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***Rashomon in Jerusalem:
Mapping the Israeli Negotiators' Positions
on the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process,
1993–2001***

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INTRODUCTION

To clarify some of the complexities and dilemmas of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this paper maps the divergent Israeli positions along the route of the Oslo peace process of 1993–2001, including the negotiations at Camp David (July 2000) and at Taba (January 2001). The paper is based on a content analysis of twenty in-depth interviews conducted between February 17, 2002, and May 4, 2003, at the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The interviewees formed a broad range of Israeli negotiators including politicians, Foreign Ministry officials, senior military officers, former members of the Security Service (Shin Bet), and political aides. The paper will focus exclusively on the contending Israeli approaches to the Oslo process from 1993 to 2001.

In chronological order, the people interviewed were: Dr. Yossi Beilin, Dr. Ron Pundak, Dr. Yair Hirschfeld, Dr. Oded Eran, Major General (Res.) Danny Yetom, Gilad Sher, Eitan Haber, Major General (Res.) Ami Ayalon, former Prime Minister (and Lt. General Res.) Ehud Barak, Dan Meridor, Lt. General (Res.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Major General (Res.) Shlomo Yanai, the late Yossi Ginossar, Major General (Res.) Danny Rothchild, Dr. Allan Baker, Avi Gil, Pini Meidan, Gidi Grinstein, Israel Hasson, and Colonel (Res.) Shaul Arieli (for a detailed list of “who’s who,” see Appendix 1). These Israeli participants were particularly active during the Rabin/Peres (1993–1996) and Barak (1999–2001) governments, while others also served under the Netanyahu government (1996–1999). The list does not include Israeli political negotiators from either the Netanyahu or the current Sharon government (2001–). Moreover, it does not include the Palestinian or American counterparts. It should be pointed out that many additional Israeli policymakers were approached (including Benjamin Netanyahu, Shimon Peres, and Shlomo Ben-Ami) but declined to be interviewed for this research.

These twenty Israeli protagonists of the Oslo process share a set of premises that can be summarized as follows: (1) there is no other option for Israel and the Palestinians than to reach a political separation based on the principle of partition and two states for two peoples along borders to be determined, if possible, by negotiations between the parties; (2) the end of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank (or Judea and Samaria) and the Gaza Strip is a paramount national interest because of demographic trends and the overall Zionist goal of keeping Israel a Jewish and democratic state; (3) there is no military solution to the Palestinian issue; and (4) the status quo in the territories is untenable, and the options of ethnic cleansing (“transfer”), a binational state, or a racist, nondemocratic one are and should be ruled out.

At the same time, the Israeli participants hold *divergent* positions toward the truncated peace process along the following themes: (1) the degree of empathy (or alternatively, condescension) toward their Palestinian counterparts; (2) their assessment of the successes and failures of the negotiating process; (3) the degree of responsibility of Israel, the PLO/Palestinian Authority, and the United States for the end of the political process and the eruption (or launching) of the second intifada in the fall of 2000; (4) the extent to which the conflict can be resolved, or managed, by the parties; (5) the degree of continuity among the different agreements and instances of negotiations (i.e., Oslo I, 1993; Oslo II, 1995; the Camp David conference, July 2000; and the Taba last round of negotiations, January 2001); and (6) the type of solution to be sought, assuming that the emergence of an independent Palestinian state is not feasible at present. In sum, what we find here is a “Rashomon effect” among the Israeli negotiators.

As Ryunosuke Akutagawa (1952) observed in his fictional tale “Rashomon,” the same story can be recreated and reinterpreted by its protagonists from different angles, yielding different pieces of an evasive “truth.” A similar case can be made that the contradictory Israeli interpretations of the peace process with the Palestinians constitute a social

(re-)construction of reality (see Adler 2002; Barnett 2002). The rationale for this paper is, then, that narratives, which are “stories with a plot,” do matter since they shape our identity and our norms. Narratives help to recreate self-perpetuating processes of wishful thinking and self-fulfilling prophecies by providing us with a moral and practical justification, *ex post facto*, for our acts. Hence narratives, which are particular constructions of the past, provide a link to both the present and the future (Barnett 2002, 65–68).

In the following pages, I present a succinct summary of the Oslo process. I then cluster the twenty protagonists. Based on this mapping, I proceed to address the following questions: (1) What are the divergent views of the agreements of 1993, 1994, and 1995, and of the negotiations of 1999–2001? (2) What went right, if anything, in the process? (3) What are the alternative explanations for its failure (“what went wrong?”)? (4) Can the conflict be resolved, or only managed? (5) How can one explain the variance across the different interpretations? And finally: (6) What lessons can be drawn from the failure of the peace process?

WHAT WAS THE OSLO PROCESS, 1993–2001?

After the Persian Gulf War of 1991, a formal Middle Eastern peace process was launched in October 1991 at Madrid on a multilateral platform. After a political deadlock was reached in 1992 and the late Yitzhak Rabin was elected as Israeli prime minister, secret and informal negotiations were held between Israelis (including Dr. Yossi Beilin, Dr. Ron Pundak, and Dr. Yair Hirschfeld) and Palestinians in what came to be known as the “Oslo process” or “Oslo” because of the initial venue of the talks. The talks came to fruition in the summer of 1993, leading to mutual recognition between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), an exchange of letters between Israeli Prime Minister Rabin and PLO Chairman Arafat, and the Declaration of Principles (DOP) of September 1993. The DOP was essentially a framework agreement by which the two parties committed themselves to a gradual process of granting political autonomy to the Palestinians, a scheme based almost verbatim on the one previously signed at Camp David in 1978, and to manage and ultimately resolve their conflict exclusively by peaceful means. To this end, the PLO unconditionally renounced any further use of violence to promote its political goals.

According to this framework for peace (not a final peace treaty), a transitional process of five years would put in place a self-governing Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza, followed by final status negotiations (no later than three years after the beginning of the Palestinian autonomy) about the “core” and most difficult issues regarding the final agreement, including Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, borders, final security arrangements between the parties, and the ultimate status of the emerging Palestinian political entity.

Following the DOP, a series of interim agreements were signed between Israel and the PLO in the period of 1993–1999. During the Rabin administration (1992–1995), the 1994 Cairo Agreement was signed on implementing autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area (of the West

Bank), as was the September 1995 Interim Agreement (Oslo II) dividing the West Bank into areas under direct Palestinian control (area A), civilian Palestinian control (area B), and Israeli control (area C, including settlements and self-defined “security zones”). During the Netanyahu administration (1996–1999), two further agreements were signed to follow up the Interim Agreement of 1995: the 1997 Hebron Protocol dividing the city between Israelis and Palestinians, and the 1998 Wye Memorandum. Finally, under the brief Barak administration (1999–2001), the Sharm-el-Sheikh Memorandum was concluded in September 1999 on the stipulations and timetable of the final status negotiations. The Oslo process came to a halt after the failure of the Camp David summit in July 2000, the eruption of the second intifada in late September 2000, and the failure of the Taba talks in January 2001. There has been no significant political process, at least at the bilateral level, since the election of PM Ariel Sharon in February 2001.

CLUSTERING THE ISRAELI PARTICIPANTS IN THE OSLO PROCESS, 1993–2001

To clarify the disparate Israeli approaches to the negotiations with the Palestinians between 1993 and 2001, the twenty participants were clustered into six groups. These groups can be placed on a continuum ranging from empathy and a certain acceptance of the Palestinian interpretation of the Oslo process all the way to a complete lack of empathy and an antagonistic attitude toward the Palestinians. This latter perspective accords with the “official” Israeli narrative about “Oslo,” and especially Camp David, Taba, and the launching of the intifada as a “terrorist war pre-planned and pre-meditated by Chairman Arafat” (see, e.g., Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002, 3–4; Gilad 2001; Kuperwasser 2001). Moreover, I constructed the clustering as a function of the bureaucratic and political roles played by the Israeli participants, which directly affected their roles in the negotiations.

- (1) In the first category we find the *original architects of the Oslo process* of 1993, the then-deputy foreign minister, Dr. Yossi Beilin, and two university professors who started the initially informal talks at Oslo, Dr. Ron Pundak and Dr. Yair Hirschfeld.
- (2) In the second category, there is a cluster of *senior officers in the Israeli Security Service* (Shin Bet), including its former head, Admiral (Res.) Ami Ayalon, its former Deputy Chief Israel Hasson, and the late Yossi Ginossar, who demonstrated a high level of empathy toward their Palestinian counterparts.¹
- (3) In the third category there is a group of former *senior military officers*, who followed the peace process since the Rabin administration at different levels of seniority, and were involved in both managing negotiations and implementing their results. They include Colonel (Res.) Shaul Arieli, Lt. General (Res.) and former Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, and Major General (Res.) Danny Rothchild.² Their positions indicate a high degree of support for the rationale of the Oslo process from its inception to the present time.
- (4) In the fourth category we find a cluster of *diplomatic/security civil servants*, who include career diplomats from the Foreign Ministry such as Dr. Oded Eran, Avi Gil, and Dr. Allan Baker, former security officer Pini Meidan, and Major General (Res.) Shlomo Yanai. They occupy the “center” of the continuum.³
- (5) In the fifth category are *all the prime ministers’ men*, from the

1 Since Yossi Ginossar’s interview was not recorded, the analysis is based on the interview he gave to Rami Tal (in Hebrew) in the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Achronot* on January 9, 2004.

2 Major General (Res.) Dany Yetom is included in the cluster of “all the PM’s men” because he acted mainly as a political aide to both the late PM Rabin and former PM Barak. Another military officer, Major General (Res.) Shlomo Yanai, is included in the cluster of the diplomatic/security civil servants, at the center of this mapping.

3 Avi Gil can be clustered as well in the fifth category, as Shimon Peres’s political aide. Pini Meidan served as a senior negotiator in 1999–2001 for PM Barak.

administrations of Rabin (1992–1995), Peres (1995–1996), and especially Barak (1999–2001). While Eitan Haber and Avi Gil served respectively as Rabin and Peres’s political aides, there is a larger group that constituted Barak’s entourage: Pini Meidan (to some extent), Gidi Grinstein, Major General (Res.) Danny Yetom (who also was a military aide to Rabin), and Gilad Sher.

- (6) In the last category, and at the right end of the continuum, we find two *senior politicians*: Lt. General (Res.) and former PM Ehud Barak, and Dan Meridor.⁴

In addition to this categorization, it should be emphasized that these Israeli actors differ in their level of involvement and continuity within the process since 1993. Unlike their Palestinian counterparts who have remained more or less the same for the last ten years, the recurrent changes of Israeli governments since 1993 have also led to the profusion and shifts in the Israeli negotiating teams and negotiators.⁵

DIVERGENT VIEWS OF THE PEACE PROCESS, 1993–2001

For many Israelis, especially the vast majority that supported Oslo until the eruption of the second intifada, the process was based on a logic of gradual

4 Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami, who served as police minister and as acting foreign minister under Barak, would probably belong to this last category, but he declined to be interviewed. His views are clearly reflected in a *Haaretz* interview of July 11, 2002, to Ari Shavit, “End of a Journey.”

5 I should mention as well that the only official interviewed from the Netanyahu administration (1996–1999) was Attorney Yitzhak Molcho. I am not including him among the participants because his interview was not recorded. His main thesis in the interview was that Netanyahu’s intention, which was made quite candid, was to procrastinate and buy time. Although Netanyahu disliked and even opposed the original Oslo agreements, during his administration he signed two further interim agreements (Hebron and Wye) aimed at implementing the Interim Agreement of September 1995.

devolution of territory, legitimacy, and political authority to the Palestinians in the territories in exchange for security, if not peace. The clear assumption was that the Palestinian leadership, first and foremost Yasser Arafat, would prepare its people for peace and reconciliation by accepting the inevitability of partition, a two-state solution, and the exclusively peaceful management and eventual resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, many of the participants emphasized the logic of gradualism, though they greatly differed about its validity and effectiveness. For some of them, Oslo I and II as open-ended interim agreements with limited goals, without a clear “end-game,” made sense since they were necessary to foster cognitive change over time (Hasson). These agreements could have been excellent if the parties meant to implement them in the first place (Baker). Moreover, they were an “unfolding adventure” designed to create trust (Gil) and to postpone, if not overcome, the most difficult issues along the way (Hirschfeld). Conversely, Barak and his people mentioned their “security holes,” the fact that Israel was gradually giving up territory in exchange for empty promises and the undermining of its national security (Barak, Yetom, Grinstein).

The very gradual and piecemeal nature of the process was intended to build trust and confidence, deferring the most difficult issues (Jerusalem, refugees, settlements) to the end of the negotiations. In practice, most of the participants agree that the result was just the opposite: instead of confidence building, trust was undermined and ultimately destroyed over the years of the peace process.

As for the Camp David/Taba negotiating saga of 2000–2001, there is a very clear divergence among the Israeli participants (including those, like Hasson, Lipkin-Shahak, Eran, Yanai, Grinstein, Sher, Barak, Yetom, and Meridor, who were actually present at Camp David) regarding the level of preparation, the professionalism of the negotiations, and the actual Israeli offer put on the table.

From a critical perspective, many of the participants pointed to the general lack of preparation (especially on the Jerusalem issue), the lack of

trust, the imposition on the Palestinians and on the United States involved in convening the Camp David summit, the fact that it was premature and amateurish, and the mismanagement and mistakes made at the summit, which “was born in sin and ended in stupidity” (Lipkin-Shahak). Moreover, both Arieli and Hasson point out that the territorial offer (87% of the West Bank) fell well short of a proposal that the Palestinians could live with. In Beilin’s analysis, Barak’s bold suggestions on Jerusalem reflected a paradox where “he was hard on territory, while soft on Jerusalem.” Conversely, all of Barak’s men (Grinstein, Sher, Yetom, and Barak himself) concur that the summit was “well prepared” and their explanation for its failure, which would ultimately become the official Israeli narrative, is rather simple if not tragically disappointing: at the summit Barak offered Arafat a fair and comprehensive settlement, but Arafat decided to reject the offer, “push the button,” and launch a war of extermination against Israel. Hence, the failure of Camp David can be squarely attributed to the Palestinian refusal to make peace, end the conflict, and recognize Israel as a Jewish state (Meridor). In this sense, “Barak put the theory of the [Israeli] left to the test, and it did not work. He put Arafat to the test, and he failed” (Meridor in Bar-Tal 2002, 65).

Regarding the Taba talks of January 2001, a majority of the Israeli participants considered them either irrelevant, an “electoral game” (Lipkin-Shahak), a mistake (Beilin), or not significant at all (Barak, Yetom). Only Ron Pundak, who did not participate in the talks, optimistically remarked that “the negotiations in Taba proved that a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was within reach”.

WHAT WENT RIGHT IN THE OSLO PROCESS?

Instead of formulating the question “What went wrong?” a fair assessment of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations should start by addressing the probably unpopular question of “What went right?” Indeed, several of

the participants pointed out the continuing relevance, or at least logic, of the Oslo process.

Both fervent supporters of the Oslo process since its inception (Pundak, Beilin), as well as opponents or those partly responsible for its demise (Barak), agree that its logic was based on solid Zionist and rational premises that are still valid (the necessity to end the occupation of the Palestinians so as to keep Israel a Jewish and democratic state). The architects of the process, Pundak, Beilin, and Hirschfeld, stress nowadays that Oslo was the key that opened the door to an eventual peace and that it changed the political reality in the region. Other supporters refer to it as a cognitive quantum leap (Arieli), a “turning point in the direction of peace” (Gil), and to the fact that the “Oslo process did not fail, but it was failed by its opponents, and it is still relevant” (Ginossar). From a legal standpoint, paradoxically, the Oslo agreements were never formally canceled, and the parties still demand their implementation from each other and complain about each other’s violations (Baker). In addition, several participants observed that there was a satisfactory degree of security cooperation in implementing the agreements during 1993–1995 (Haber, Ginossar), and especially during the Netanyahu administration of 1996–1999 (Hasson, Arieli, Lipkin-Shahak).

WHAT WENT WRONG IN THE OSLO PROCESS?

At the core of the “Rashomon effect” regarding the Israeli approaches to the Oslo process, we find alternative explanations for the eventual collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. These explanations can be grouped in terms of assigning responsibility to the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Americans, or to all the parties concerned. As we move along the clustering of the participants from left to right, the responsibility for the failure of the process is buck-passed to the other party (the Palestinians) or to the third party (the Americans).

ISRAELI RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FAILURE OF THE PROCESS

Five complementary and overlapping explanations refer to the Israeli share of responsibility, as follows:

Lack of Coherence and No Definition of Clear National Interests

As opposed to the more clear and consistent Palestinian positions over the entire decade (i.e., the demand for an independent state along the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem and the Temple Mount under Palestinian sovereignty, and a feasible solution to the refugee problem), many Israeli participants complained that the successive Israeli governments lacked a clear sense of the final goals of the negotiations. For instance: “The Israelis do not know what they want” (Pundak, Hasson); “There has been no discussion at the government level of strategic goals” (Beilin); “There is a lack of grand vision in the formulation of Israeli policies” (Ayalon). Furthermore, there have been no clear red lines regarding the final status negotiations after 1999 (Eran, Meidan, Yanai). Probably the best example of this lack of coherence has been the policy regarding the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, with the doubling of their population between 1993 and 2000. Most of the Israeli participants (including Haber, Gil, and Barak himself) recognized the damage of the settlement expansion in undermining trust between the parties, but still allowed them to grow and even encouraged their development.

Misperceptions and Misunderstandings of the Basic Palestinian Positions

Several of the Israeli participants acknowledge today that they misread and misunderstood the Palestinians regarding their bargaining range and their red lines. For instance, Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson, and Arieli pointed out the wishful thinking of former PM Barak that the Palestinians would settle for less than their minimum demands, whereas Barak candidly admitted his expectation of a possible and “fair” deal (from his standpoint). In particular, Arieli pointed to the constant Zionist/Israeli misperception, held since the time of the Peel Commission (1937), that Israel could design

the territorial reality through a series of *faits accomplis* and the Palestinians would eventually accept this as a fact of life. Moreover, many of the protagonists interviewed recognized, with the benefit of hindsight, the devastating effects of the unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon on the morale and motivations of the more moderate and pragmatic forces among the Palestinians that still opted for peaceful negotiations. Furthermore, they stressed the arrogance, lack of goodwill, and condescension that exuded from the Israeli conduct of the negotiations (Hasson, Hirschfeld, Rothchild, Gil). Thus, many of the participants underline the lack of empathy and misunderstanding of the basic Palestinian positions as a major failure in the process (Pundak, Beilin, Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson, Arieli, Lipkin-Shahak, Hirschfeld, Rothchild, Gil, Eran, Meidan).

Mismanagement of the Negotiations and Implementation in the Rabin/Peres Administrations (1993–1996)

Several participants asserted that the cautious and gradual approach adopted toward the process by the late PM Rabin undermined the chances for its success. Moreover, Rabin's reluctance to condition the continuation of negotiations on the halting of terrorist attacks, not demanding "reciprocity" or more decisive Palestinian actions against terrorism (as Netanyahu did more successfully), fatally undermined Israel's image and a more successful implementation (Ayalon, Hasson, Lipkin-Shahak, Rothchild, and especially Barak).

As for the aftermath of the initial agreements in the interim period, several protagonists pointed out that *after* the completion of the initial DOP in September 1993, the IDF was too involved in subsequent negotiations and implementing the process. Its focus was on short-term, tactical, security-oriented goals, so that it lacked a political or grand-strategy sense of direction. Hence, whether political leaders handed over authority to the army or the IDF just took it, the result was a growing militarization (and depoliticization) of the peace process (Beilin, Arieli, Rothchild, Eran, Haber, Meidan, Yetom).

Mismanagement of the Negotiations and Implementation in the Netanyahu Administration (1996–1999)

A majority of the participants, and especially those on the left side of the continuum, tend to agree that Netanyahu cannot be blamed for the failure of the process. He even made a positive contribution by insisting on “reciprocity” between advancing the political process and the Palestinian campaign against terrorism (Hasson, Lipkin-Shahak, Gil). Yet it was obvious that Netanyahu tried to procrastinate on implementing a political process that he openly disliked (Arieli). Paradoxically, whereas the signing of the Hebron Protocol in 1997 and the Wye Memorandum in October 1998 strengthened the legitimacy of the process, their only partial implementation further undermined the trust between the parties (Meidan, Hirschfeld). People who tend to put most of the onus on Barak and Arafat regard the Netanyahu period as a “lost one” (Pundak), or a “minor event” (Ayalon). Conversely, those who give Barak more credit tend to blame Netanyahu in stronger terms: the political process came to a halt under him (Grinstein), and he is partly responsible for its failure (Yetom).

Mismanagement of the Negotiations and Implementation in the Barak Administration (1999–2001)

There is a consensus among all the participants that Barak wanted to reach a final peace agreement with the Palestinians, and that he demonstrated a good deal of courage. However, his critics add that he did not know how to do it properly (Pundak, Beilin, Ayalon, Arieli, Lipkin-Shahak, Hirschfeld, Rothchild). Barak’s binary vision of all or nothing, his failure to develop a decent relationship with his Palestinian counterparts (particularly Arafat), his detour toward Syria, the lack of implementation of the second and third redeployments following Wye, his insistence on reaching the end of the conflict, and the lack of clear red lines regarding territory and Jerusalem all contributed to the ultimate derailing of the process (those criticisms are made by most of the participants, except for Barak and his political entourage).

It should be pointed out that between Camp David (July 2000) and Taba (January 2001) 33 to 35 further rounds of negotiations took place, and that the negotiations continued under fire even after the second intifada erupted. In this context, several participants complained that the intifada escalated and eventually derailed the political process completely as a result of the initially heavy Palestinian casualties (as compared to almost none among the Israelis), the tremendous military blows and lack of differentiation by the IDF between Palestinian terrorists and the civilian population and, especially, the role played by Lt. General (Res.) Shaul Mofaz, then the IDF chief of staff, who did not strictly follow the directives of Barak's government and notably contributed to escalating the violent confrontation into today's war (Beilin, Hasson, Arieli, Hirschfeld, Grinstein). Table 1 summarizes the explanations concerning Israel's responsibility.

PALESTINIAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FAILURE OF THE PROCESS

The Israeli participants offered five explanations for the Palestinian share of responsibility for the failure of the process: the role played by Arafat himself; Palestinian mismanagement of the negotiations and their implementation; Palestinian misperceptions of the Israelis; the cleavages within the Palestinian leadership; and their ultimate failure and violation of the agreements by turning to violence and terrorism. As we move along the continuum from left to right, these explanations become more emphatic and paramount as in the official Israeli narrative, compared to Israel's own misdeeds.

Arafat as the Main Culprit for the Failure of the Negotiations

There is a consensus among all the Israeli participants that Yasser Arafat is an unreliable and difficult leader, and that "he is a liar." Moreover, everybody seems to agree that Arafat made a tremendous strategic mistake by keeping violence as a bargaining option, and by not controlling and suppressing the Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas and Islamic Jihad within

Table 1: Israeli Responsibility for the Failure of the Process

Actors	Misperceptions and misunderstandings	Mismanagement of negotiations under Rabin	Mismanagement of negotiations under Netanyahu	Mismanagement of negotiations under Barak
Pundak	No clear goals, confusion	Misperceptions	Yes	Yes
Beilin	No discussion of strategy	Misperceptions	No sacred dates	—
Ayalon	No vision	Yes	No separation between terrorism and negotiations	A minor event
Ginossar	Settlements	—	—	—
Hasson	We do not know what we want	Of the Palestinian red lines	Need for reciprocity	Lack of leadership
Arieli	Settlements	Attempt to impose a territorial reality	Too important a role for the army	Procrastination
Lipkin-Shahak	—	—	Failure to demand repressing terrorism	—
Hirschfeld	No clear concept of negotiations	Arrogance and humiliation	Military view prevailed	Strengthened legitimacy, undermined trust
Rothchild	Responsibility without authority	Patronizing and humiliation	Gradual approach not bold enough; too soft on Palestinian violations	Broke trust
				Binary view, stupidity
				Lack of trust, arrogance

Continued

Continued		Misperceptions and misunderstandings	Mismanagement of negotiations under Rabin	Mismanagement of negotiations under Netanyahu	Mismanagement of negotiations under Barak
Actors	Lack of coherence	standings	under Rabin	under Netanyahu	under Barak
Gil	Settlements	No dignity, patronizing	Patronizing	—	Poor human relations
Eran	No clear red lines	Lack of goodwill	—	—	Multiple channels; poor human relations
Baker	Settlements	Illusions; naiveté	—	—	—
Haber	—	No grand design	Political euphoria	—	—
Meidan	Lack of red lines	Patronizing	—	—	Mistakes in the negotiations
Yanai	Changing positions	—	—	—	—
Grinstein	—	—	Army too much involved	—	—
Sher	—	—	—	The process stopped	—
Barak	Settlements	—	Security holes	—	—
Yetom	—	—	Rabin did not want to address final issues	Partly responsible	—
Meridor	Naiveté	The process too risky and too dangerous	—	—	—

the Palestinian-controlled territories. At the same time, there is strong disagreement among the Israeli participants as to whether Arafat is the main culprit of this tragic story. On the left side of the continuum, the security officers tend to dismiss the overall importance of Arafat (“not a strong leader,” Ayalon; “too simplistic an argument,” Ginossar; “not capable,” Arieli; “Mr. Nobody in the Islamic world,” Rothchild; “not a Pentium IV mind as depicted by Israeli military intelligence,” Gil). As we move to the right of the continuum, Arafat’s responsibility rises: he missed a historic opportunity (Eran); he failed as a leader and instead of rising to the occasion he openly turned to terrorism (Sher, Barak, Yetom, Yanai). Using a colorful metaphor from Latin American history, Meidan aptly describes Arafat as Che Guevara turned into President Fidel Castro, but eventually turning back into Che Guevara. To sum up, even though not all the participants exclusively blame Arafat, all recognize that he did not act with integrity (Baker) and that he has a serious, perhaps intrinsic problem in not recognizing the Jewish link to the Land of Israel and the holy places in Jerusalem (Hasson, Meridor). Moreover, Arafat failed to prepare his public for peace (Eran, Ginossar), and his leadership became increasingly irrelevant as the situation on the ground deteriorated (Ayalon).

Mismanagement of the Negotiations and Failure in Implementation

Several Israeli participants pointed out that the Palestinians did not properly implement their side of the interim agreements, so that their performance in 1993–1999 was “miserable” (Ayalon) if not “catastrophic” (Meridor). The PA failed as the government of an embryonic future state (Hirschfeld), was characterized by corruption (Rothchild), and did not maintain a monopoly in the use of force or seriously attempt to crush terrorism (Barak). As for the negotiations with Israel, especially at Camp David, the Palestinians seriously contributed to the failure of the summit by their mismanagement, failure to offer counterproposals, and alienating the Israelis regarding the Jewish link to the Temple Mount and their insistence

on the “right of return” for four million Palestinian refugees (Pundak, Beilin, Lipkin-Shahak, Eran, Yanai, Barak).

Misperceptions and Misunderstandings of the Basic Israeli Positions

As a mirror image of the Israeli misperceptions, the Palestinians also misunderstood or misread the Israeli intentions, according to the Israeli negotiators. For instance, as mentioned above, they misinterpreted the Israeli unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in May 2000 as a sign of weakness (Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson, Arieli); they developed their own illusions about Israel’s implementation (for instance, the expectation that by the third redeployment they would get 90% of the West Bank; Baker, Meidan); they misread Israeli domestic politics (Grinstein, Meridor) and downplayed Israeli concerns about security and the demographic threat posed by the “right of return” (Pundak, Meridor).

Cleavages within the Palestinian Leadership

Several participants pointed out that the cleavages within the Palestinian leadership, especially between Arafat and his entourage (or “second echelon”), gravely contributed to the failure of the Camp David negotiations (Ginossar, Arieli, Hirschfeld, Rothchild, Meridor). Thus, there is a consensus among the Israeli participants that while some of the Palestinian negotiators were seriously intent on reaching an agreement (such as Dahlan, Rashid, and Asfur), it became impossible to reach a deal with Arafat because of the domestic Palestinian cleavages at that time, such as the struggles between Abu Mazen and Abu Ala.

The Palestinian Turn to Violence, and Failure to Fight Terrorism

There is almost a consensus among the Israeli participants that the Palestinians’ main responsibility for the failure of the process has been their ineffectiveness in preventing and fighting terrorism, even though there was adequate cooperation between the security services, especially between 1996 and 1999 (Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson). For some of the participants, the

Palestinians' cardinal sin was their deliberate turn to violence after Camp David by launching the second intifada (Barak, Sher, Grinstein, Yanai, Meidan), which represented a gross legal violation of the DOP (Baker). The Palestinian resort to violence thus diminishes the importance of the Israeli transgressions or misdeeds, in relative terms (Yetom). Table 2 summarizes the explanations concerning Palestinian responsibility.

U.S. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FAILURE OF THE PROCESS

Some Israeli participants asserted in their interviews that the United States failed in its role of mediator for two main reasons: because the Palestinians did not perceive the United States as an honest broker, and because its performance was ineffective and even counterproductive.

The United States Was Not an Honest Broker

The Clinton administration became heavily involved in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations during the Netanyahu government, with the signing of the Hebron Protocol (1997) and the Wye Memorandum (1998), and especially during the Barak government of 1999–2001. According to the Israeli participants, the Palestinians did not regard the United States as an honest broker for the following reasons: Clinton blamed Arafat for the failure of the Camp David summit (Ayalon); Arafat distrusted the Americans (Hasson); the Camp David negotiations did not have to be portrayed as a failure (Lipkin-Shahak). Only in December 23, 2000, with the presentation of his outline for a final agreement, did Clinton adopt the role of honest broker (Pundak), but it was perhaps too little and too late by then.

The United States Performed Its Role of Mediator Ineffectively

The complementary argument is that the United States did not perform well as a mediator: Clinton could have presented his plan much earlier (Hasson); he made many mistakes (Arieli); the United States showed a lack of professionalism (Gil); the American team was weak in knowledge and

Table 2: Palestinian Responsibility for the Failure of the Process

Actors	Arafat as main culprit?	Mismanagement of negotiations and failures of implementation	Misperceptions and misunderstandings	Cleavages within Palestinian leadership	Turn to violence
Pundak	No	—	—	—	—
Beilin	No	—	—	—	—
Ayalon	Not a strong leader	Miserable performance	Impact of Lebanon withdrawal	Importance of second echelon	Strategic mistake
Ginossar	Too simplistic	—	Impact of Lebanon withdrawal	Importance of second echelon	Strategic mistake
Hasson	Arafat does not recognize Jewish link	—	Impact of Lebanon withdrawal	—	Strategic mistake
Arieli	Not a capable leader	—	Impact of Lebanon withdrawal	Palestinian public divided	Failure to fight terrorism
Lipkin-Shahak	Manipulator	—	—	—	Turn to terrorism
Hirschfeld	Did not deliver the goods	No counterproposals; failure of governance	—	No supporting entourage at Camp David	—
Rothchild	"Mr. Nobody in the Islamic world"	Corruption and lack of governance	—	No promotion of local cadres	Turn to terrorism
Gil	"No Pentium IV"	—	—	—	Failure to prevent terror
Eran	Arafat missed the opportunity	Lack of preparation for peace	—	—	—

Baker	No bona fides	—	Illusions about Israel's intentions	—	Violence as violation of agreements
Haber	—	—	—	—	—
Meidan	Wants to be pushed, coerced	—	Wrong assessment of Israel	—	Turn to violence as negotiating tactic
Yanai	A failure	—	Lack of pragmatism	—	Deliberate turn to violence
Grinstein	Main culprit	—	Misunderstanding of Israeli politics	Implosion and decay of the second echelon	Deliberate turn to violence
Sher	Failed as a leader	—	"All or nothing" (Arafat)	—	Tremendous strategic mistake
Barak	A terrorist and murderer, main culprit	No serious negotiations; no monopoly on the use of force	Arafat does not recognize the existence of Israel as a Jewish state	—	Deliberate turn to terrorism
Yetom	Main culprit	—	—	—	Deliberate turn to terrorism
Meridor	Main culprit	No serious negotiations	Misperceptions of Israel	Dahlan, Rashid, Asfur wanted an agreement	Deliberate turn to terrorism, the goal to destroy Israel

details (Grinstein); and the Americans had the ability to influence Arafat and could have done so more (Yetom, Sher). It should be stressed that the level of criticism toward the United States becomes more salient concomitant to the lack of self-criticism about Israel's responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED

In addition to the Israeli, Palestinian, and American portions of responsibility for the failure of the process, one can find common themes or problems ascribed to the Israelis and the Palestinians. Each side suffered from mutual misperceptions, cognitive, and cultural gaps; mutual violations in implementing the agreements; the failure to confront their fringes; mismanagement of their negotiations; and the failure of their leadership.

Mutual Misperceptions, Cognitive, and Cultural Gaps

Several Israeli participants emphasized the lack of trust as well as the development of cognitive gaps stemming from divergent expectations and illusions, leading to a process of mutual disappointment (Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson, Hirschfeld, Rothchild, Baker, Meidan). The sources of those misperceptions are psychological, sociological, and cultural, involving an encounter between a democracy (Israel) and a nondemocratic entity (the Palestinian Authority) (Yanai, Meidan). This is a typical case of a dialogue of the deaf (Pundak), where each party attributes to its counterpart an inherent bad-faith model of behavior. Thus, in their social (re-)construction of reality, Israelis and Palestinians tend to ignore their mutual interactions and interdependence, as if they were living in two different realities without affecting each other (see Dowty and Gawerc 2001).

Mutual Violations in Implementing the Agreements

A few Israeli participants emphasized the mutual violations in implementing the agreements as another important reason for the failure of the process (Beilin, Ginossar, Lipkin-Shahak, Baker). These protagonists point to the persistence of Palestinian terrorism and the continuing expansion of Israeli

settlements as evidence of failed implementation. Moreover, the reluctance of both leaderships to bring about a “new *Altalena*” (i.e., to confront, even by violent means, their own fringes and risk a civil war) led to the extremists of both parties having a veto on the continuation of the peace process. Haber referred, for instance, to the fact that Rabin did not dare evacuate the Jewish neighborhoods in Hebron after the massacre perpetrated by Baruch Goldstein in February 1994.

Mismanagement of the Negotiations

As mentioned earlier, negotiations were mismanaged by both parties because of a logic of gradualism that backfired, a secret diplomacy that did not take into account the importance of public opinion, and the lack of a third-party arbitrator or conciliator (Ayalon). Several of the Israeli negotiators agreed that both Israelis and Palestinians mismanaged the process (Beilin, Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson, Lipkin-Shahak, Hirschfeld, Gil, Eran, Baker, and even Grinstein).

Failure of the Leadership in Both Parties

Finally, several of the Israeli negotiators, especially those who were most critical of the Barak administration, concur that there was a failure of leadership on each side. Hence, there is a need for a new political leadership that could agree on the parameters of a future settlement (Hasson, Arieli, Rothchild, Meidan). In this context, six of the Israeli participants speculated that Rabin’s assassination in November 1995 essentially derailed the peace process (Hirschfeld, Baker, Meidan, Sher, and especially Yetom and Haber). Similarly, two of the participants suggested that Shimon Peres could have succeeded where Ehud Barak failed at Camp David (Baker and, not surprisingly, Gil).

If we pool together all the alternative explanations, we can map the twenty participants in terms of apportioning responsibility to one or more of the parties (Table 3). This distribution of blame fits quite closely the clustering of the Israeli participants.

Table 3: Apportioning Responsibility (“Blaming”) for the Failure of the Process

Actors	Mostly the Israelis	Mostly the Palestinians	Both parties	Only the Palestinians	The Americans, to some extent
Pundak	Yes	—	—	—	Yes
Beilin	Yes	—	—	—	—
Ayalon	Yes	—	—	—	Yes
Ginossar	Yes	—	—	—	—
Hasson	—	—	Yes	—	Yes
Arieli	—	—	Yes	—	Yes
Lipkin-Shahak	—	—	Yes	—	Yes
Hirschfeld	—	—	Yes	—	—
Rothchild	—	—	Yes	—	—
Gil	—	—	Yes	—	Yes
Eran	—	—	Yes	—	Yes
Baker	—	—	Yes	—	—
Haber	—	Yes	—	—	—
Meidan	—	Yes	—	—	—
Yanai	—	Yes	—	—	—
Grinstein	—	Yes	—	—	Yes
Sher	—	Yes	—	—	Yes
Barak	—	Yes	—	Yes	—
Yetom	—	—	—	Yes	Yes
Meridor	—	—	—	Yes	—

CAN THE CONFLICT BE RESOLVED, OR JUST MANAGED?

In addition to the variety of explanations for the failure of the Oslo peace process, the twenty Israeli participants disagree about the extent to which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be resolved or just managed. Here the answers are split more or less evenly. The more optimistic camp includes the original architects of the process (Pundak, Beilin, but not Hirschfeld, who is more guarded about the feasibility of resolving the conflict right now), the security officers (Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson), two of the senior military

officers (Arieli, Lipkin-Shahak), and one of the diplomats (Eran). The more pessimistic camp includes Rothchild, the rest of the civil servants, all the PMs' men, and the two senior politicians (Barak, Meridor).

Those who argue that the conflict can be resolved view the 1967 borders as the basis for the final status agreement, as currently stipulated in two nonofficial documents resulting from grassroots initiatives, the Geneva Draft Agreement (November 2003) and the Ayalon-Nusseibeh People's Voice or Statement of Principles (July 2002). This includes the possibility of border modifications on the basis of an agreed 1:1 territorial swap. Hence, it is no coincidence that people such as Pundak, Beilin, Ayalon, Hasson, Arieli, and Lipkin-Shahak have been actively involved in those initiatives. Moreover, all the members of the "optimistic" camp assert the pragmatic and rational congruence between the moderate sectors of the two national movements, the moderate Zionists and the Fatah pragmatists, around a two-state solution. They also agree that the conflict is already ripe for resolution at the level of their respective societies, though not necessarily at the level of the political leadership, and that it can easily be transformed into a win-win game. Furthermore, they are not particularly concerned about the Israeli demand (by the Barak government) for an "end to the conflict" via a formal termination of all claims by all parties concerned (perhaps with the exception of Hasson, who sees it as a major problem for Arafat). Finally, all of them dismiss the importance of the Palestinian "right of return," regarding it as a bargaining chip or "virtual right" to be exchanged for territorial gains and Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem including the Temple Mount (Beilin, Pundak, Beilin, Ginossar, Arieli). In this respect, even some of those who do not see an immediate resolution of the conflict regard the "right of return" as a theoretical position, not concrete or real (Baker), or as a mere bargaining chip (Meidan).

Conversely, those who argue that the conflict cannot be resolved at this stage prefer to focus on conflict management. One option is a mandate or trusteeship by the international community and/or some regional actors (as

suggested by Hirschfeld, who still believes in the potential resolution of the conflict; Baker, Meidan, and Haber, who shows some nostalgia for the “Jordanian option,” or rule, in the West Bank). Other options include an interim agreement (Hirschfeld, Gil, Haber, Meridor) or unilateral withdrawal (as suggested by Grinstein, Barak, Yetom, and Meridor). This group attributes the lack of resolution to the lack of ripeness on the Palestinian side, especially with regard to Arafat. In their view, the Palestinians still view the conflict as zero-sum. The evidence is the Palestinian rejection of the very logical Israeli demand for an “end to the conflict,” and especially the fact that Arafat is unprepared and unable to give up the “right of return,” which is a front for his real aim of destroying the state of Israel (Meridor and Barak especially, but also Yanai, Gil, and even Rothchild). These views are summarized in Table 4.

HOW TO EXPLAIN THE VARIANCE ACROSS THE DIFFERENT ISRAELI INTERPRETATIONS

The four tables presented above show beyond doubt the striking “Rashomon effect” in Jerusalem among the Israeli participants in the Oslo process. How, then, can one explain the variance among the positions? Beyond the personal, idiosyncratic, and psychological variables, I suggest that the clustering of participants in itself gives us a clue as to their expected positions. In this regard, we can adopt some of the assumptions presented in Allison’s book (1971) concerning organizational processes and the governmental (bureaucratic) politics paradigm as alternative models of decisionmaking. Hence, I formulate three hypotheses to explain the variance, as follows:

1. The more the Israeli participant has been involved in the Oslo process since its inception and at the level of practical implementation, the higher his (hcr) commitment to its eventual success and the higher the empathy toward the Palestinian counterparts.

Table 4: Can the Conflict Be Resolved, or Just Managed?

Actors	Resolution or management?	Palestinian ripeness?	Israeli ripeness?	Finality of claims?	Right of return?
Pundak	Resolution	Yes	No	Not mentioned	Bargaining chip, virtual right
Beilin	Resolution	At the NGO level	At the NGO level	Not mentioned	Bargaining chip, virtual right
Ayalon	Resolution	At the level of society	At the level of society	Not mentioned	Hard for Arafat to give up
Ginossar	Resolution in the long term	—	—	Not mentioned	Not a major obstacle, but a bargaining chip
Hasson	Resolution	Of the people, not the leadership	Lack of clarity	Major problem for Arafat	A domestic Palestinian problem, not so serious
Arieli	Resolution	Need for deep cognitive change	Need for deep cognitive change	Not mentioned	Only declarative, as a bargaining chip
Lipkin-Shahak	Resolution	Fatah, yes	No	Not mentioned	Arafat knows that there is no return
Hirschfeld	Resolution in the long term, management right now	Not yet	Not yet	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
Rothchild	Management (unilateral withdrawal)	No	Yes	Arafat opposed it	Arafat is not ready to give it up
Gil	Management, no deal possible now, except for interim agreement	No	Yes	It was a mistake to demand it	Palestinians will not give it up, until they get all the rest

Continued

Actors	Continued Resolution or management?	Palestinian ripeness?	Israeli ripeness?	Finality of claims?	Right of return?
Ernan	Resolution	Not clear	Not clear	You can have a peace treaty without it	Not mentioned
Baker	Resolution not possible with Arafat	No	Yes	In interstate peace treaties, not necessary	Theoretical position, but not concrete
Haber	Management (back to the Jordanian option?)	Not clear	Not clear	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
Meidan	Resolution not possible in the short term, perhaps after trusteeship	No	No	Barak insisted on it	As a bargaining chip, not real
Yanai	Management	No	Yes	Barak wanted it, but it is a state of mind	Arafat cannot give up the right of return
Grinstein	Resolution is possible, but not right now (management through unilateral separation)	No	Yes	A justifiable demand, to change geopolitics	Not mentioned
Sher	Management	No (especially because of Arafat)	Yes	Barak's legitimate demand	Not mentioned
Barak	Management (unilateral option)	No	Yes	Legitimate demand	A front for the destruction of Israel
Yetom	Management (unilateral separation)	No	Yes	Not mentioned	Not mentioned
Meridor	Management (either interim agreement or unilateral separation)	No	Yes	A major issue: recognition of Israel as a Jewish state; the Palestinians oppose that	The Palestinians have not given up their right of return, they want to destroy Israel

2. The higher the seniority in the political echelons, or the closer the identification with the political leader in his (her) immediate entourage, the higher the apportioning of responsibility for failures of the process to the Palestinian and American parties, and the lower the empathy (or higher the condescension) toward the Palestinian counterparts.
3. In many instances, the Israeli negotiator's approach and positions toward the Palestinians are a function of the individual's organizational role as a diplomat, civil servant, military officer, or security officer.

Taken together, these three hypotheses shed light on the divergent positions across the six clusters of the Israeli participants. For instance, the first hypothesis explains the positions and actions of the original architects of the Oslo process, the security service people, and the senior military officers. Similarly, the third hypothesis indicates a possible link between the security officers and their high level of empathy toward the Palestinians. Conversely, hypotheses 2 and 3 explain the ambivalent and complex attitudes of former PM Barak and his entourage toward the Oslo process and toward the Palestinian partners (who, in their view, actually proved to be "no-partners").

CONCLUSIONS: LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

What, then, can we learn from the failures of the Oslo process in general, and of Camp David and Taba in particular? The question of "what went wrong" has become a focus of research attention in Israel and elsewhere in the last three years (see, e.g., Slater 2001; Baskin 2002). Some of the Israeli participants ventured the following conclusions, or lessons to be drawn. These lessons should be assessed with a measure of skepticism in the context of my limited, qualitative content analysis of the interviews with twenty Israelis identified with the "peace camp" who stated their own reconstructed narratives.

1. In any future political process there will be a need for proactive involvement by third parties, in roles such as arbitration, verification, and conciliation, beyond the “facilitating” role played by the United States in past efforts. There is an important role to be played by moderate Arab regimes (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia), by the Europeans, and by the international community as a whole in monitoring and guiding the process (Ayalon, Hirschfeld, Rothchild, Baer, Meidan, Yanai, Sher).
2. For the Israeli-Palestinian peace process to succeed, there is a need to confront the extremist fringes of both societies that have consistently opposed any political compromise. In the words of Ami Ayalon: “For Israelis to achieve full security, the Palestinians almost had to come to the verge of civil war”(against the Hamas and Islamic Jihad fundamentalists). Conversely, “for the Palestinians to achieve a state, Israeli society would have to undergo a harsh internal confrontation because of the need to uproot settlements” (Ayalon 2002; also Lipkin-Shahak, Haber, Rothchild).
3. The peace process must be made into a popular and legitimate process, supported at the grassroots level. This is based on the negative experience of Oslo being perceived as an illegitimate and elitist peace process, detached and alienated from the grassroots, especially in the Palestinian case but also in the Israeli case (Ayalon, Hasson, Arieli, Hirschfeld, Rothchild, Yanai, Yetom).
4. For the process to succeed in the future, cooperation between the parties has to expand beyond the myopic security vision of the IDF and the defense establishment toward a broader definition of security that encompasses economic cooperation, education, confidence-building measures, and building strong and stable political institutions (Hirschfeld, Eran, Yanai, Sher).
5. Finally, there is an urgent need to rebuild trust between the parties, and to learn to talk to (and with) the Palestinian counterparts as equals, without patronizing them (Lipkin-Shahak, Rothchild, Gil). Thus, more

than the gaps in the territorial percentages of the West Bank, it was the mutual lack of confidence that ultimately ruined and doomed the negotiations. The need to develop empathy remains paramount for any further continuation or renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process (Pundak, Beilin, Ayalon, Ginossar, Hasson, Arieli).

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APPENDIX

WHO IS WHO IN THE INTERVIEWS

SHAUL ARIELI (Interviewed on May 4, 2003)

Colonel (Res.) Shaul Arieli followed the process from the beginning, first as a military officer in the Gaza Strip in charge of the initial withdrawal of the IDF. In 1995 he was appointed to head the “Interim Agreement Administration” for the IDF. He later served as deputy secretary to the defense minister under Netanyahu and Barak, and as head of the “Peace Administration” under Barak in 1999–2001, together with Meidan, Sher, and Grinstein. He has been involved in “drawing maps,” both for the Barak administration and more recently, within the informal Geneva Initiative.

AMI AYALON (Interviewed on June 27, 2002)

Admiral (Res.) Ami Ayalon is a former commander of the Israeli navy and was head of the Israeli General Security Service (Shin Bet) in 1996–2000. With Sari Nusseibeh of Al-Quds University he initiated in July 2002 a grassroots movement calling for a two-state solution (“People’s Voice” or “Statement of Principles”).

ALLAN BAKER (Interviewed on January 15, 2003)

Dr. Allan Baker, now Israel’s ambassador to Canada, was the Foreign Ministry legal adviser and has been a member of the Foreign Ministry since 1978. He was part of the negotiating team on the final status negotiations in the Barak administration in 1999–2001.

EHUD BARAK (Interviewed on June 30, 2002)

Lt. General (Res.) Ehud Barak served as chief of staff of the IDF in 1991–1994. He later served as interior minister in the Rabin government in July–November 1995, and as foreign minister in the Peres government in November 1995–June 1996. He was elected prime minister on May 17, 1999, assumed office on July 6, 1999, and completed his term on March 7,

2001. He conducted the negotiations at Camp David in July 2000, but was not present at the Taba talks.

YOSSI BEILIN (Interviewed on February 17, 2002)

Dr. Yossi Beilin is a political scientist by training. In 1992–1995 he was the deputy foreign minister, and one of the leading architects of the Oslo process in 1993. He has held ministerial positions in the governments of Rabin, Peres, and Barak. Most recently he served as justice minister in 1999–2001. He participated in the Taba talks in January 2001 (but not in Camp David). He was the chief Israeli negotiator of the nonofficial Geneva Initiative of November 2003.

ODED ERAN (Interviewed on February 18, 2002)

Dr. Oded Eran is a former career diplomat. Ambassador to Jordan in 1997–2000, he was head of the Israeli negotiating team-regarding the final status talks with the Palestinians in November 1999–summer 2000. He participated in the Camp David talks in July 2000.

AVI GIL (Interviewed on January 15, 2003)

Ambassador Avi Gil served as director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry in April 2001–November 2002. A longtime confidant of former minister Shimon Peres, Ambassador Gil has held a number of government positions in the last thirteen years. In his years with then-Foreign Minister Peres, Gil was closely involved in Israel's policymaking and peace efforts, including the negotiation of the Oslo Accords and the peace treaty with Jordan.

YOSSI GINOSSAR (Interviewed on October 15, 2002, and on November 5, 2002; material also based on his interview to Rami Tal in *Yediot Achronot* [in Hebrew] on January 9, 2004)

The late Yossi Ginossar was a former Security Service official. He was a personal envoy to the Palestinians and served as a liaison to Yasser Arafat

under PMs Rabin, Peres, and Barak. After retiring from the Security Service, he was Israel's first emissary to secret talks with the Palestinians in the mid-1980s. He died in January 2004.

GIDI GRINSTEIN (Interviewed on February 25, 2003)

Gidi Grinstein served as secretary and coordinator of the Israeli negotiating team for the permanent status talks in the office of PM Barak in 1999–2001. He was secretary and junior member of the Israeli delegation at Camp David in July 2000.

EITAN HABER (Interviewed on March 24, 2002, and on May 8, 2002)

Eitan Haber, a journalist and writer, was a personal adviser to the late PM Yitzhak Rabin and director-general of the PM's Office in 1992–1995.

ISRAEL HASSON (Interviewed on March 5, 2003)

Israel Hasson, a former deputy chief of the Security Service, was involved with the negotiations with the Palestinians since 1995. He served as a senior negotiator under the Barak administration and participated in the Camp David talks in July 2000. He is currently a prominent member of the Ayalon-Nusseibeh grassroots movement.

YAIR HIRSCHFELD (Interviewed on February 17, 2002)

Dr. Yair Hirschfeld is a historian of the Middle East at the University of Haifa and one of the original architects of the Oslo process, together with Beilin and Pundak. He initiated the Oslo channel and led the negotiations in their first unofficial stage. Later he served as director-general of the Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF), an NGO dealing with Israeli-Palestinian cooperation.

AMNON LIPKIN-SHAHAK (Interviewed on August 20, 2002)

Lt. General (Res.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak was chief of staff of the IDF in 1995–1998. As deputy chief of staff he was chief negotiator from the army

of the Interim Agreements of 1994 and 1995. He was a senior member of the negotiating team under PM Barak and participated in the Camp David and Taba talks in 2000–2001. He actively took part in the nonofficial Geneva Initiative of November 2003.

PINI MEIDAN (Interviewed on January 15, 2003)

Pini Meidan is a former Mossad officer and foreign policy adviser. He was a member of the permanent status negotiating team under PM Barak in 1999–2001 and participated in the Taba talks in January 2001.

DAN MERIDOR (Interviewed on August 8, 2002)

Attorney Dan Meridor served as cabinet secretary under PMs Begin and Shamir. A former prominent member of the Likud Party, he served as justice minister in 1988–1992 and finance minister in 1996–1997. A long-term MK, he chaired the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in the Israeli parliament until August 2001. He participated in the Camp David talks, and currently is chairman of the Jerusalem Foundation.

RON PUNDAK (Interviewed on February 17, 2002)

Dr. Ron Pundak is director-general of the Peres Center for Peace. He was one of the original architects of the Oslo Declaration of Principles of 1993, as a member of the negotiating team lead by Shimon Peres and Yossi Beilin. He is a historian and political scientist, affiliated with Tel Aviv University and the University of Haifa, as well as with the Economic Cooperation Foundation (ECF).

DANNY ROTHCHILD (Interviewed on August 27, 2002)

Major-General (Res.) Danny Rothchild is a former deputy head of Israel's Military Intelligence and former commander of the Israeli forces in Lebanon. As a former military coordinator of activities in the territories, he has participated in the peace negotiations since the Madrid Conference in 1991. He is currently president of the Council for Peace and Security, an NGO group that advocates unilateral separation.

GILAD SHER (Interviewed on April 18, 2002)

Attorney Gilad Sher was chief negotiator in the peace talks with the Palestinians after Oded Eran, and head of the office of PM Barak. A senior aide and adviser to Barak, he served as chief negotiator (together with Shlomo Ben-Ami) at Camp David and Taba and as legal adviser of the "Peace Administration" team.

SHLOMO YANAI (Interviewed on August 27, 2002)

Major-General (Res.) Shlomo Yanai is a former head of the Strategic Branch (Military Planning) of the IDF, and was head of the security team in the Camp David talks in July 2000. He also participated in the Taba talks in January 2001.

DANNY YETOM (Interviewed on February 18, 2002)

Major-General (Res.) Danny Yetom was head of the Mossad in 1996–1998 under Netanyahu, and a military attaché and secretary to both PMs Rabin and Peres. A close political aide to Barak, he became head of the PM's office staff in 1999–2001. He participated in the Camp David negotiations in July 2000.