

PAPER 10

A REAL PARTNER FOR PEACE?

A CRASH COURSE ON THE TRUTH

Who is preventing peace in the Middle East?



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THE PEACE INDUSTRY

All too often, we demean the occupation of Palestine to be an ancient clash of civilizations, the Jews vs. the Muslims, so caught up in their mutual hatred of each other that they are unable to live together in peace. It is thought that in order to resolve this, a mutual understanding and dialogue needs to be sought. However, this is not the case. The occupation of Palestine is based on racism, ethnic cleansing and apartheid. It is not an ancient clash of civilizations, but rather a struggle of the oppressed against an oppressor. In this light, many Palestinian factions have called for a boycott of Israel until it ends aggressions and complies with international law. On the other hand, Israelis are often heard to be calling for “dialogue” and complain that Palestinians are not making any concessions. Simultaneously, Israel makes no real efforts toward ending apartheid and their subjugation of the Palestinian people. Let’s explore a few of the famous “peace offers”

| OCCASION | RESULT |
|-----------------------------|---|
| OSLO PEACE PROCESS (1993) | The PLO agreed to recognize Israel’s “right to exist in peace and security” and to a demilitarized quasi-government. Israel agreed to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and only parts of the West Bank, and to cease the building of settlements. Israel did not agree to disarm (nor was this a question), but said it would continue to ‘protect’ the region from external threats and to control all borders. However, illegal Israeli settlements only grew, (the population of settlers reaching all-time highs). No agreements on final status issues were made, including Jerusalem, borders, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. The agreement was only partially implemented. |
| CAMP DAVID ACCORDS (2000) | Bill Clinton, Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat failed to reach any agreements on final status issues. Israel did not agree to comply with international law, but offered the Gaza Strip and most of the West Bank, with the condition of maintaining its major settlements and incorporating these into Israel, while keeping most of East Jerusalem. Essentially, according to the PLO, it offered something similar to a prison. Israel also demanded that it control all borders , airspace, and water resources. Arafat would not agree to anything less than the internationally-recognized borders of 1967, and the right of return for Palestinian refugees (UN Resolution 194). |
| GAZA ‘DISENGAGEMENT’ (2005) | In 2005, Israel withdrew its settlers from the Gaza Strip. Although Israel uses this as an example of how it has offered peace but been met with terrorism, Israel still controls Gaza’s borders, airspace, and waters. Virtually, it has created a prison in which it controls and patrols the border, who enters and leaves, controls all imports and exports, but the ‘prisoners’ are free to do what they want – within these prison walls. The blockade of Gaza has been deemed illegal by international bodies like the UN and repeated calls have been made for Israel to cease this blockade, which has taken a toll on the people of Gaza. |

See Paper 7 for more info.

ISRAEL-HAMAS CEASEFIRE (2008)

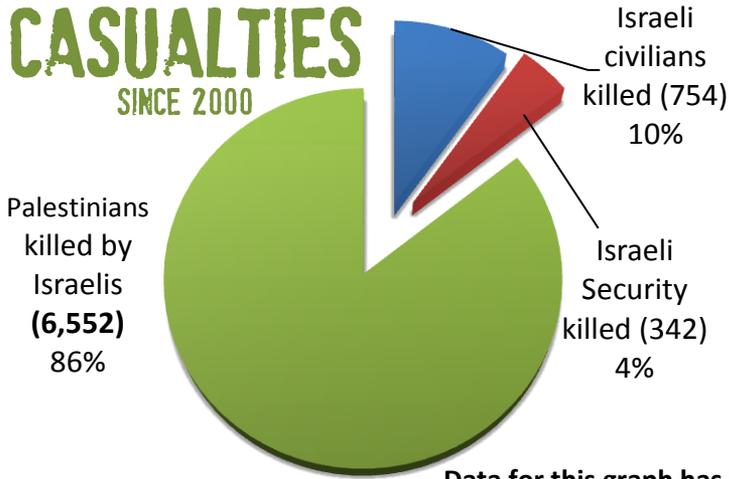
PRISONER EXCHANGE HAMAS-ISRAEL (2011)

In June 2008, Egypt brokered a temporary ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas. This truce “tahdiya” was broken by Israel in November when it invaded Gaza and killed six Hamas members. Contrary to common belief, it was **not Hamas** that broke the ceasefire. Although this is not usually classified as part of the peace process, it is an example of Israel negotiating with an armed Palestinian group (who was also elected), and reaching tangible results. In exchange for the only Israeli prisoner held by Hamas, Israel agreed to release over 1000 Palestinians in Israeli prisons. Over 5000 Palestinians remain in Israeli prisons.

Unfortunately, all too often, dialogue is sought, with no real goal or direction towards a just and lasting peace. The result of such futile dialogue is a legitimization of the occupation and the false impression that this is a struggle between two equal sides. Palestinians are demanded to concede and “negotiate” more territory and their sovereignty, while Israel makes loose promises of good-will to take small steps away from its blatantly illegal actions. This became clearer with the release of “The Palestine Papers” in which the PLO exposed its willingness to throw away issues that Palestinians have long been fighting for. Note: Never has Israel agreed, nor offered, to fully comply with international law, nor has it declared its own borders. **Any peace offer has attempted to legitimize what is considered illegal under international law.** Such offers are neither fair, nor conducive to a just and lasting peace and this is why they are rejected. Furthermore, Israel also refuses to directly negotiate with any group it deems “terrorist”.

The problem is not one that requires dialogue or negotiations- it’s a simple issue of Israel treating Palestinians as equals who have the right to self-determination and sovereignty. Israel currently controls 90% of historic Palestine, and has literally encaged the rest of it, controlling all resources, water, and airspace. To say that Palestinians or militant groups within Palestine are a real threat to Israel’s existence – whose military is the largest in the region and fully equipped with a nuclear arsenal - is a little naïve. Don’t take our word for it, look at the statistics of those killed and military strength and decide for yourself.

CASUALTIES SINCE 2000



Who is the
real **THREAT**
to *peace*
in the Middle
East?

Data for this graph has been taken from B'Tselem

COMPARISON OF MILITARY STRENGTH

ISRAELI MILITARY

2011 BUDGET: \$16 BILLION

- **AIR FORCE:** 875 combat aircraft, 84 transport aircraft & 286 helicopters
- **NAVY:** 3 nuclear capable Dolphin submarines, 15 combat vessels & 3 landing crafts
- 3800 Tanks
- 6390 Armored Vehicles
- **ARTILLERY:** 2100 artillery units, 25 surface-to-air missile batteries and 70 surface-to-air missile launchers
- **70-400 NUCLEAR WEAPONS**
- **BALLISTIC MISSILES:** More than 150 Jericho missiles and an unknown number of lance missiles (with a 4350 mile range)
- **A lot more:** See www.globalfirepower.com

PALESTINIANS

BUDGET: NO OFFICIAL BUDGET OR ALLOCATION OF FUNDING

- **NO AIR FORCE**
- **NO NAVY**
- **NO TANKS**
- 50 Armored Vehicles
- Some mobile Qassam and Grad rocket launchers
- Homemade rockets
- **No Nuclear Arsenal**
- **No Ballistic Missiles**

*Under the terms of the Oslo Accords, the PA is only allowed a moderate police force (with restrictions), but must remain unarmed and without an army or navy. No such clauses for Israel exist. Hamas, the elected government in Gaza, is armed, but lightly with rifles and rockets and is considered "terrorist".

Statistics for this table were taken from a report by the Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU), published in January 2009.

IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, THE NEWSPAPERS WILL HAVE YOU HATING THE PEOPLE WHO ARE BEING OPPRESSED, AND LOVING THE PEOPLE WHO ARE DOING THE OPPRESSING.

MALCOLM X



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