconsider the Palestine issue before the upcoming WWII. The MacDonald White Paper was published in May 1939. The White Paper claimed that establishing a Jewish state in Palestine was not among the British policies. The White Paper also envisaged that Jewish immigration would be limited to 75,000 for five years, and at the end of this period, if the Palestinians did not want further immigration, it would be completely cut off. Jewish land purchase would be limited to certain regions and Palestine would be granted independence after 10 years, according to the Paper (Cleveland 2015: 288). The reports published by Britain during the Mandate administration implied that Britain was paralyzed between the irreconcilable demands of Palestinians and Jews. Britain produced different solutions depending on the source of oppression to balance Palestinian uprisings and Zionist interests (Khalaf 1991: 65).

The Holocaust during the WWII caused great sympathy and support for Jews in the international community. The establishment of a Jewish state was regarded not only as a just cause, but also as a partial solution to the issue of Jewish refugees in Europe (Best et al. 2008: 134). Britain was forced, especially by the USA, to remove the restrictions on Jewish immigration so that refugees could be settled in Palestine. The British strict measures to prevent the Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine during the WWII strengthened the reaction of the Zionists to Britain and Jews’ determination to establish a state by force. On the other hand, the Zionists also

understood the importance of gaining the political support of the USA due to the change in balance of power. The Biltmore Conference in 1942 absolutely rejected the 1939 White Paper and approved Jewish immigration to Palestine and establishment of a Jewish state (Yılmaz Şahin 2016: 52). The USA became the center of international Zionist activities after the Conference. Harry Truman, who came to the presidency in 1945, defended the Biltmore Program until 1948 due to the influence of the Zionist lobby (Cleveland 2015: 290).

Since the initiatives adopted by the USA and Britain, either collectively or separately, to deal with not only the refugee issue, but also the Palestinian issue in general, could not yield any results. Britain, therefore, decided to take the Palestine issue to the UN. The Palestine problem entered a critical juncture with the adoption of the Majority Plan (UN Resolution 181) presented by the UN Special Committee for Palestine on 29 November 1947. The Plan envisaged the partition of Palestine and establishment of Arab and Jewish states. The attitude of the USA and the Soviet Union was decisive in the adoption of the Plan. Despite the recommendations of the US military and foreign officials, President Truman was influenced by the Jewish lobby and took a stand for partition (Khoury 1985: 51). The Zionists initially opposed to the Majority Plan, but later became a party of the Plan. Arab countries strongly rejected the decision to partition the Palestine into two states. The partition of Palestine later resulted into yet more clashes between the Arabs and the immigrant Jews in Palestine.

Following the partition plan, conflicts between Palestinians and Jews became more violent. Jews started to organized to take control of the lands reserved by the UN resolution. The efforts of the scattered Palestinian forces against the Jewish forces remained inconclusive that some major Arab centers were captured by Jews, and around 400,000 Palestinians were forced to flee (Kemiksiz 2018: 133). The division in the Palestinian leadership, the weakness of the Palestinian political institutions together with the lack of a professional Palestinian army and a central command were the main factors that led to the collapse of the Palestinian society (Khalidi 2006: 14-15).

Palestinians could not be able to recover for a long time, and the struggle to relieve the Jewish pressure on Palestine and Palestinians was directed by non-Palestinian Arabs. The issue of Palestine turned into an Arab-Israeli conflict when the Arab states declared a war on Israel in May 1948 for the purpose of liberating Palestine.

Thus, Britain transferred the Palestinian issue to an allied state (Israel) in the region as Britain failed to fulfil its duties under the Palestine Mandate assigned to it by the League of Nations.



CHAPTER THREE

CRITICAL JUNCTURES IN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS (1967-2020)

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been one of the longest-running and most explosive conflicts in the history. Since the Middle East War of June 1967, there have been many peace plans and negotiations held by regional and international actors to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This chapter focuses on some of the critical junctures in the peace process that the past seven decades have witnessed: UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967, Camp David Accords in 1978, Oslo Agreement in 1993, Camp David Summit Meeting in 2000, Taba in 2001, Geneva Accord in 2003, and lastly the Trump Peace Plan in 2020.

3.1. UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242 OF 22 NOVEMBER 1967: THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The 1956 Suez War was the confrontation of Israel, allied with the Western countries (Britain and France), and Egypt. and the West against each other, and Israel played the role of auxiliary force in this war. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War (Six-Day War), on the other hand, caused a conflict between Israel and the Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and in terms of its results, it opened a new era in the Middle East whose effects are felt even today (Armaoğlu 2017: 199).

The initial stage of the Six-Day War was the Syrian-Israeli tension in 1966. Palestinian guerrillas sponsored by Syria began to attack Israel. Israel attempted to respond the attacks with heavy weapons. Tensions increased on the Syrian-Israeli and Jordanian-Israeli borders, and six Syrian planes were shot down by Israel in the air war between Syria and Israel on 7 April 1967 (Ballı 2013: 32). Egypt also entered the Sinai Peninsula and ensured the withdrawal of UN troops in Sharm El Sheikh. Egypt first closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. The USA and the USSR took action to prevent a possible war, but they could not be successful in their efforts (Yılmaz et al. 2005: 72). The 1967 Arab-Israeli War started with the attack of Israeli planes on the

Egyptian airport on 5 June 1967. Israel continued its attacks on Syria and Jordan as well. Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza from the Palestinian lands and the Golan Heights from the Syrian lands (Yılmaz 2003: 169). The war lasted six days and ended on 11 June 1967.

At the end of the war, Israel took control of Sinai, Gaza Strip, West Bank, Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, and tripled its territory. Israel, therefore, obtained strategic depth and territory. Israel believed that this achievement could be traded “in return for full peace and recognition” (Best et al., 2008: 434). Thereupon, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 242 on 22 November 1967, and demanded a return to the pre-war borders. UN Security Council Resolution 242 envisaged the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories and recognized the right of every state in the region to live “in peace”, “free from threats and use of force”, “within its secure and recognized borders”. Egypt, Jordan and Israel recognized the Resolution, while Syria did not. The USA was the only Western country that did not affirm the Resolution. However, the Arab countries argued that Israel should withdraw from the occupied territories first and determine “safe and recognized borders” during the negotiations, and that the withdrawal should be done accordingly (Armaoğlu 1991: 709-710). This argument did not allow for a peaceful agreement accepted by the parties for many years. Moreover, the Resolution was the call for a fair solution to the Palestinian refugee issue. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) did not accept Resolution 242 due to speaking of the Palestinians only as a refugee problem and not as a people with the right to form a state while recognizing Israel’s right to exist (Cleveland 2015: 398).

Resolution 242 emphasized the withdrawal of Israel from the lands occupied in the 1967 War, but the lands occupied by Israel in the 1948 War were not in question (Arı 2007: 17-18). However, at the end of the 1948 war, Israel increased its territory to 78% that was 22% more than envisaged in the UNGA Partition Plan in 1947 (56.4%). The remaining 22% of the Palestinians’ land occupied in the 1967 War was almost regarded as a vested right of Israel (Kemiksiz 2016: 148-149). In other words, even if Resolution 242 had been implemented with all its elements and Israel had withdrawn from all the territories it occupied, the Palestinian state would have been established on 22% of the historical Palestinian lands. The same discussion was also valid for the settlers, and the situation of the Jewish settlers in the lands occupied by Israel before

1967 was not on the agenda of the UN Security Council. Because of the Resolution, the West Bank has been a subject of the international agenda after 1967, and this region and Gaza became the main element of the Middle East problem. Israel interpreted the concept of “recognized and secure borders” as support for its policy of not returning to the pre-1967 period. This policy will continue as an unchanging attitude of Israel after the 1967 War.

3.2. CAMP DAVID ACCORDS OF 1978

The 1967 War was a turning point in the Middle East. After the defeat of the Arab states, Israel was reluctant to hold peace negotiations in order not to make any concessions from what it had won in the War. Therefore, the Palestinian issue became more irresolvable. Israel has both strategic and military superiority and gained the support of the United States. However, Israel was also aware that the Arab states would not give up the struggle (Süer and Atmaca 2007: 46).

Anwar Sadat succeeded Nasser after his death in 1971. Sadat planned to make peace with Israel in order to guarantee Israel's withdrawal from Sinai, reopen the Suez Canal to international shipping, and restore the deteriorated economy. However, Israel saw its existing borders as vital for its security and did not accept this proposal (Best et al. 2008: 474). Sadat decided to use the war as a diplomatic instrument to show that the Israeli Army was not as strong as it was thought by leading the USA to be part of the conflict (Cleveland 2015: 417).

After the war plans between Egypt, Syria and Jordan on 6 October 1973, Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked Israel from two separate fronts when Israel was on Yom Kippur holiday (Armaoğlu 1991: 718-719). The Egyptian Army became successful in crossing the Suez Canal. The Syrian Army occupied the Golan. However, two important developments altered the course of events. First, the USA supported Israel's counterattack. Second, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 338 in 22 October 1973, and terminated the war. According to Resolution 338, the parties would comply with the ceasefire within 12 hours. Israeli forces took advantage of the 12-hour period and crossed to the west bank of the Suez Canal (Yılmaz 2003: 199). The USA, the USSR and the UN ensured the signing of the ceasefire agreement with diplomatic initiatives. The peace treaty was signed on 11 November 1973. With this agreement, an

armistice agreement was signed between Israel and Egypt. With this agreement, the parties would start negotiations to withdraw to their positions on 22 October 1973, and would meticulously abide by the ceasefire. The armistice agreement was the beginning of the developments until the 1979 Camp David Accords (Armaoğlu 2017: 336).

The consequences of the 1973 War affected the whole world. For the first time, the “myth of Israel’s invincibility” disappeared (Memiş 2006: 115). On the other hand, Israel has become more dependent on the United States militarily and economically, while being diplomatically isolated from the international community (Süer and Atmaca 2007: 48). Egypt also began to move away from the Soviet camp by improving its relations with the USA. The rapprochement of an important Arab country (Egypt) with the USA would seriously affect the balances in the Middle East. Moreover, Arab states decided to use oil as a weapon against the West. This decision caused an oil crisis all over the world. To support Syria and Egypt, oil-producing Arab countries announced that they would cut down on oil production until Israel withdrew from the occupied Arab lands and oil prices rapidly increased. The increase in oil prices caused panic, especially in Western Europe and Japan. The oil embargo on countries supporting Israel lasted until March 1974 (İbası 2008: 77).

In 1974, as a result of the “shuttle diplomacy” of US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, separation agreements were signed by Israel, Egypt and Syria. These agreements showed that Israel could withdraw from the occupied territories – the Sinai and partially the Golan. In case of a separation agreement between Israel and Jordan, the possibility of returning the West Bank to Jordan showed that the USA would prefer to opt out of the PLO and reach an agreement with Jordan. PLO adopted a political program in June 1974 and declared that it would establish an independent national authority in any part of the Palestinian territories liberated from Israel. This statement has been interpreted as the PLO’s approval of the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and tacit recognition of Israel. UN Security Council Resolution 242 was rejected in the political program and PLO stated that the armed struggle against Israel would continue.

After the announcement of the political program, the PLO was recognized as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people at the Arab Summit held in Rabat in October 1974. This Summit was an objection to Jordan’s claim to represent the

Palestinians. King Hussein of Jordan accepted the decision of the Summit in return for intense pressure from Arab states and their financial aid commitments. However, in reality, Jordan did not believe that the PLO could fulfill its representative role since the USA and Israel accepted the PLO as a terrorist organization. Also, according to Jordan, the Rabat Summit decision was taken without consulting the Palestinian people and the PLO was imposed on the Palestinian people (Susser 1994: 214-217).

One of the most important results of the 1973 War was that it paved the way for the 1978 Camp David Accords. The visit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to Israel on 19 November 1977 started the Egyptian-Israeli peace process (Kaya 2018: 5). The negotiations between two countries were carried out under the mediation of the USA. The summit held between 5-17 September 1978 resulted in the Camp David Accords signed on 17 September 1978 that led in 1979 to a historic peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. By signing the Camp David Accords, Egypt aimed at a comprehensive peace plan in the Middle East peace and a solution to the issue of Palestine, rather than establishing a bilateral peace with Israel (Kemiksiz 2018: 137).

Camp David Accords consisted of two framework agreements. The first framework (A Framework for Peace in the Middle East) dealt with the West Bank, Gaza and the Palestinian issue. The second framework (A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel) determined the principles of peace between Israel and Egypt (Armaoğlu 2017: 886). The first framework stated that the conflict between Israel and Arab states could be peacefully settled through the United Nations Security Council Resolution 242. The key points of the first framework envisaged that:

- Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian officials ought to negotiate to resolve the Palestinian issue in its every respect.
- Both Egypt and Israel accept that transitional arrangements should be made for the West Bank and Gaza in five years to transfer of authority with peace and order.
- Egypt, Israel, and Jordan will reach a consensus on the terms for an elected self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza.
- In case that the administrative council is initiated officially in the West Bank and Gaza, the related five-year-period will begin (Tucker 2008: 1337).

The framework emphasized autonomy of the inhabitants of West Bank and Gaza. However, there was no statement about the status of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Right of Return. UNGA rejected the first framework, because UN and PLO did not participate to the negotiations. The second framework focused on the principles of peace between Egypt and Israel as well as the future of the Sinai peninsula. According to the framework, Egypt and Israel promise not to make use of threat or force to resolve conflicts (Tucker 2008: 1337). Israel and Egypt would negotiate in good faith to keep peace between them.

The Israeli-Egyptian peace was met with a negative reaction in the Arab world. The peace was regarded as a betrayal of a common cause of Arab states and Palestinians. The peace agreement resulted in the expulsion of Egypt from the Arab League. The separation of Egypt from the Arab unity was the first major crack in the post-1948 Arab strategy that adopted a boycott policy and rejected to accept Israel as a legitimate state (Rabinovich and Brun 2017). However, the expectation that the agreement would lead other Arab states to reconcile with Israel failed. The attitude of Arabs towards Israel contrarily got hardened. One of the main reasons for this attitude was the annexation and settlement policies implemented by the Likud government of Israel led by Menachem Begin, who was known for his far-right views (Kemiksiz 2018: 138).

The underlying reason behind Israel's signature in the Camp David Accords was the PLO issue and security of the occupied territories. Israel's main goal was to neutralize the Arab states by making bilateral agreements with them and to divide the Arab unity by marginalizing the PLO (Doyran 2015: 43). In other words, Israel became a party of the Camp David Accords to ensure its regional interests. Therefore, the Camp David Accords was a sisyphian task to provide sustainable peace in the Middle East.

The USA signed the Camp David Accords as a third-party witness (Armaoğlu 2017: 886). The Camp David process has made the USA a leading actor in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The USA ensured that an Arab state signed a peace treaty with Israel for the first time and provided Israel's security by that the largest Arab army withdrew from the war.

The Camp David Accords could not find acceptance on the side of the European Community (EC) properly. The EC countries considered the issue of Palestine as

fundamentally important for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the US approach in the Camp David process pushed the issue into the background. The Camp David Accords stipulated that only the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza would be given autonomy instead of providing a homeland to Palestinians (Kaya 2018: 6). In fact, the US President, Jimmy Carter, emphasized finding a solution to the issue of Palestine and providing a homeland for Palestinians when he first took office in the spring of 1978. In this respect, he became the first president among the US presidents to declare the provision of a homeland for Palestinians. However, as a result of Israel's opposition to this idea in the Camp David negotiations, the Accords only proposed autonomy to Palestinians.

In the following two years, the EC countries reached a conclusion that the Camp David process could not be successful to make the desirable outcome for suggesting a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and they had to launch their own Middle East Peace initiatives (Kaya 2018: 6). However, Jimmy Carter wanted to use the Camp David process in his election campaign in the upcoming elections and put pressure on the EC members not to announce an alternative declaration to the Camp David Accords and start a new process in the Middle East (Ifestos 1987). In the same way, Israel and Egypt proclaimed that they would not accept an alternative process. Therefore, the EC leaders declared the Venice Declaration at the summit held in Venice on 12-13 June 1980. In the declaration, the EC countries put an emphasis on two basic principles to establish peace in the Middle East. The first principle was based on the right to survival and security for all Middle Eastern states, including Israel. The second principle was justice for all peoples in the Middle East, namely the recognition of the legitimate rights of Palestinians (Hartley and Cossali 2004). Thus, EC countries followed an inclusive approach by both identifying Israel's security needs and Palestinian rights as the two main objectives of the peace process (Laipson 1990: 11).

USA welcomed the Venice Declaration, since there was not a significant deviation from the Camp David Accords. On the other hand, Israel reacted harshly and defined the declaration as surrender and submission (Kaya 2018: 7). Israel confirmed not to be involved in any peace initiative launched by European states. Israel opposed the European states' participation in any peace initiative until the 1990s. The PLO also found the Declaration inadequate and unsatisfactory. Accordingly, Palestinians stated

that the declaration should have proclaimed the PLO as the only representative of the Palestinian people, and called for amendments to UN Security Council Resolution 242. They also expected the Declaration to rectify the refugee problem as a Palestinian issue. They considered the Camp David Accords as an inadequate framework to offer an inclusive peace process in the Middle East. According to the PLO, the Declaration was an act of European states' allowing for American pressure. Egypt also welcomed the Declaration, because it was consistent with the objectives of the Camp David Accords (Kaya 2018: 7).

3.3. 1993 AND 1995 OSLO ACCORDS

After the Gulf War in 1991, the USA gained a very important diplomatic position in the Middle East. During this period, the USA realized the need to ensure stability in the region to implement its policies in the Middle East. Therefore, the USA launched some diplomatic initiatives for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In order to end the conflict between the parties, US Secretary of State, James Baker, made frequent visits to the Middle Eastern countries and planned to include Arab states in the peace process. For this purpose, a conference was held in Madrid in October 1991 to resolve the problems in the region, especially between Palestine and Israel (Torlak 2010).

At the Madrid Conference, a just, continuous and comprehensive peace call was made based on the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (withdrawal from the lands in exchange for peace). The Conference aimed at resolving the issue of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their own territories. However, the Madrid process was suspended due to the presidential elections in the USA in 1992 and Israel's deportation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad members from the country. The Madrid Conference, therefore, failed to solve the existing problems and remained as symbolically important attempt in terms of direct negotiations among Palestinians, Arab states and Israel (Doğan 2015).

Since Israel refused to negotiate with the PLO and Palestinians from East Jerusalem in the Madrid process, Palestinians participated in a joint delegation with Jordan. The Madrid Conference, therefore, failed to make concrete progress in peace-building. After the Labor Party led by Yitzhak Rabin came to power in Israel in 1992,

Israel leaned towards the idea of direct dialogue with the PLO. The secret negotiations, which started with the mediation of Norway in Oslo in January 1993, resulted in the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO and signing a joint Declaration of Principles in September 1993 (Kemiksiz 2016: 155). After secret negotiations, the PLO and Israel signed a number of agreements, including the Declaration of Principles, the Cairo Agreement, the Washington Agreement and the Paris Protocol during the Oslo Process between 1993 and 1995. The Oslo I Process starting in January 1993 was completed on 13 September 1993 and resulted in the adoption of the “Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements” by Israel and the PLO (Kor 2010: 71). The Declaration was a framework for future agreements and envisaged a gradual process that included arrangements for temporary and permanent periods. The Oslo I Process entered into force with the Cairo Agreement signed in 1994. The Agreement was related to the Gaza Strip and Jericho without any provision regarding Palestinian refugees. Mutual recognition letters were signed during the Oslo I process. According to the letters, Israel recognized the PLO as the official representative of Palestinians, while the PLO recognized Israel’s right to exist and rejected its will for terrorism, violence and Israel’s elimination (Kaya 2018: 9). In this respect, the call of European countries to recognize the PLO as the representative of Palestinians and the PLO’s participation in peace process has been realized. Palestine met the condition of human community. The first of the criteria for statehood has been achieved. Palestinians as a community has been largely recognized by the international community (Mutlu 2019: 406).

Since Palestine and Israel did not comply with the schedule determined by the Oslo I, negotiations were held in Washington under the auspices of the USA, and “Oslo II”, that is, “the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip” was signed on 28 September 1995. According to the Agreement, the parties agreed on the expansion of the Palestinian National Authority to include the major cities of the West Bank. Unlike Oslo I, this agreement included the status of refugees. Pursuant to the relevant article, it was decided to discuss the final status of Jerusalem, settlers, asylum seekers and refugees until October 1996 at the latest. However, the refugee issue was never discussed in the following years. In this respect, the Oslo Accords completely blocked the way for Palestinian refugees to return to their homes (Kemiksiz 2016).

Although the Oslo process emphasized the necessity and importance of peace between the parties, there were problems and obstacles to peace that the Oslo Accords could not solve. The main obstacle to the peace process was the issue of mutual trust between Israel and Palestinians. It would be an illusion to expect that the long-standing historical hostility between two parties could be solved by just a single agreement. In addition, the agreement could not propose a permanent solution to the return of refugees. Around 4 million Palestinians were living in the diaspora in different countries, and some of them were in refugee camps (Arı 2005: 684). Akçay (2003: 118) states that the main purpose of Israel during the Oslo negotiations was “to make an agreement with the PLO and to incite the conflict between the PLO and Hamas. Israel did not want to withdraw from the occupied territories, it was only using peace as a tactical maneuver”. The failure of the Oslo process has led to the gradual fade of hopes for Israeli-Palestinian peace, rise of conflicts and uprisings again, divisions among the Palestinians, and a duality between Hamas and Fatah (Kemiksiz 2018: 139).

There were serious difficulties in the implementation of the Oslo Accords. Israel demanded new concessions each time for the transition to the next stage. Moreover, Israel was reluctant to obey its obligations. The Israeli administration did not suspend settlement activities. In order to ensure the connection between Jewish settlements, bypass roads were built and checkpoints were created, and the Israeli occupation was expanded. During this period, attacks by Jewish settlers on Palestinians also increased. After the Israeli security forces had killed 30 Palestinians, Hamas carried out bomb attacks targeting Israelis in Jerusalem and Palestine (Kemiksiz 2016: 156). The murder of Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, who was accepted as the architect of the Oslo negotiations, by an extreme-rightist Jewish settler in 1995, sharpened political differences between secularists and religious factions in Israel. The development revealed that peace with Palestinians increased the social division.

3.4. CAMP DAVID SUMMIT OF JULY 2000

During the Oslo negotiations, the issue of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees was left to the post-temporary period. The victory of the Likud Party led by Binyamin Netanyahu, who was against the Oslo Peace Process, in the elections held in Israel in May 1996, put the peace process in a deadlock (Kaya 2018: 9). Despite efforts by the

Clinton administration and the EU to restart the process, they failed to make progress during Netanyahu's period. Hopes for peace increased after the Labor Party led by Ehud Barak won the elections in Israel in May 1999 (Sönmez and Kalaycı 2003: 57). In the post-Oslo period, Arafat was not as eager for negotiations as Barak. In July 2000, US President Bill Clinton invited the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to Camp David, Maryland, to continue peace negotiations. The purpose of this summit was to enable two sides to reach an agreement and resolution on issues including borders, settlements, refugees and "permanent status" of Jerusalem.

However, these negotiations were also unsuccessful. Barak did not accept the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and only accepted a limited compensation. Israel would not take legal responsibility for refugees leaving their homes and stipulated that this issue would not be on the agenda again (Ari 2007: 23). It was unacceptable to expect the Palestinians to sign an agreement demanding that they would renounce their right of return. On the other hand, Israel was still claiming that it had been a victim of anti-Semitic genocides in Europe and demanding compensation, it had nuclear weapons and a very large army, though (Kemiksiz 2016: 157).

Barak also rendered sovereignty of the Palestinian state meaningless. He demanded that the "independent" Palestine would not have heavy weapons and not make an alliance agreement with other states without Israel's approval. In case Israel perceived a threat, it could deploy military forces in the Jordan valley (Kemiksiz 2016: 157). In other words, Palestine would not be independent, but would become a vassal state dependent on Israel. Israel made it impossible to define the Israeli-Palestinian border by annexing East Jerusalem, establishing new Jewish settlements in the West Bank and building a "separation wall" (Şahin 2010). Moreover, Palestine would be divided into three parts, and these parts would be connected to each other by secured passageways that Israel could close in case of emergency. Although it was stated that Jerusalem could be the capital of both states, only a small part of it was left to Palestine, and Israel's sovereignty would be in question in the rest of Jerusalem, including the holy places (Ari 2007: 24). Since Arafat rejected these proposals, an agreement could not be reached at Camp David. The al-Aqsa Intifada started after the Camp David and the parties lost their hopes for peace, after opposition leader, Sharon, stormed al-Aqsa Mosque in October 2000.

3.5. TABA NEGOTIATIONS (JANUARY 2001)

Immediately after the Camp David Summit had been inconclusive, right-wing Israelis revolted against Ehud Barak, who opened Jerusalem for discussion. The delay in the solution in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations was discouraging Palestinians. The concern of Palestinians was the decrease in support to Barak. It was obvious that a decline in the support for Barak would make a peace agreement impossible. This atmosphere of uncertainty was an opportunity for Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon (Bayraktar 2003: 226). Ariel Sharon's visit to the Masjid al-Aqsa (Harem El-Sharif) in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000 under the protection of around a thousand Israeli police and soldiers, led to a decrease in hopes for peace and increased tension in the region (Said 2002: 74). The Sharaon's visit had main three aims. First, Israel would not relinquish the sovereignty of the holy hill to Palestinians. Israel would not accept the concessions made by Barak. Lastly, Israel was the only ruler of the region (Ballı 2013: 79). Before his visit to Masjid al-Aqsa, Sharon told the New York Times that Jerusalem was the property of Jews and Israelis were its guardians (Bayraktar 2003: 226). On 29 September 2000, Al-Aqsa Intifada first started in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and spread from the Palestinian territories to the Israeli territories in October (Yılmaz 2009: 340). More than a thousand Palestinians were killed during the Intifada (Carter 2008: 93).

Hamas argued that the agreements signed during the Oslo process would not create a Palestinian State, on the contrary, would perpetuate the Israeli occupation. According to Hamas, the Oslo process was designed to break up and eliminate Palestinian resistance (Doyran 2015: 93). The escalating violence and mutual destruction campaign between the parties destroyed the atmosphere of trust that was necessary for peace. The conflict has turned into a war in the 2000s. The process has become the continuation of the occupation on the side of Israel while for the Palestinians, it has become a struggle for existence. Israel started to reoccupy the lands in the West Bank, which it left to the Palestinian administration, by using heavy weapons. The Palestinian administration did not have the political and military power to prevent the attacks. As a result of Sharon's visit to the Masjid al-Aqsa, the Palestinian administration was destroyed by the violence, and Hamas became more popular and stronger (Ballı 2013: 80).

In the process, Clinton appointed former Senator George J. Mitchell as head of the Fact-Fitting Commission. The Commission also included President Süleyman Demirel, Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorbjørn, former American Senator Warren Rudman and European Foreign and Security High Representative Spanish Javier Solana. The Commission published a report in 2001 and called the parties to take action on three points. These were the immediate end of violence and the halting of the construction of illegal settlements, the introduction of mutual confidence-building measures and the initiation of negotiations. The report also stated that there was no basis for the claim that the Palestinian Autonomous Administration launched a terrorist campaign against Israel with a deliberate plan, and underlined that the Palestinian Authority failed to make a persistent effort in controlling the demonstrations and violence. According to the report, the policies of Sharon were not the sole reason of the al-Aqsa Intifada, but created a provocative environment (Ayman 2009: 53).

Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Barak and the Palestinian President Yasser Arafat launched a new series of negotiations at the Egyptian town of Taba on the Red Sea from 21 to 27 January 2001. Unlike Camp David Summit in which the USA played a key role, outsiders did not participate in Taba Summit. At the Summit, Israel put a new map on the table. The abandonment of “areas to be temporarily held under Israeli control”, which was included in Israel’s previous proposal, was considered as an acceptable negotiation ground for the Palestinian Authority (Ayman 2009: 53). There were three main issues that could not be agreed upon in the 2001 Taba talks: the refugee issue, the borders of the West Bank and the status of Jerusalem. The three most controversial topics of the revived peace talks between Israel and Palestine would be handled by a special committee. The Committee would be chaired by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni on behalf of Israel and by former Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei on behalf of Palestine. The Committee’s primary agenda would be to seek reconciliation on the issues of refugees, the status of Jerusalem and demarcation. The summit was interrupted by the elections in Israel, right-wing Likud Party candidate Ariel Sharon became prime minister and refused to continue negotiations.

3.6. GENEVA ACCORD (2003)

George W. Bush took over the Presidency of the USA in 2001. Bush did not see the solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a strategic priority in his strategy towards the Middle East, unlike his predecessor Bill Clinton. He did not get involved much in the Conflict until the September 11 terrorist attacks (Kaya 2018: 10). However, after the September 11 attacks, the US administration realized that the continuation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict triggered hostility towards the Western supporters of Israel such as the USA and the EU, and led to terrorist attacks.

The waves of Palestinian suicide attacks were followed by Israel's occupation of almost all of the West Bank. In April 2002, Israeli forces entered the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank and took control of the area. A massacre was committed by Israel in the Jenin refugee camp. Israel stated that its troops faced an organized resistance and suffered heavy losses, while only 52 Palestinian women, children and elderly were killed in the combat. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report on this issue blamed both sides for violent incidents that put civilians at risk, but concluded that there was no massacre (HRW 2002). Amnesty International, on the other hand, concluded that the Israeli army committed war crimes in its operations against Jenin and Nablus in the West Bank (Amnesty International 2002: 68).

That the whole peace process have ground to a halt led the USA to give priority to the Middle Eastern issue. The US administration sent Retired General Anthony C. Zinni to the region to mediate in ending the conflict between Israel and Palestinians, but Zinni did not succeed in his attempt (Dobson and Marsh 2006: 180). In the same period, the EU representatives such as Javier Solana, the High Representative of the EU for Foreign and Security Policy, and Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique, who was holding the rotating presidency of the EU Council promoted some mediation initiatives that resulted in failure.

After the failure of the Western attempts, US Secretary of State Colin Powell, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and rotating President of the EU council Josep Pique came together in Madrid on 10 April 2002 to coordinate mediation activities for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and established the Quartet on Middle East (also known as the Diplomatic Quartet or

Madrid Quartet). The Quartet, consisting of the UN, the USA, Russia and the EU, proclaimed a “road map” to revive the peace process in the Middle East.

Publication of the road map was delayed due to negotiations over its content throughout 2002. The document was published only after the US-led operation in Iraq in April 2003. All diplomatic attempts were suspended until the publication of the document. In June 2003, US President George Bush announced his policy on the Middle East. In his speech, Bush called on Palestinians to designate a leader who “will not compromise on terrorism” (The White House 2002). The ceasefire declared by Palestinian militant groups in June after intense negotiations was only valid for 7 weeks.

The road map consisted of three stages. The road map primarily focused on holding elections in Palestine and cessation of violence. The second stage dealt with a Palestinian state with temporary borders. The third stage addressed key issues such as settlers, Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees were addressed. In particular, the first stage of the road map, namely the end of terrorism and violence, included Palestinian proposals. The first stage was also the precondition of Israel (Ari 2007: 28). The details of three stages can be outlined as follows:

- **First stage:** This stage primarily envisaged free and fair elections in Palestine, rebuilding institutions under a Palestinian rule and stopping terrorism. It also demanded Israel to withdraw to its position in September 2000. There was an aim of the improvement in the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, and a rectification of the economic situation in the West Bank. In other words, in the first phase of the plan, Palestinians were asked to re-start cooperation on security and carry out comprehensive political reform, including the new constitution and elections, while Israel was expected to take all necessary steps to ensure normalization of the lives of Palestinians. It was stated that all these attempts were realizing the principle of two-independent-state solution for peace and security in the region (Cordesman 2003: 44).
- **Second stage:** The road map envisioned the establishment of a Palestinian state with temporary borders. This would also mean the implementation of UN resolutions 242 and 338 and Israel’s return to the 1967 borders. The second stage focused on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state

with temporary borders and elements required for Palestine's "sovereignty". This phase was planned to begin after the Palestinian elections and to end with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. It was expected that the Quartet including US, Russia, EU and UN would hold an international conference to improve the economic situation of Palestine. In this process, it was envisaged that the parties would cooperate comprehensively, engage in effective security cooperation, and ensure normalization in the lives of Palestinians and their institutions. Democratic institutions of Palestine, including the Prime Ministry, would be established. Political reforms should be completed. Arab states were asked to re-establish their pre-Intifada relations (such as the mutual opening of commercial offices) with Israel (Cordesman 2003: 44-45).

- **Third stage:** In the third and final stage, the goal was to consolidate Palestinian reforms and stabilize Palestinian institutions, ensure permanent and effective Palestinian security, and eventually establish an independent Palestinian state with final borders by signing a permanent status agreement. This road map envisioned a second international conference of the Quartet to ratify the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on Jerusalem, refugees, Jewish settlements and definite borders. The conference would support efforts for a comprehensive Middle East agreement between Israel, Lebanon and Syria. The Israeli and Palestinian authorities were expected to reach a final consensus on UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 1397. Thus, the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 would have ended. In this way, it was aimed to establish an independent Palestinian State with its final borders. The talks were planned to focus on the "protection of the religious rights of Christians, Jews and Muslims". At this stage, Arab countries would be asked to balance their relations with Israel "within the framework of Arab-Israeli peace" (Cordesman 2003: 45).

The plan envisaged that Israel would return to its position on 28 September 2000. However the road map did not mention the dismantling of Jewish settlements. This can be interpreted as freezing Israel's occupation without preventing its natural expansion. Therefore, the road map had some uncertainties about the significant issues.

In the first stage, the road map focused on a Palestinian State with temporary borders and sovereign elements. However, there was no explanation about what was the meaning of sovereign elements. According to Sharon, even if such a state were to be established, Israel would have the power to veto the agreements made by this so-called state with other countries, in addition to external security, control of airspace and control of underground water resources. The “final status talks” envisaged in the road map did not provide any guarantee that the status of Jerusalem, refugees and settlers would result in an agreement. At this point, the road map left the most key issues unsettled.

The establishment of the Quartet launched a period in which a complete harmony was observed in the attitudes of the USA and the EU towards the resolution of the conflict until the term of Donald Trump’s presidency. The statement announced at the end of the first meeting of the Quartet on the Middle East indicated that the conflict between Israel and Palestine should be resolved on the basis of the UN Security Council resolutions based on the principle of “lands for peace” (Kaya 2018: 11). The statement also emphasized that a just and everlasting solution to the conflict should be based on the vision of two states to live side by side within secured and recognized borders. The two-state solution has been a principle on which the USA and the EU have taken as a basis in their efforts to solve the conflict. The UN Security Council members have also reaffirmed the principle of two-state solution by adopting the UN Security Council resolutions numbered 1397 of 12 March 2002 and 1515 of 19 November 2003, thus the principle has become legally binding for all UN member states. The UN affirmed a vision of the Middle East where two states, Palestine and Israel, had to live side by side.

UN Security Council Resolution 1397 demanded two sides to stop all acts of violence, called upon both sides and their leaders to resume negotiations on a political settlement. In the Resolution, there was an emphasis on support for the efforts of the UN authorities to assist the parties to stop the violence and to launch the peace process again. Similarly, UN Security Council Resolution 1515 repeated the Council’s demand for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence. The Council reminded the principle of two-state solution in the region. UN member states wanted two sides to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. The Council called on the parties to

perform their obligations under the Roadmap proclaimed by the Quartet on the Middle East.

Despite all the efforts of the Quartet to promote peace and stability in the Middle East, the Quartet faced criticisms from regional and international actors. In the report of MERCURY, which is financially supported by the EU's 7th Framework Programme, Tocci (2011) stated that the Quartet was inadequate to reveal new measures to prevent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The statements of the Quartet were seen as repetition of previous statements. Therefore, they would be insufficient for significant changes in policies of Israel and Palestine. Palestinian officials criticized the former Prime Minister of the UK Tony Blair for taking the function of the Quartet personally and found his role "useless" (Kalman 2012). According to the report of the Saban Centre for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, the Quartet remained ineffective to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The Quartet was found so "outdated, dysfunctional, and discredited" that it should not have been shown as responsible for negotiating peace in the Middle East (Kalman 2012).

The developments on the side of the Quartet seemed to justify the criticisms. First, the US preferred to work with Israel rather than its partners in the Quartet. The EU, UN and Russia accepted the role of the US instead of trying to create a counterbalance. The US administration also supported Israel's unilateral withdrawal plan from Gaza (Disengagement Plan), which rendered the road map's vision of a Palestinian state meaningless. Disengagement Plan enabled Israel to withdraw from Palestine without ending the occupation, unlike the Quartet's road map. Although the Plan was criticized for that Israel intended to determine its borders unilaterally, it was also supported because it envisaged a complete withdrawal from an occupied Palestinian territory for the first time (Kemiksiz 2016: 161). These developments resulted in the increasing marginalization of the Quartet and the determination of the process by the USA and Israel (Elgindy 2012: 17).

On December 1, 2003, Israeli and Palestinian leaders signed the Geneva Accord, as a draft "Permanent Status Agreement" to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Kiran 2005: 152). The Accord was prepared by Israeli and Palestinian politicians, former Palestinian Minister of Information Yasser Abed Rabbo and former Israeli Minister of Justice Yossi Beilin. Israel and Palestine initially did not approve of the

Accord. After the preparation of the Accord, the US administration took action to revive the Middle East Peace Plan, known as the road map prepared by the Quartet on the Middle East. The Middle East representative of the US administration, William Burns, met with Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmet Qurei in Amman and with Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom in Jerusalem. In his contacts, Burns asked Israelis to withdraw from illegal settlements and said, "We have an opportunity to revive the Middle East Roadmap. This will undoubtedly be a difficult process. Both sides have important responsibilities" (Deutsche Welle 2003). William Burns said that he was also worried about the firewall that the Israeli government built in the West Bank, because the Wall caused harsh criticism in the international community, but he did not demand stopping its construction.

Furthermore, Saab Erakat from the Palestinian Cabinet and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon's representative, Dov Weisglass, came together to prepare for the Israel-Palestine Summit. Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei said he would meet with Sharon if he showed that he was ready to resolve the issues between two sides. Qurei underlined that one of the biggest problems was the firewall in the West Bank. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, on the other hand, said that Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei's request to meet him could not be attributed to the suspension of the construction of the firewall. Israeli Justice Minister Josef Lapid also reacted to Qurei, arguing that the Palestinian Prime Minister did not have the right to put forward certain conditions for meeting.

The Quartet's road map and the Geneva Accord remained vain attempts for peacebuilding in the Middle East. Israel killed the paralyzed Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin on his wheelchair in March 2004 and his successor Abdulaziz Rantisi in April 2004. In May 2004, Israel carried out an operation against the Refah refugee camp in Gaza and continued settlement activities and construction of the firewall. The suspicious death of Arafat through poison in November 2004 and the election of Abbas to the Presidency of the Palestinian Authority in January 2005 strengthened the expectation that the peace process could be reimplemented. The Sharm El Sheikh Summit in February 2005 aimed at ending the Intifada and launching the Road Map, but the developments in Palestinian internal politics negatively affected the peace process. In September 2006, fighting broke out between Palestinian groups, Fatah and Hamas, in

the Gaza Strip, and Hamas won 2006 Palestinian legislative election. After the painful process of conflicts and ceasefires until June 2007, Mahmoud Abbas declared a state of emergency in Gaza and the West Bank. He demanded the formation of a transitional government and handed over the duty of Prime Minister to Salam Fayyad. Thus, a two-headed administration emerged, one being the Hamas government in Gaza and the Fatah government in the West Bank (Erkmen 2019: 18).

Undoubtedly, some actors tried to increase their regional influence after the crisis in Palestinian internal affairs. The search for influence resulted in a political and geographical division in the region. Israel and the international community did not recognize the legitimacy of Hamas. Fatah did not want to leave power. After the establishment of the Fayyad government, the USA and the EU decided to initiate aid programs, and Israel released its tax revenues (Aymat 2010: 9). The involvement of the Western actors in the process started the road map negotiations again and the Annapolis Conference was held in November 2007.

Yaşar et al. (2010: 91) stated that the main reason behind the Annapolis Conference was the decrease in power of the party on the side of USA-Israel-moderate Arab regimes-Abbas against Hamas-Hezbollah-Iran-Syria in the Middle East. Therefore, the declining party wanted to create an “artificial peace atmosphere”. The Iraqi, Lebanese and Palestinian elections witnessed the rise of Islamist groups close to Iran. The increasing influence of Iran in the region has caused concerns in Sunni Arab countries, especially in Saudi Arabia. The only concrete result of the Conference was the decision to start direct talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders. The Conference envisaged that negotiations would continue without interruption and an agreement would be made before the end of 2008. The parties declared that they would immediately fulfill their road map obligations. They decided to establish a mechanism with the participation of the representatives of the USA, Israel and Palestine to implement the road map.

Direct talks between Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert began in December 2007. However, negotiations were interrupted without any resolution due to Israel’s Gaza operation in 2008, decision to expand settlements in Eastern Jerusalem, and the resumption of excavations under the Al-Aqsa Mosque (Yaşar et al. 2010: 93). The Israel Defense Forces launched Operation Cast Lead on 27 December 2008.

Thousands of Palestinians lost their lives, injured and forced to leave their homes due to their destruction by Israel.

After Operation Cast Lead, Hamas and Fatah launched negotiations in Cairo, and Fayyad resigned in March 2009 to establish a new national unity government. However, both parties could not reach any compromise. Meanwhile, the end of Abbas' four-year term in January 2009 and the proposal to combine the Presidential elections with the 2010 general elections caused new tension in Palestine. The tension led Hamas to question the legitimacy of Abbas' Presidency. Although Hamas did not accept the unification of the elections, it declared that it would continue to recognize the Presidency of Abbas (Kemiksiz 2016: 165).

When the new US President Barack Obama took office in 2009, the division among the Palestinians, the stagnation in the Israeli-Palestinian process and the tension in the Palestinian territories continued to be the prominent issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Obama aimed to erase the negative traces left by his predecessor Bush in the region, to withdraw the US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, and to make a new opening to the Arab and Muslim world. After taking office, he visited Turkey in April 2009 and Egypt in June 2009, giving the message that the USA was not at war with the Muslim world. As previous US presidents did, he first dealt with the issue of Palestine to improve the US image. In this context, Obama first started indirect talks between Israel and Palestine in order to end the stagnation in the peace process. Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu to freeze settlement activities for 10 months (UNGA 2010). Netanyahu accepted this offer with the exception of Jerusalem. Subsequently, it was decided to hold direct talks in September 2010. However, negotiations were suspended, because Netanyahu did not agree to extend the moratorium.

Arab Spring process in the Middle East, which started in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread to the rest of North Africa and West Asia in a short time, led to government changes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, and a long and bloody civil war in Syria. The atmosphere created by the Arab Spring protests also affected Palestine through reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. There were demonstrations in Gaza and the West Bank to make solidarity with the Egyptians who rebelled against the Hosni Mubarak administration. Demonstrators called upon Hamas and Fatah to end the conflict and provide unity (Pratt 2013: 12). The transitional government, which came to

power after Mubarak's overthrow, adopted a more sensitive approach to public demands. This change in attitude led Egypt to reconsider its policy on Gaza. The relaxation of the blockade on Gaza, the opening of the Rafah crossing, and the opportunity for Haniyeh to visit the countries of the region have reduced the pressure on Hamas.

During the Arab Spring, Israel played a waiting game in the peace process. The Israeli administration did not want to take risks for peace in an environment where its interlocutors could change overnight (Byman 2011). Palestinian leaders have also taken a less conciliatory stance towards Israel. Under these conditions, the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were interrupted for three years, and the attention of the international community shifted from the issue of Palestine to the Arab Spring. This situation gave Israel the opportunity to continue its settlement activities by demolishing Palestinians' homes and confiscating their lands.

During Obama's term, the USA conducted two peace initiatives. The first initiative was in 2010-2011 and the second in 2013-2014. However, both attempts did not end Israel's activities of building new settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. In the period of initiatives, the USA and the EU underlined a two-state solution to the conflict on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions. But in reality, the Western support for a two-state solution looks very differently. In the face of the interruption of the peace negotiations with Israel and the pressure of reform demands after the Arab Spring in Palestine, the Palestinian administration concentrated on the efforts for the recognition of Palestine by the UN (Asseburg 2012: 88). Due to the US veto, Palestine could not succeed in its attempts. The UN General Assembly granted Palestine the status of an observer state at the end of November 2012.

3.7. 2020 TRUMP PEACE PLAN

Donald Trump became the 45th president of the USA in the 2016 elections. During his election campaign, Trump promised that he would move the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. This promise provided the support of Evangelical Christians and pro-Israel Republicans. Despite the similar promises of previous US presidents, they failed to keep their promises. In this respect, Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December 2017 and decision to move

the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem not only fulfilled his pre-election promises, but also symbolized a significant departure from the policies already adopted by the previous US administrations.

On the other hand, Trump's decision refers to the enactment of the "Jerusalem Embassy Act" approved by the American Congress on 8 November 1995. The law stipulated that Jerusalem would be recognized as the capital of Israel and the US Embassy would be moved to Jerusalem by 31 May 1999 at the latest. Former presidents have not enforced this law in order to protect the national security interests of the US. They used the right to suspend the law every six months. They mainly concerned about the lack of an attempt without an ultimate solution to the conflict. They avoided endangering the national security interests of the USA in the region, disrupting the relations of the USA with Arab states, and risking the future of the peace process in the Middle East (Kaya 2018: 12). The decision faced harsh reactions from both Palestinians and Arab states and increased tension and violence between Palestine and Israel. The decision has also shown that the Jewish lobby has a great influence on American foreign policy towards the Middle East and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The previous US administrations made a considered effort not to follow a policy that could harm Israel's interests. Moreover, they avoided taking steps that could be dangerous to the US national interests in the Middle East. In other words, they tried to balance of American and Israeli interests. In this respect, Trump has broken with tradition by enacting Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995.

The US Jerusalem decision was not also accepted by the international community. The UN General Assembly voted the US decree that recognized Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel on 21 December 2017. A total of 128 UN member states participated in the UNGA meeting. As a result of voting, the UNGA adopted a draft measure that declared US President Trump's Jerusalem decision "null and void" (Kaya 2018: 12). According to the resolution, no decision would be accepted to change the status of Jerusalem unilaterally, and member states were asked not to move their embassies to Jerusalem. In the UNGA voting, the United Kingdom rejected US President Trump's decision.

In addition to EU member states' stance at the UNGA voting, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini made a

statement on behalf of the foreign ministers of all EU member states after her meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on 7 December 2017. According to the statement, EU member states have not supported the Trump administration's Jerusalem decision and the attitude of the EU towards the issue has been clear (Eriksson 2020: 147-148). Mogherini stated that a two-state solution could be the sole practical answer to Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, Jerusalem would be the capital of both Israel and Palestine.

Mogherini emphasized that the EU countries will not recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel without an ultimate solution to the conflict. Mogherini also expressed that the conflict should be resolved on the basis of the pre-1967 borders within the framework of the UN Security Council resolutions. Any changes in these borders would only be made with the consent of both parties. Mogherini underlined a fair and sustainable method of dealing with the conflict that would meet the expectations of both parties. Mogherini also stated that US President's Jerusalem decision has the potential to worsen the situation. The main concerns of the EU member states were that conflicts and increased violence between Israel and Palestinians after this decision would endanger stability in the region as well as security of the EU member states in the final outcome. EU member states have been concerned about the rise of radical groups, which may trigger new terrorist attacks in Europe in the long run. Regional instability may cause an increase in migration from the Middle East to Europe.

Moreover, EU member states have been concerned about the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe after Trump's decision. The following development showed that their concern was not unfounded. First, anti-Semitic slogans were used in demonstrations. Later, the attacks were organized on a synagogue in Sweden and a Jewish restaurant in the Netherlands. Although the majority of the member states, especially Germany, France and the United Kingdom, did not support Trump's decision, they could not agree on a joint statement against the decision. Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic blocked a joint statement (El-Awaisi and Ataman 2019) and argued that there was no reason for the EU to intervene directly in this issue. In reality, these countries were aiming to strengthen their relations with the USA and Israel (Kaya 2018: 14). The Czech Republic stated that they supported the two-state solution as the common statement of the EU, and did not intend to move their embassies

to Jerusalem. However, the Republic declared the capital of Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders in December 2017, and opened an honorary consulate in Jerusalem (Arnaout 2021).

Two year later, the US President Donald Trump held a White House press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on 28 January 2020, and announced “Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People”, commonly known as the Trump Peace Plan or Deal of the Century. Palestinian representatives were not invited to the conference. According to the Plan, the Palestinians would establish a state with limited sovereignty. In parallel with the US Jerusalem decision on Jerusalem in 2018, the 2020 Plan would also recognize Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel. The US would provide \$50 billion in international investment from Gulf Money to build the new Palestinian state and open an embassy in Palestine (Crowley and Halbfinger 2020). One of the most controversial issues was that the Plan did not envisaged the destruction of Israel’s Separation Wall, “Wall of Shame” or “Wall of Security”, separating the West Bank and Jerusalem. The Plan would increase the presence of Israeli soldiers, and make Jewish settlements in the West Bank legal. Palestinian refugees would be also stripped of their right to return to their homes. The blockade on Gaza would not be lifted. A tunnel would be built between Gaza and the West Bank, but it would be under Israeli control. The Plan demanded cessation of the resistance. In particular, Hamas and Islamic Jihad were demanded to lay down their arms (Dağlı 2020).

The Plan, which Donald Trump described it as the “Deal of the Century”, faced the biggest reaction from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas held a press conference in the city of Ramallah and said that their strategy was based on their struggle to end the occupation, and they would not accept the deal because Jerusalem was not for sale. The Plan was also criticized by the international community including Turkey, Iran, Jordan, the UN and the European Parliament. The representatives of the UN and the EU insisted on a two-state solution to the conflict. On the other hand, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson made a statement in support of the Trump Peace Plan. Prime Minister Johnson’s spokesman stated that the British Prime Minister considered the Plan as a step that would have positive effects in the future.

Although the Plan included the concept of “peace” in the title, its proposals indicated that the Plan was prepared to protect Israel’s long-standing ambitions rather than providing peace in the region. No matter how the Plan was entitled, the attacks by the Israeli police on Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Old City of occupied East Jerusalem on May 2021 has proved that the Trump Peace Plan can be regarded as another failure to provide peace and stability in the region.

Israel’s expansion of its territory on Palestinian lands, resorting to violence and colonizing the Palestinians since its independence has pushed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a dead end. The issue deepened when Israel did not take any positive steps despite the Palestinian demands for Israel to withdraw to the 1967 borders on the way to a two-state solution. No positive results were obtained from the conferences and meetings held between the two states to solve the issue. Palestine’s efforts for independence and its struggle against Israel’s occupation continued for years. In this section, the thesis of the parties and international actors for the resolution of critical issues such as the status of Jerusalem, refugees, borders, settlement areas between the two states were analyzed. It has been examined whether the two-state solution has been compatible with the perspective of the two states. Although the two-state solution could not be an alternative in this process, it has been seen that the one-state solution is not a reasonable option for two states. It has become clear that for a helpful option in the peace process that will satisfy both sides, the parties must make serious concessions on their principles.

CHAPTER FOUR

ASSESSING THE PAST OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE PROCESS AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

The creation of Israel has resulted in great destruction in the region. The long standing wars, millions of Palestinian refugees dispersed to countries of the region, occupied Palestinian territories by Israel, Fatah-Hamas conflict in Palestine, financial issues caused by the resource allocation to armament, regional instability, radicalization, terrorism, polarization and hostilities have determined the history of the “Middle East” in the last 100 years. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the future of the peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the British and American role together with the mediation of Western actors in the peace process.

Living in peace and security is the most natural right of every society. However, there can exist the paradox of security in peacebuilding process. When living conditions and security of only one side in the conflict zone improve and increase, threat and security perception of that side also increases. Therefore, this situation in a conflict environment triggers the potential of political administrators to display risky behaviors on the part of the society where security is ensured. Aggressive behaviors in this direction do not contribute to non-conflict situations, on the contrary, they have the potential for a potential for violence and/or acts of aggression (Çalışır 2020: 51).

Regarding the issue of Palestine, the Israeli securitization narrative based on Israelis’ desire to live in prosperity, especially against Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip under siege, sometimes prevents even negative peace. The absence of violence in a conflict and only a ceasefire as a result of violent conflicts means “negative peace”. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is mostly considered in this category, except for violent conflicts and wars. “Positive peace”, on the other hand, refers to the structural transformation and absolute establishment of justice. Positive peace requires cooperation while negative peace is the absence of violence at all (Galtung 1996: 31). The phase of “positive peace” phase has not yet been achieved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Kenneth Boulding offers the concept of “stable/sustainable peace” that conflicts can be prevented by determining pre-war conditions and taking precautions against these conditions (Bayraktar 2012: 255). However, the process of identifying conflict conditions is complicated and all conflicting sides should have equal opportunity to represent their needs through negotiations. The theory of conflict resolution developed by John Burton from Maslow’s hierarchy of needs suggests that it can be hard to contain or suppress entrenched conflicts in the long term. However, conflict resolution can satisfy basic needs and prevent deep-rooted conflicts (Fisher 1997: 6). Burton underscores that human beings have deep-rooted basic needs, these needs cannot be suppressed or negotiated with anyone (d’Estrée 2008: 136). For the Palestinians, the needs such as the protection of their lands and borders, the right of return of the refugees who were forced to immigrate and being an independent state can be regarded as deep-rooted basic needs. Although there may be different dimensions of these needs, peace cannot be established without providing reasonable conditions through negotiations (Çalışır 2020: 52).

To concentrate on its deep-rooted interests, Israel has been motivated by a desire to survive while perceiving all events occurring in the Middle East and international system, and Israel’s foreign and security policy rhetoric has evolved unilaterally with regard to the political culture of securitization. Since Israel has adopted an over-securitized foreign policy and focused its policies more on maintaining its presence in the region has “normalized” Israel’s use of force while responding to conflicts (Gül and Yüksel 2016: 349).

Securitization considers politics beyond the established rules of a game, and treats a problem as a particular kind of policy or a supra-political issue (Buzan et al. 1998: 23). The Copenhagen School identifies three different units of securitization: reference objects, securitizing actors, and functional actors. A reference object is something that is assumed to be “existentially threatened” (Buzan et al. 1998: 36). The reference object of securitization is the state, traditionally, but securitizing actors can regard anything (national identity, social groups, etc.) as reference objects. Securitizing actors (political elites, government, pressure groups, or military) are those who engage in a security speech act on an issue in order to securitize it. Securitizing actors carry out their actions by presenting any controversial political issue as an “existential threat” to

the reference object such as the state, ideology or national independence. Functional actors, on the other hand, significantly influence security decisions, but do not choose the reference object or demand security measures to keep the reference object secured (Buzan et al. 1998: 36). The functional actor act as an “outsider” of the securitization process, or as an actor contributing to the speech act on security. When securitizing actors cannot directly securitize an issue, they can use the social capital of functional actors to achieve the securitization process.

The State of Israel has carried the traces of the traumatic effects of assimilation policies towards Jewish communities in Poland and Russia (Cleveland 2015: 266-295) and the Holocaust during the WWII (Kızılay 2020). Therefore, genocide and hate speeches have been the foundations of Israel’s national consciousness (Efegil 2013: 55). Since the establishment of the State in 1948, Israel has coded the Arabs living in the region as a security problem, and the Jewish identity has been formed through marginalizing the Palestinians living in Israel (Polat 2018: 282). When this traumatic consciousness has been combined with conflicts with Arab states and hostility towards Arabs, the perception of existential threat has gained a strong and important place in Jewish collective memory, in the state structure and in national security strategies.

The first dimension of the existential threat can be regarded as the dimension of demography. The potential elimination of the Jewish majority in the region has been perceived as a threat within the scope of the demographic dimension. The second is the political dimension that deals with losing Israel’s sovereignty over the Jewish community and in the international arena. Finally, the third dimension is security, in which Iran’s nuclear weapon capabilities have been used by Israel as an excuse to pursue its security-based policies (Michael 2009: 688-689).

Israel’s threat and security perception has resulted in overreacting even to nonexistent threats due to regarding them as an existential threat, and legitimizing Israel’s violent behaviors. Israel has used the concept of “existential threats” to satisfy its national interests and legitimize measures against the regional actors through gaining the support of its people and achieving cooperation with the USA. Israel has been referring to the perception of existential threat while adopting violent attitude towards Palestinian Arabs and building the Separation Wall in the West Bank and Jerusalem (Ağdemir 2014: 66).

The second impact of the perception of existential threats on Israel's security policy has been in the military dimension. Based on this perception, Israel has equated security to military capabilities, thus carried out activities to increase its military strength. Israel, as an actor in a region always dominated by wars, conflicts and chaos, has seen its military strength as the main instrument of maintaining its existence. In this respect, the Israel Defense Forces has become a high-tech military power in the region as a result of developing advanced weapons and continuous support of the USA (Kızılay 2020). After the 1967 War, Israel's settlement movement to judaize the West Bank found both a physical and a political-ideological field of action (Belder 2018: 7). As a result of the settlement movement, Israel started to control the region militarily for security reasons and settlements continued to increase over the years.

While the Israeli administrations have gradually included the lands they occupied since 1967 within the borders of Israel, on the other hand, they started to take measures to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. To institutionalize the occupation in the Palestinian territories, Israel has carried out its strategy within the framework of certain plans. The first of these plans was developed by General Yigal Allon, Deputy Prime Minister of the Labor Party government following the 1967 War. The plan was later referred to as the "Allon Plan". The Allon Plan envisaged immediate annexation of almost thirty percent of the West Bank. According to the Allon Plan, Jewish settlements would be constructed on the highlands along the north-south axis of the West Bank, as well as on the eastern part of this line. The final version of the plan envisioned the creation of an Arab or Palestinian entity in 50 percent of the West Bank, while annexing East Jerusalem, the Jordan valley, the Hebron Hill and the southern part of Gaza (Ari 2007: 14).

When the nationalist Likud Party won the Israeli elections in 1977, the Sharon Plan based on the Allon Plan was transformed into a new strategic document with the title of "A vision of Israel at Century's End". Accordingly, it was planned to create a belt of settlements along the line running from north to south, from Jenin to Bethlehem, along the western side of the West Bank. Ariel Sharon, the Minister of Agriculture in those years, argued that a new buffer zone would be created between Israel and Palestine through these settlements. The Sharon Plan became the key element of the World Zionist Organization's settlement policy in October 1978 (Ari 2007: 14). The

comprehensive five-year plan envisioned the settlements to be located both between and around the Palestinian population in the West Bank. This plan resulted in the division of the West Bank into three parts. The purpose of the Plan was to prevent the link and territorial unity between Palestinian cities.

The third plan was the Begin Plan, known by the name of Prime Minister Menachem Begin, regarding the Palestinian autonomy (entity) to be established in the occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank. The Plan was accepted by the Israeli parliament in 1977. The autonomy created in the Begin Plan also envisaged the formation of an administrative by "Arab inhabitants" on local issues (Anziska 2017: 290). However, foreign policy, borders and economic matters would be in Israel's control. The main purpose of the Plan was to enable Israel to manage the region more effectively, to create an image legitimizing Israel's occupation, and to support pro-occupation local administrators. The Begin Plan was, in fact, similar to formation of "self-government" introduced for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during the Camp David process in 1978.

The Oslo process in the 1990s envisaged partial autonomy for the Palestinians within the framework of the principle of "self-government". Although both the Palestinians and the international community thought that a Palestinian State would be established at the end of this process, the Israeli authorities seemed not to agree on this idea. Two years after the Oslo Accords, Israel's Prime Minister and Labor Party leader Izak Rabin advocated peaceful coexistence between Israel and the Palestinian entity, but focused on a united Jerusalem as Israel's capital (Inbar 1999: 160). He was also talking about an entity, not a state, ruled by Palestinians. Rabin said that a return to pre-1967 borders would never be out of the question, and Palestinians could have an autonomous internal structure under Israeli sovereignty.

The Oslo process in the 1990s has normalized and deepened the Israeli military presence in the region. Thus, the increase in security-based settlements has been accelerated by securitization policies. In this process, the settlements established by non-Zionist ultra-Orthodox Jews in the West Bank have also increased (Belder 2018: 7). Economic-social dynamics within the country increased Jewish immigration to the West Bank. Jewish settlements have eventually become an organic part of the process that would make Israel a Jewish nation-state.

Despite the international pressure on a “two-state solution” to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel’s securitization policy has arguably reached its peak in 2018 as the Israeli Parliament approved “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People”. According to the Law, the right to self-determination in the country would belong only to the Jews. Israel was acknowledged as a Jewish state and the historical homeland of all Jews in the world. If there was be a gap in the law, Jewish shari'a would be taken as reference. All Jews in the world would have the right to return to Israel. Moreover, the Law recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The construction of new settlements and the annexation plan of the West Bank, military control and interventions in places of worship such as Masjid Aqsa and Al-Halil Mosque by Israel implies continuity in Israel’s securitization policies and persistent Israeli practice of peace avoidance.

For Palestinians, it is inevitable that the capital of a Palestinian state will be Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is one of the holiest places for all Muslims along with Makkah and Madinah. The Mi’raj, the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad into heaven, also took place in Masjid al-Aqsa. In fact, this holy place was the first qibla of Muslims (610-624), one and half year after the Hijra. Therefore, any proposal that does not envisage sovereignty over the Masjid al-Aqsa in Eastern Jerusalem seems acceptable neither to the Palestinians nor to the Muslims. On the other hand, Israel considers Jerusalem, where the holy temple and the Western Wall located adjacent to the Masjid al-Aqsa as a holy place for Jews, and advocates it to be its eternal capital (Zeitlin 1947: 120). According to the UNGA Resolution 242, the holy places in East Jerusalem, which were held by the Palestinians until the 1967 War, would have to be under Palestinian sovereignty.

Furthermore, the population of refugees has reached millions. A significant number of refugees have been living in camps with unfavorable conditions. Many of refugees were forced to migrate from lands currently occupied by Israel, such as Jaffa, Haifa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Israel argues that the return of refugees will never be approved by claiming that Israel’s population structure and demographic balance will deteriorate. On similar grounds, Israel opposes even the return of refugees to the Palestinian side.

The evaluation of conditions for resolving conflicts between Israel and Palestinians reveal that achieving a realistic peace requires a consensus between two sides on major fault lines such as borders, refugees, Jewish settlement, status of Jerusalem and recognition of the Palestinian state. Both sides have their own nonnegotiable deep-rooted needs. For both sides, any compromise with these needs have been perceived as an existential threat to their securities and survival. Especially Israel has conceptualized “security” over traditional concerns and perceptions, and formed its policies around these concerns and perceptions. Although the perception of security has changed its axis over time, foreign policy practices has been carried out on the basis of the same basic arguments against different threat elements. The initial perceived threat of Arab states by Israel has gradually turned into the possibility of non-conventional warfare, terrorism and fights against non-state actors. Israel has focused on the strategy of existential threat perception as a tool in its foregin policy. Therefore, the Israeli administrations have legitimized their activities with the aim of creating freedom of action against perceived threats. The imparactibility of bilateral negotiations due to security-based approach to conflict resolution have entailed the intervention and mediation of third parties into negotiations.

4.1. FINDING BRITAIN’S ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS

There had been likely to be a direct intervention of British actors in the early Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At the beginning of the 20th century, Britain became the primary actor in the issue of Palestine. The Balfour Declaration played a pivotal role in every phase of the Palestinian issue. The British promise for a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine with the Balfour Declaration in 1917 (Göze 1995: 10) has given substantial legitimacy to the Zionists’ claims on Palestine (Altınoğlu 2005: 303). The Balfour Declaration was the first time that a great power explicitly gave support to Jewish immigrations to the region. Therefore, the Declaration paved the way for the establishment of Israel on the Palestinian territories resulting in the piecemeal occupation of Palestine and displacement of large masses of Palestinians.

Moreover, the Balfour Declaration triggered what became known as the Arab-Israeli conflict in the “Middle East”. The Balfour Declaration made two completely opposite promises. On the one hand, it promised Jews a homeland on territories where

another nation had been already living, on the other hand, it claimed that no harm would come to fundamental rights of non-Jewish nations. The paradox in these statements has also been proven by historical experience. In the case that the first promise was fulfilled, the second promise was experienced by the opposite developments. After the Declaration, the Palestinian issue has been a zero-sum game between Arabs and Jews, in which one side gained when there was an absolute loss for the other side.

Britain expected the presence of Jews in the region would protect the British interests (Arı 2005: 119). Palestine was the only missing link in Britain's chain of exploitation from the Atlantic to the Pacific (Fromkin 2008: 245). Since the Balfour Declaration provoked disturbance among Arabs, Britain had to develop a cooperation between Arabs and Jews (Önal 2020: 254). The British protectorate continued until the WWII. Due to the financial and political burdens of the protectorate and unresolved conflicts in the region, Britain applied to the UN on 2 April 1947 for the issue of Palestine, and a committee was formed to investigate the issue (Önal 2020: 259). In other words, the British foreign policy was one of the main reasons behind the conflict and Britain played a mediatory role in negotiations as long as its interests were satisfied.

In the post-1948 era, the dominant role of Britain has declined in the peace process; however, it has continued involving in the regional issues. The British involvement in the region has been partly connected to either its historical bonds or its foreign policy based on its relations with the US or international organizations such as the UN, the EEC or the EU (Rynhold and Spyer 2007: 137). However, there has been the lack of analysis that focused on the change in the British approach to the Middle eastern issues in the literature. Rynhold and Spyer (2007: 138) argue that Britain's foreign policy after the Six-Day War has wavered between a "diplomatic" and a "strategic" orientation. The British actors have adopted diplomatic approach to specify Britain's interests with regard to establishing and maintaining multi-actor relationships with both Palestinians and European states. On the other hand, the strategic approach has mostly focused on restraining threats to British interests through mutual relationships with Israel and the US. The decision of which orientation should be adopted by the British actors has depended on the developments in the regional and global environment.

The Gulf region has been of vital importance for Britain in terms of oil and commerce in arms (Phythian 1996: 271). The value of British defence equipment exported to the Middle East had a greater share in the 1980s (Table 1).

Table 1: Exports of British defence equipment by region, selected years 1980-1992

Region	Value of exports for selected years (£ m)								Share (%)
	1980	1985	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	
NATO & other W. Europe	111	247	254	412	470	396	422	350	23
Middle East & N. Africa	158	284	632	685	1,569	1,207	1,156	851	56
Other Africa	121	155	45	38	34	36	31	85	5
Asia & Far East	134	73	260	199	306	295	220	199	14
Latin America & Caribbean	13	54	41	37	28	46	35	21	2

Source: Ministry of Defence: UKDefence Statistics, 1993 edition.

In 1993 the Middle East accounted for around 56% of British defence exports, followed by NATO and other Western Europe (23%), Asia and Far East (14%), other Africa (5%), and Latin America and Caribbean (2%). The share of British defence exports to the Middle East has not changed in the last decades. Estimated total British defence exports based on orders and contracts signed by region from 2009 to 2019 (Table 2) shows that 1993 the Middle East accounted for around 60% of British defence exports.

Table 2: Estimated total UK defence exports by region, 2010 to 2019

Region	% Share
Africa	1
Asia Pacific	9
Europe	12
Latin America	1
Middle East	60
North America	17

Source: Ministry of Defence: UKDefence Statistics, 2020 edition.

Britain has been primarily oriented toward ensuring regional peace, stability and security in order to preserve the commercial interests. Moreover, Britain had to establish diplomatic relations with the Middle Eastern states so that the potential rise of radical forces in the region could not pose a threat to European states or directly to Britain as in 9/11 attacks to the USA. Radical groups succeeding in gaining possession of weapons of mass destruction could make the strategic threat to Britain severe concentration of the British foreign policy. Therefore, the conflict resolution would be compatible with the British national interests in the region, but it is controversial which policy could be the best alternative for Britain to ensure peace and stability in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Britain has been the main actor in sponsoring European economic support for the Arab-Israeli peace process. Britain has provided “financial assistance and technical know-how” to the Palestinians (Rynhold and Spyer 2007: 150). The assistance has been given both through bilateral relations with the Palestinian Authority and under the umbrella of the EU. Benjamin Netanyahu’s (the Israeli right) victory in the 1996 general elections triggered the internal tensions within Britain. In 1998, the British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook visited Israel during the British presidency of the European Union. The attitude of Britain was not welcomed by Netanyahu that he cancelled dinner with Cook. Netanyahu charged the Foreign Secretary that he did not conform to the agreement regarding meeting with Palestinians (Schmemmann 1998). Cook told reporters that he came to the region to serve for the peace process. Britain’s position in the EU led the British foreign policy to converge toward a diplomatic orientation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that reinforced “combination of ideological sympathy for the Palestinians, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a pro-European orientation” (Rynhold and Spyer 2007: 138).

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is the responsible government department to pursue national interests through diplomatic relations with foreign countries. The FCO has avoided conflict and regarded Arab counterparts as clients in line with diplomatic orientation while the long standing Arab-Israeli conflict and Israel’s violence against Palestinians has pushed the British diplomats to discover the Israeli culture and to grow anxious of having historical responsibility for the Israeli presence in the region (Rynhold and Spyer 2007: 142). The Guardian anonymously

published the speech of a FCO official about Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2001. In the speech, the official identified Prime Minister as “The cancer at the heart of the Middle East crisis” (MacAskill 2001). In 2004, 50 former British diplomats signed a letter and attacked the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair’s policy on the US-led coalition over advancing a roadmap for peace in the Middle East and backing up illegal settlements of Israel in the West Bank (Renwick 2004). The signatories of this letter urged Blair to change the political position of the UK as a partner in US policies disapproved by the Arab and Muslim world (Tempest 2004). The diplomats were mostly concerned about the adoption of the diplomatic orientation while the administrative authorities have tended to evaluate the regional relations in line with the strategic approach.

Similarly after Brexit, the British foreign policy toward the Israel-Palestine conflict has reflected the “new realism in the UK Government” (Niblett 2021) that has given priority to bilateral collaboration concerning life sciences and green technology and close security partnerships with regional allies (Cabinet Office 2021). The 2020 British Integrated Review on the government’s vision for the UK’s role in the world made no specific reference to the peace process in the Middle East. In parallel with leaving the EU, the British-Palestinian relations seem to reach a low point. First, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson praised Trump Peace Plan in 2020 while the EU has been rejecting the Peace Plan. In April 2021, Johnson announced that the UK does not approve a decision by the International Criminal Court on the investigation of Israel for possible war crimes (Merrick 2021).

The British actors’ attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after the Six-Day War have supported the belief that Britain’s role in the conflict has depended on its relation with the international organizations, especially the EU. In conclusion, the British foreign policy with respect to the peace process have oscillated between a diplomatic and strategic orientation, as Rynhold and Spyer (2007) claim, depending on the institutional responsibilities and external environment both globally and regionally since the second half of the 20th century. In each orientation, there has been one clear determinant of the British policies that pro-British peace and security in the region would preserve national interests of Britain.

4.2. EXPLORING THE US MEDIATION IN THE PEACE PROCESS

After the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the increasing role of the UN in conflict resolution, proposals for a solution have mostly focused on the problem of an administrative structure in the region. The whole conflict was treated as if it was depended on whether Palestine could become a state, or not. For this purpose, mediation initiatives have envisaged the two-state solution that ensured an independent State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel. Although the two-state solution based on the UN Partition Plan for Palestine in 1947 appears to be a reasonable proposal for the conflict, the following events proved that mediation initiatives could not be more than whistle in the wind.

The 1948 and 1967 Wars enforced almost one million Palestinians to leave their homes. After the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel seized the West Bank and hundred thousands of Palestinians were displaced. The former Palestinian territories were used to create new Jewish settlements and the distribution of population started to become in favor of Jews. For an independent Palestinian state, the Jewish settlers must be evacuated so that Palestinian refugees can be resettled. Israel must also hand over the West Bank because there seems no other alternative for Palestinian refugees. In action, Israel supported the expansion of Jewish settlements into areas that would become part of a future Palestinian state. Thus, Israel aimed to guarantee the one-state solution that would create a unitary state dominated by Israel.

Despite the emphasis on the two-state solution, the US interventions in the peace process show that mediation initiatives have, in fact, served the same one-state solution. The Camp David Accords in 1978 and 1979, the Oslo Process in 1993 and the Road Map in April 2002 initially aimed to create a temporary Palestinian administration. They have extended consultations on the fundamental issues in the conflict (borders, refugees, the status of Jerusalem etc.) over a period of time. Therefore, they procrastinated the establishment of an independent State of Palestine in practice.

These initiatives were mainly based on Israel's security. The temporary administration mainly aimed to create an administration with limited autonomy under Israeli sovereignty. A sovereign Palestinian State with temporary borders actually refers to an abstract sovereignty. They were seen as fake solutions by the majority of Palestinians as they justified the Israeli occupation aiming at dividing the Palestinian

territories (Appendix A). The dual administrative structure which emerged after the Hamas-Fatah conflict has turned the expected division into reality.

The Oslo Talks has been considered as the most promising process for the desired peace between Israel and Palestine (Türker 2020). Both sides met on a common ground, and reached agreement on on critical points such as the status of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements in the West Bank (Appendix B and Appendix C). The process started with Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho and continued until the Sceond Intifada in September 2000. The opposition of Hamas and the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by Israeli extremist groups in the middle of the 1990s showed that the Oslo Accords was doomed to failure from the very beginning.

In the roundtable meetings of The Center for Global Studies, Bora Bayraktar evaluated the reasons and factors negatively affecting the Oslo Peace Process in detail and listed eight headings: (i) The four main issues behind the dispute - the status of Jerusalem, the final borders, the fate of Jewish settlers and Palestinian refugees - were not discussed in the negotiations and were postponed until the Camp David talks in 2000. (ii) Historical events like Al-Nakba in 1948 (Palestinian Exodus that approximately 750,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled from their homes by Israeli forces) were not included in the discussions. (iii) The Oslo process did not focus on the identity issue and the need for identity transformation. It seemed impossible to reach a solution by dividing the lands within the framework of the "resource sharing" method, that is, the "land for peace" principle. Both Israelis and Palestinians identified their national identity through the same lands. A durable solution to the conflict could be achieved through redefining their own identity without rejecting the other. (iv) The Oslo process ignored power asymmetry between two sides. While the Palestinians were not realizing their relative weaknesses against Israel and demanding more benefits than they may achieve, Israel did not take a clear position on solutions. (v) The US, as a chief mediator, did not use a balancing approach. The US administration pretended that the conflict was between Israel and Arabs. Therefore, it backed Israel up instead of balancing the power asymmetry by supporting Palestinians. Since a significant portion of the US delegation was of Jewish origin, the Palestinian delegation sometimes thought that they were negotiating with two different Israeli delegations. (vi) Conflict resolution became more complex due to the intervention and interests of regional and international

powers. (vii) Opposing groups that wanted to sabotage the peace efforts also led the process to the downfall. (viii) There was excessive mutual distrust between Israel and Palestinians. The Oslo “peace process”, therefore, seems as another means of oppression by Israel and the USA in order to destroy Palestinians’ right of self-determination (Aral 2018: 8).

Although the Palestinians clearly expressed their demands, they were not met by Israel. Therefore, the idea that “Israel does not keep its promises, it keeps us stalling” was widespread among Palestinians. On the Israeli side, the idea that “No matter what concessions we make, Arafat will not accept. Arafat is a liar and terrorist, there will be no peace with the Palestinians” prevailed (Yıldırım 2012: 11). The Camp David talks in July 2000 were an important milestone to make up for the failures in the Oslo process. The parties negotiated the final status issues. However, at the end of Camp David, it was once again understood how far the approaches and solution proposals of the parties were from each other.

The Road Map was another “so-called” US-backed peace proposal. As in the Oslo process, the US has tried to give the appearance of making peace by postponing the main issues between Israel and Palestinians. The Road Map asserted several preconditions for Palestinians. First, the Quartet on Middle East expected Palestinians to change their leaders, Arafat, and to stop violence. However, the results of the 2006 elections in Palestine did not meet the expectations of the Western actors. Hamas won the majority in the parliamentary elections. Israel saw Hamas as a terrorist organization. Hamas rejected the existence of Israel and ceased the armed struggle against Israel in principle. The Western actors reminded that Hamas was a “terrorist” organization. The US, Israel and the EU asked Hamas to lay down its arms and recognize Israel. Otherwise, all aid to the Palestinian Administration would be cut off and the Palestinian people would be left to their fate although they won in democratically free elections. The US administration not only stopped the aid, but also demanded the given aid back. Israel announced that it would impose a more comprehensive embargo and cut off tax funds that were supposed to be given to Palestine. In short, the Western actors provoked the political struggle that would result in a civil war in Palestine. They also began to directly deal with President Mahmoud Abbas by applying economic isolation to the Hamas government that led to a long siege of Gaza.

In 2018, Donald Trump's recognition on Jerusalem as capital city of Israel and moving the US embassy to Jerusalem put all the card on the table. In parallel with the decision, President Trump announced "Trump Peace Plan" in 2020. Although the 2020 Trump Peace Plan was criticized by the international community including Turkey, Iran, Jordan, the UN and the European Parliament, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson appreciated the Plan. As in the Balfour Declaration, the UK supported a plan that has been in favor of Israel. The Western attitude towards the peace process has indicated that their main and only purpose in the process has been to guarantee their own interest rather than mediating the fulfillment of the preconditions.

One of the reasons behind the running Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been the absence of an impartial mediator to lead the peace process (Sinai 2001: 19). Since the USA has supported Israel, power relations between two sides becomes more volatile to balance, for Palestinians. As Israel has obtained a foothold in the Western world, even an Arab unity may not eliminate the power asymmetry. However, Arab states could not embrace unity in the fight against the West-supported Israel. Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have supported Fatah while Syria, Qatar and Iran had a stance in support of Hamas (Amour 2018). Hamas and Fatah, thus, strengthened their positions against each other. The tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia has been one of the factors that indirectly harms the intra-Palestinian reconciliation. The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Bin Salman, replaced the "Israeli-Arab conflict" discourse with the "Israeli-Palestinian conflict" discourse. This can be interpreted as Saudi Arabia abandonment of being supportive of the Palestinian issue (Inbari 2017: 67-68). In other words, the dual administration Palestine has resulted in similar divide in regional alliances that deepened power and security relations between Israel and Palestine. Unless the Western actors help balance out the power dynamics in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, hopes for peace will dwindle in the Middle East.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Especially the First Zionist Congress at the end of the 19th century and the 1917 Balfour declaration gave the start signal of the Palestine issue. At that time, the Jewish population in the area was very small despite a significant increase in Jewish immigration to the region. Early attempts to conflict resolution resulted in the 1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine, the UNGA Resolution 181, that was a prelude to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The establishment of Israel triggered a new dynamism in the issue of Palestine. The tension in the region caused by Jewish immigrations escalated into a broader conflict between Jews and Arabs that has remained a dominant concern until the 21st century.

This research primarily analyzed the brief history of the Palestinian issue, and British actors' role in the development of the conflict. The study later evaluated the WWII with regard to British actors' ultimate goals, grand visions and activities related to Palestine. Western actors especially US has developed a variety of methods to seek peace for Israel and imposed on the Palestinians. However, the research demonstrated that the peace process did not come up to a fair, acceptable and equitable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestine issue, which has been the most protracted, central and current problem of the region, has two very important features. First, no other region in the world has witnessed such a long and hard struggle for a palm-sized land like Palestine. Secondly, no problem in the 20th century has become as predominantly an axis of international politics. Due to the lack of sustainable conflict resolution, the "Middle East" has become the hottest political region in the world in the last fifty years. No single power could ensure that Israel and Palestine would enjoy just and lasting peace and prosperity.

The existence of the British mandate in Palestine during the WWI seemed to be a desired choice by both Jews and Arabs in the region. The Zionists had made great efforts for Palestine to be ruled by Britain since the British mandate had been expected to respond to all their demands. Arabs, on the other hand, had believed that Britain

would end the Ottoman domination and bring independence for the Arab communities. Nevertheless, the British mandate failed to enable two communities to live together in peace. Three decades later Britain took the problem to the UN and declared that it would end the mandate on 15 May 1948, the protection of the British interests was transferred to an organization, the UN, that Britain was one of the founding countries. In other words, arbitration as a solution for the conflict between Arabs and Zionists shifted from the unilateral efforts by one Great Power to the institutionalist approach in the post-WWII era. Despite referring the issue of Palestine to the UN, the US has played the key role in the conflict. The main objectives of the US foreign policy regarding Palestine in the second half of the 20th century were to defend the interests of American oil companies and to prevent a possible Arab-Israeli conflict in the region as well as to support Israel as a reliable ally in the “Middle East”. During the Cold War, Israel was considered as an important power for balance in the region against the threat of the Soviet Union. In 1990s, Israel had the support of the US against Iraq under Saddam Hussein and Iran. For this reason, the peace talks after 1967 have been often associated with Israeli interests.

The “two-state solution” to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been proposed by the international community since the UNGA Resolution 181 dated 29 November 1947 that divided Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab. The Partition Plan has also been de facto supported by all US governments; but it could not resolve the conflict. The Plan has been at best a half solution rather than a comprehensive one. It includes Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, as well as refugees elsewhere who may receive adequate compensation or migrate to the new Palestinian state, but does not deal with the problems and dilemmas of nearly one million Palestinian minority as Israeli citizens. This plan has not only unfairly divided the historic homeland of the Palestinians into two parts through coercion and force of arms, it has also made the return of displaced refugees impossible.

For Palestinians, the critical date in the conflict 1948 the establishment of Israel. The occupation in 1967 was a symptom, not the cause of the problem. Therefore, the two-state solution has not remained incapable of solving the symptoms of the problem, also has actively supported the continuation of the main cause. As the probability of the two-state solution diminishes, conflict resolution tends towards the one-state alternative.

If the one-state solution was the dispossession of the Palestinians, the denial of their rights, and the continuation of the ongoing conflict between Israel and its neighbors, there would no sense in making a peace that would preserve this status quo.

The Palestinian Authority has been divided in two polities- Hamas and Fatah- in a geographical, sociological, economic and political sense. Both side have claimed to be representing the Palestinian community. The political division even occasionally turned into a conflict. The split between Hamas and Fatah weakens the military, diplomatic and political struggle with Israel. In May 2014, Hamas and Fatah reached an agreement on forming a unity government. However, Israel has declared that it would not recognize the new government. Many Hamas members were arrested in Israel's operations in the West Bank, and Palestinians lost their lives in the protests. This led Hamas to retaliate with rockets from Gaza to Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that new Jewish settlements would be built in the West Bank through purchasing new lands. The uncertainty in the Palestinian internal affairs has encouraged Israel to implement its own recipe for conflict on the basis of extreme securitization. Israel regards all structures of Hamas as a terrorist organization without discrimination. The negotiation process may become difficult as Israel identifies its interlocutor as a terrorist organization.

A just peace between Palestinians and Israelis depends on mutual trust and conciliatory negotiations. Genuine reconciliation between the conflicting parties depends on abandoning policies of retaliation and securitization. When the parties evaluate their pasts critically and synchronously, a new narrative will emerge in bilateral relations. As long as conflicting parties believe that balance of power is in their own favour, they may not seek peace in order to get a higher gain at the possible negotiation table. Considering the negotiation processes with an asymmetrical power relations, the lack of balance will probably pose an obstacle to achieve sustainable success. For this reason, the balance of power between Israel and Palestine can be considered a key factor to reach a positive result in negotiations. When the balance of power is achieved, the chance and hope of peace can increase as the cost of the conflict to the parties becomes equal.

On the other hand, the Arab Spring has changed the nature of power relations in the peace process. The Arab states, who once declared wars against Israel's policies,

seem to hesitate to get involved in the process. Iraq has been under the occupation of the USA for a long time. The Iraqi territories have been divided into separate ethnic parts and political administrations. In Egypt, a US-led policy has been followed under the rule of Sisi. The ongoing civil war in Syria has disabled the state to remain as an influential actors in the regional politics. Leaders were overthrown in Tunisia, Yemen and Libya, and these countries did not have the power to produce policies in the international arena. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been acting as observer states in the sense of the Palestinian issue. While the Arab Spring tried to cause the destruction of dictatorial regimes in the region, the Israeli lobbies in the region as well as in the West deliberately caused and exacerbated the chaotic environment. Israel rejected the demands for the initiation of peace negotiations and suspension of settlement activities. In this respect, the Arab Spring provided a justification for Israel's uncompromising stance and created an opportunity to accelerate its unilateral policies. Because the US as a mediator did not force Israel to make peace with the Palestinians, the mediation failed to prevent the deadlock in the conflict.

Today, Palestine is still not recognized as a fully sovereign state. The status of an observer state was given to the State of Palestine by the UN on 29 November 2012 and 134 UN member states recognized the State of Palestine as an independent state, however, it still lacks the fully recognized legal existence in the world system. However, historical and legal indicators reveal that Palestine is a state. First, there is a "permanent population" of Palestinians. In the resolutions adopted by the UN, it has been envisaged to establish a Palestinian state in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, which constitute 22 percent of the historical Palestinian lands. In terms of having the capacity to enter into international relations, Palestine fulfills the necessary conditions. As a matter of fact, Palestine is, in fact, regarded as a "state" by both the UN and the international community. Moreover, Palestine has been a party to the International Criminal Court and many other international agreements and organizations. Mahmoud Abbas has been recognized as the head of state of Palestine in various international platforms. The primary reason that makes the state of Palestine practically impossible is the Israeli role in preventing the establishment of an effective administration over Palestine by Palestinians. In other words, since Palestine is under the occupation of Israel, Palestine cannot benefit from the possibilities of being a state

in every respect. As a result, the two-state solution discussed throughout the resolution process was actually formed. The reason behind not implementing the two-state solution leads researchers to the conclusion that the British and American actors have not only been under an enormous influence of the Israeli lobbies, but were also guided by the Israelis.

The current undesirable developments in the region imply that there is no sign ending the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands. The legal and political ground for reconciliation with Israel has already been destroyed by the Zionist aspirations and policies. The displacement of Palestinians by the instruments of usurpation and threats brought the Palestine issue and the peace process to a deadlock. As indicated earlier, the Palestinian side and the Arab states have repeatedly made open or covert offers for peace and order to Israel both during and after the Cold War. Israel only made peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan on its own terms. Even if the Israeli threat was isolated from the region, it would be hard to guarantee the end of ultimate goals of the British and American imperialist aspirations regarding the Middle East.

In case of complete occupation of Palestine by Israel in the near future, some developments are expected in the region in the short and long term. The current legitimacy crises will deepen in countries such as Egypt and kingdoms in the Gulf countries, which establish relations with Israel, remain silent in the Palestinian independence struggle and cooperate with the US in many areas. The ongoing Israeli violence in Palestine may damage the political authority of the PLO. In countries like Turkey, which recognizes Israel and has diplomatic, economic and political relations with this country, there will be a very strong public pressure about the severance of relations with Israel. Leading actors in the Muslim world, especially in the Arab world, may decide a total embargo against Israel and adopt the option of joint armed struggle. As a result, the Palestinian issue, which has been left unsettled, will most likely herald radical political and cultural transformations in the Arab world in particular and in the Muslim world in general.

The last months show that almost every actor in the “Middle East” is currently repositioning. The US general elections were possibly the most effective factors in this situation. As the Biden administration came to power and announced that it would withdraw from the Middle East (and its concrete withdrawal from Afghanistan) caused

a reassessment of dynamics by the regional countries. This led to the re-examination of the balance of power in the region and the relations of the countries with each other. The mutual talks between Turkey and Egypt, and Saudi Arabia and Iran started. Regional powers began to prepare for the consequences of the less American influence. These developments reminded the worse situation after the British withdrawal of the Mandate in 1948.

This study analyzed the ultimate aim and role of the British and American actors in Palestine. When the current approach of the actors is evaluated, it is difficult to say that they have equal and neutral attitude towards Israel and Palestinians. After the Israeli attacks, the British and American administrations have been content with calling for restraint on both sides and reduction of the tension. In conclusion, Britain as the root cause of the Palestinian issue due to the Balfour Declaration and as a colonial ruler under the Mandate System until 1948 has been actually concerned about the protection of its regional interests rather than a sustainable peace since the beginning of the process.

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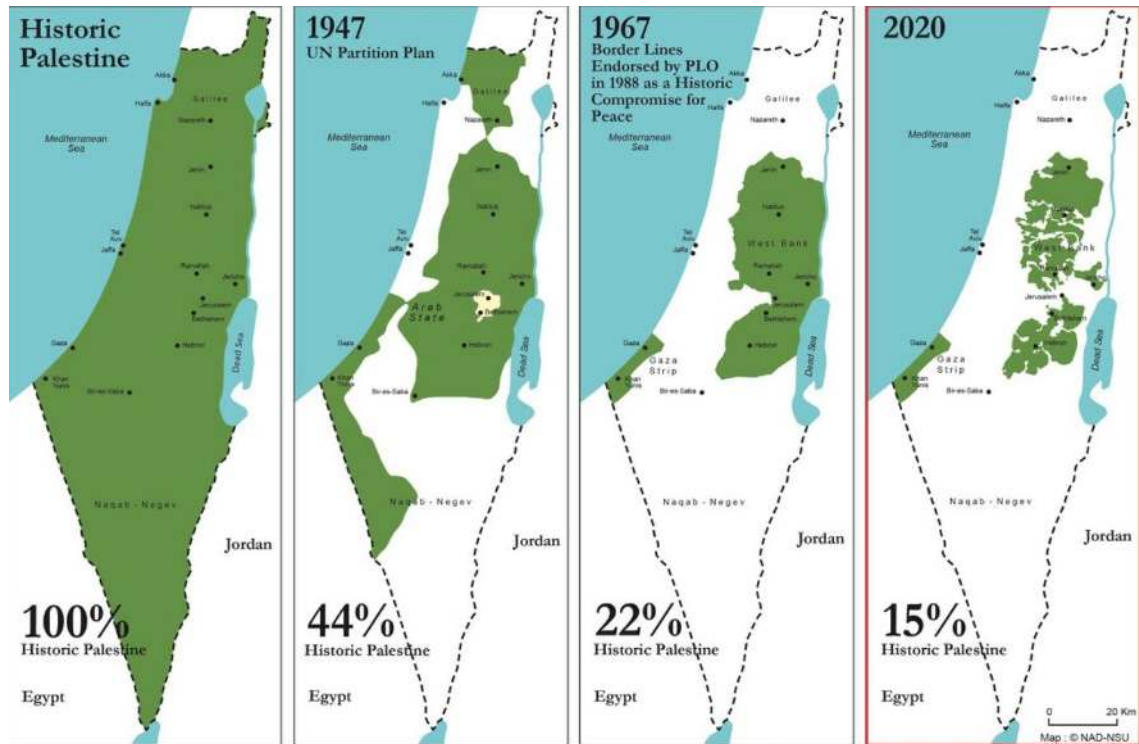
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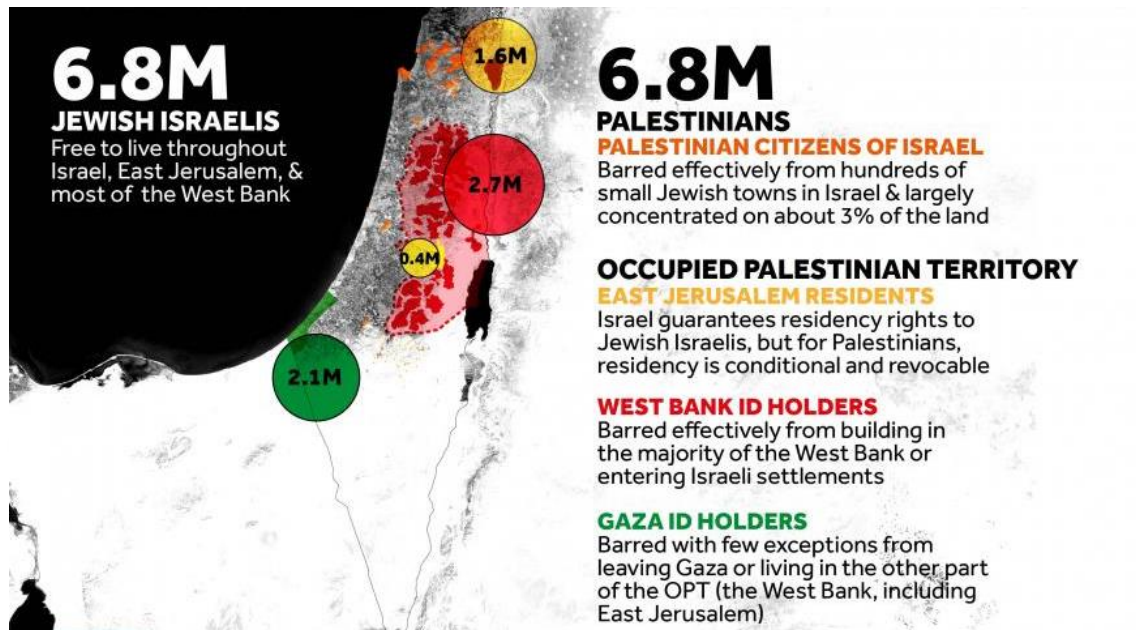
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A



Perpetual Massive Loss of Palestinian Lands (CPT Palestine 2020).

APPENDIX B



Integrating Jews vs. Separating Palestinians (HRW 2021).

APPENDIX C



The Israeli settlement of Ariel between the Palestinian village of Marda (below) and Salfit (above) in the occupied West Bank. Satellite Image. Source: Google Earth

CURRICULUM VITAE

YUMNA BAKIRTAŞ

EDUCATION

2019-	Master ASBU / International Relations
2014-2019	BA Anadolu University / International Relations
2012-2016	BA Necmettin Erbakan University/ English Teaching

WORK EXPERIENCE

2016- 2019	Foreign Affairs - Project Consultant of Kahramankazan Municipality
2009-2010	Nar Super Market “Cashier - Accountancy Friedrichshafen, Germany
2008-2009 (intern)	“ChristlicheJugendDorf” Language Course (1 Month) Friedrichshafen, Germany

VOLUNTARY WORK AND LEADERSHIP

Board Membership of Woman Commission of Yeni Dünya Vakfi	2020-2021
President of Kahramankazan Youth Assembly	2017-2019
President of Kahramankazan Woman and Family Commission	2018-2019
Turkish Youth Delegate of Council of Europe Local and Regional Authorities	2018
Board Membership of Woman and Family Commission of Ankara TUGVA	2016-2017

Meram Youth Assembly Member for Foreign Relations and Environmental City Commissions	2014-2016
Board Membership of Woman and Family Commission Konya TÜGVA	2014-2016
Representative Youth of the Ministry of Youth and Sports	2015-2016
President of English Community at Necmettin Erbakan University	2013-2016
Member of Konya RAVZA Humanitarian Relief Foundation	2014-2016

PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Sivil Düşün (EU Fond)	2018-2019
Embassy of Japan	2018
Ministry of Culture	2018
City matching Grant Programme	2018
TİKA and TRT	2018
Embassy of Australia	2017

LANGUAGES

Turkish – Mother Language
Germany - Excellent
English – Very Good