

Critical Studies and the Middle East Peace Process

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Abstract

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the complicated crises that traces back to nearly a century ago. It caused severe challenges and brought about disastrous consequences both for the Middle East region and the conflicting parties. Numerous attempts have taken place so far by different states, organizations and individuals to establish a lasting and comprehensive peace in this conflict, but given the intransigence positions of the conflicting parties, the attempts were futile and still there is no light at the end of this tunnel. The limitations of the realistic viewpoint that dominates the conflict and considers its signs rather than its root causes, made us tackle the issue through a proper, more appropriate approach.. To us, critical studies, particularly the emancipation approach which goes beyond the realistic limitations, deliberates the contemporary and historical conditions together with its nature and tries to remove situations leading to the conflict is a more viable strategy to achieve a lasting peace.

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Introduction

Nowadays the threats against human societies are more complicated than the past. There are some factors that affect the world, now a smaller, more populated and warmer place, such as provoking reactions for interstates' conflicts, extremist ideologies, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, along with more traditional threats against people's security like religious prejudice, all of which influence local and global policies more than ever. The goal of applying critical approaches against such multidimensional threats is to search different theoretical obligations and political inclinations towards those who put human societies in such a dilemma (Booth, 2005, p. 1).

Critical theory searches for the basic capabilities to present ideas that are able to develop human beings' emancipation of suppressive circumstances and structures. Critical theory intends not simply to eliminate one or other abuse, but to analyze the underlying social structures which result in these abuses with the intention of overcoming them (Horkheimer, 1972, p 206). The political goal of critical theory is to emancipate; that is to emancipate individuals and groups gradually from possible humanistic structures and lapses. In fact, emancipation is considered the heart of a critical theory about world security. In theory and practice, emancipation is related to disengagement of limitations (Booth, 2007, p. 110; Devetak, George, and Weber, 2012, p. 70).

Modern conceptualization of the word 'emancipation' was evolved during the Age of Enlightenment and it was inspired by the campaign against cruelty, peculiarly royal tyranny, religious prejudice, ignorance, and inequality. According to Booth, in

political discourse, emancipation commences to support human beings against suppresses that impede their free choices and adopt with other's freedom (Devetak, 2005, p. 145). The relationship between security and emancipation is significant and as Booth claimed they are complimentary (Booth, 1991, p. 319).

In other words, security is achievable in international community if emancipation policies develop toward eradicating possible and structural suppresses. The more effective way of understanding the relationship between security and emancipation is that the former is taken as the means and the latter is considered as the end. Ideals should inform both the means and the ends, but the means are something that we can utilize. Such perception is supposed as non-dualistic and the relationship between security and emancipation means that to practice security is to promote emancipatory space and to realize emancipation is to practice security (Booth, 2007, pp. 110-14). Stephen Eric Bronner described the critical theory of the Frankfurt School as "a cluster of themes inspired by an emancipatory intent" which indicates one of the critical, most complicated and constant efforts to define the word 'emancipation' in the contemporary era (Jones, 2005, p. 216).

Emancipation theorists focus their criticism on realism hypotheses and discussions and intend to re-conceptualize international relations. They claim that international relations should perceive how men and women are restrained by international structures. So, they must represent how people could unburden the world political structures, because the structures constrain them and restrain their ideology. Therefore, the main goal of emancipation is to restrain the power-oriented situation of the structure of international politics. It focuses on human being's freedom and success. It intends to provide a basis for proposing a proper theory that could practically emancipate human beings (Linklater, 1989, p. 199; Jackson & Sorensen, 2013, pp. 92-3).

The realist tradition, sometimes called 'political realism' can claim to be the oldest theory of international politics. Realism is grounded in an emphasis on power politics and the pursuit of

national interests. Its central assumption is that the state is the principal actor on the international or world stage, and, being sovereign, is able to act as an autonomous entity. During the 1980s, Neo-realism (structural realism) developed under the influence of Waltz (1979) and others. While Neo-realists continue to acknowledge the central importance of power, they tend to explain events in terms of the structure of the international system rather than the goals and make-up of individual states (Heywood, 2002:128-129).

The Palestinian/Arab-Zionist conflict began before the State of Israel was created in 1948. Since then, numerous wars have been fought, and numerous peace plans have been tried and failed. Many books and articles have been written on this enduring conflict. Most of them provide a historical narrative of the conflict like Benny Morris (2008); Charles Smith (2004) or Bickerton and Klausner (2002). A number of them have produced an account of the conflict which is shallow, biased, and slanted such as Daniel Cil Brecher (2007); John Hagee (2007) and David Brog (2006). Some of texts present mainly realistic view of the conflict for managing it such as Efraim Karsh (1996) or Shlaim (2001). Whereas, Ruane and Todd (2005) show the relevance of the emancipation concept to the resolution of the conflict in Northern Ireland, that can be applied to other cases such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

From this perspective, the goal of emancipation is to remove the circumstances that result into conflict, and it is going to be indispensable and applicable by changing the goals, identities and ideals. The objective of an emancipation approach is not only to control and manage the conflict, but also to solve it; moreover it intends to undermine the conflict circumstances where the dispute has extended and prolonged. It indicates social and cultural bases, existing opposite identities and interests and the circumstances where the conflict is subject to. Generally, the emancipation concept could be considered as a process in which the participants, who decide to restrain or change their system

facilities, actively contribute toward the transition in which they are going to be involved (Ruane & Todd, 2005, p. 238). Accordingly, this paper attempts to study the relationship between the concept of emancipation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

I- The Nature of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The conflict between the State of Israel and the Arab states has dominated the political life of the Middle East for decades (Milton-Edwards, 2006, p. 105). On 14 May 1948, the British Mandate for Palestine expired, the Jewish National Council was held in Tel Aviv and the establishment of the state of Israel was declared by David Ben-Gurion. This ushered in strong sentiment of military-centered nationalism and engulfed the entire region in war (Ismael & Ismael, 2011, p. 35). Although the Palestinian/Arab-Zionist conflict was intensified by establishing the State of Israel, its political tensions have been traced back to a century ago. Actually, the root of the current Arab-Israeli conflict traces back to the birth of Zionism and Arab nationalism in the 19th century which brought about the clash of nationalism, Jewish versus Arab. In fact, the conflict was a political and nationalist one that started to compete against territorial ambitions, and stemmed from the Ottoman Empire's dissolution which gradually converted a large scale Arab-Israeli conflict to a small scale Israeli-Palestinian one (Shlaim, 1996; Tal, 2004, pp.1-4).

The nature of the conflict could be theorized by a triple interdependent system: the conflict of cultural-religious frictions; structure of dominance, dependence, and inequality; lack of tolerance, radical views, and inclination toward conflict polarization (Ruane & Todd, 1996, pp. 290-92). The first element includes a territory that involves different ethnic-religious frictions (Muslims/Christians against the Jews), indigenous-immigrants (migrant Jews against native Palestinians) and ideological disparities (Zionism against Arab nationalism). The clash of the above discrepancies provokes the conflict increasingly. Every Jewish-Muslim group adduces religious issues

to approve their position in the conflict. So, the contemporary history of Arab-Israeli conflict is affected severely by their religious beliefs and their interpretation of the concepts of the 'Chosen People', 'The Promised Land' and the 'Chosen City' i.e. Jerusalem (Beker, 2008, pp. 1-3; Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Lavi et al., 2014).

The second element is related to the triangular relations of power and control that existed between the British government and Jews and Arabs in Palestine (Ruane & Todd, 2005, p. 239). Before World War I, Palestine was a part of the Ottoman Empire for more than 400 years. During the later years of the Empire, the Ottomans focused on the prominence of Turkish ethnicity and this caused prejudice against Arabs (Fraser, 1980, p. 2). The promises about emancipating from Ottoman yoke made most of the Jews and Arabs support the Allied powers during World War I and this resulted in the appearance of a broad movement of Arab nationalism. During those years tensions were increasingly expanding between the Arabs settled in Palestine and the small Jewish population that were expanding gradually. At the end of World War I, the population of the Jewish community, older residents and migrants, grew significantly and in 1917 Britain supported the establishment of a national homeland for the Jewish people by issuing the Balfour Declaration. It was the result of British key members' perceptions who believed that in order to win the War, it is necessary to support the Jews. Nonetheless, the declaration dissatisfied the Arab world (Segev, 2000, pp. 48-9; Babst & Tellier, 2012).

After the war, Palestine was mandated by Britain, and more Jews migrated to Palestine (Ross, 2004, pp.17-18). With the coming into power of the Nazis in Germany, Hitler and the Nazi regime, began to implement increasingly severe measures aimed at segregating and ultimately removing the Jewish people from Germany and eventually all of Europe. So, they motivated and facilitated the immigration until the war started. Arabs who lived in Palestine considered the increasing migrations of the Jews as a threat for their homeland and identity. In 1936, the increasing

trend of the tensions ended in Palestinian-Arabs uprisings during 1936-1939 (Lesch & Tschirgi, 1998, pp. 47-51; Brownson, 2014). Along with the tensions among Arabs and Jews, European anti-Semitism was expanded in the Middle East which corresponded with Nazism in Germany. This coincided with the Jewish refugees fleeing from Europe. So, most of the Jews entered Palestine illegally and this aggravated the tensions (Lewis, 1999, pp. 150-52; Morris, 2008, pp. 20-22).

The third factor is the tendency toward polarization of the conflict, because there are extreme divisions and views among the two parties especially the Israeli side. Since the diplomatic attempts towards applying peaceful ways to solve the problem were not fulfilled, Britain asked the United Nations (UN) for help. On 15 May 1947, the UN organized a committee composed of 11 state representatives, named the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP).. The committee was neutral since no superpowers' representatives were registered as members (Smith, 2004, p. 186; Ruane & Todd, 2005, p. 239).

After five weeks of deliberations, the committee suggested that two states would be established on two separate territories, one for the Jews and another for the Arabs. So, the two-state solution was adopted on the basis of the UN General Assembly Resolution 181, dated November 29, 1947 (Sachar, 1996, pp. 283-94; Karsh, 2010, p.1). Actually, it was accepted with misgiving by the Jews and rejected by the Arabs (Calvocoressi, 2008, p. 320). Arab states who organized the Arab League discredited the UN resolution. So, to control the critical positions, the Arabs and the Jews settled in Palestine, started a dispute that resulted in the committing of crimes by both parties (Fraser, 1980, p. 41; Lewis, 1992; Jabareen, 2013).

On 14 May 1948, a day before the end of the British Mandate for Palestine, David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, declared "the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the State of Israel" (Clifford, 1991: 20). This event resulted in the birth of the State of Israel. The next day, the Arab League

declared its disagreement with the two-state solution in a letter to the UN, and this was the moment that Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq attacked Israel. The first Israeli-Arabs conflict started in 1948. Israel, a newly-established state not only parried Arabs, but it also expanded its borders over the UNSCOP partition plan (Peres 1980; Metz, 1990, pp. 50-52; Smith, 2004, p.198). There are reasons for the Arab coalition's defeat: disagreement on war aims, the inability of the Arabs to coordinate their diplomatic and military moves, the military edge of Israel over its Arab adversaries, and finally Israeli leaders' awareness of the divisions inside the Arab coalition (Shlaim, 2007).

Afterward, Israel dominated a large part of Palestine. The rest of the areas including the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were controlled by Jordan and Egypt, respectively. More than 700,000 Palestinians escaped from their homeland before and during the war (Lesch & Tschirgi, 1998, p. 12). The war between Israel and Arab neighbors ended by signing the 1949 Armistice Agreements. These measures have exacerbated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so that in the current situation, radical viewpoints of the two sides especially Israelis are being considered as the main obstacles of achieving a durable peace (Morris, 2008, p. 375).

II- The Current Context of Conflict

The abovementioned factors reinforce each other through continuity or change. The main obstacles of a lasting peace in the Middle East include the continuity of radical viewpoints and lack of tolerance that resulted from religious, ethnic and ideological issues. This can be seen clearly in the final status of issues such as borders; Jewish settlements; Palestinian refugees, and the future of Jerusalem. For instance; the ultra-orthodox Jews in Israel are not satisfied with assigning even a small part of Jerusalem to the Palestinians as a capital of the future Palestinians state, because they claim it as the eternal and undivided capital of the Jewish state.

Some of them even assert that the Islamic symbols in

Jerusalem should be removed and the Jewish third temple be established in their place. These people and groups have Messianic views. Haredim, Gush Emunim, Kach, and Kahane Chai are examples. In Israel they are considered as maximalists who are the advocates of the 'Greater Israel' idea. Unlike radical groups, there are minimalists who believe in a 'territorial compromise' with the Palestinians and they believe that Israel security could be guaranteed by the peace (Maleki, 2001, p. 1176). Even some Israeli elites see an Arab Palestinian state as an urgent priority, precisely in order to head off the danger of accelerated calls for binationalism (Ismael & Ismael, 2011, p.331). Actually, these wide ranges of outlooks in the Israeli side reminds one the old saw, "which referred to the multiplicity and intensity of political views, that if there are two Israelis there are three political parties to reflect their viewpoints" (Reich, 2001, p. 122).

In the Palestinian side, the political leader Khaled Meshal has stated explicitly that the Palestinian Islamist group will end its armed struggle against Israel if the Jewish state withdraws from the Palestinian land it occupied in 1967, during the Middle East War. Hamas, which refuses to recognize Israel, has long maintained that it will enter into a long-term truce if Israel pulls out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and agrees to a right of return for millions of Palestinian refugees (Reuters, 2010).

Whereas Israel's ultimate foreign policy objective is that lasting peace and acceptance in the Middle East is a sine qua non for Israel's overall security and well-being in the broader international community (Reich, 2001, p.137), its reservations on final status issues has caused a real bottleneck. Israel does not agree to return to the borders of June 4, 1967 completely. As regards the future Palestinian state, Israeli authorities believe that such a state should be a civil one and no foreign army has the right to be stationed on the West Bank, and a future Palestinian state should be demilitarized (Rumley & Tibon, 2015).

The Israelis don't agree to a complete pullout of the Jewish settlements. They believe that some of the Jewish settlements

have Torahic importance such as Beit El, Immanuel, Ariel, Ma'ale Adumim, Gush Etzion, and the like. They also emphasize that Jerusalem should not be divided. It is said that Israel has long-term plans for Jerusalem, and its goal is to follow the greater Jerusalem plan, meanwhile some Israeli elites believe that Judea-Samaria sovereignty is dependent on sovereignty in Jerusalem. Most Israeli leaders, irrespective of political inclination, claim that the future of Jerusalem as the 'undivided and eternal capital of Israel' is not debatable. So, any Israeli political elite who believes otherwise commits political suicide (Maleki, 1999, p. 417).

On the contrary, the Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as their future capital. As regards settlements, they demand for a complete pullout of Israel from the occupied territory and its return to the 1967 borders (Elgindy, 2011). These controversial viewpoints of both sides especially Israelis have exacerbated the current situation of the conflict. Among them, Jerusalem is considered a major issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Jerusalem has long been a disputed city among Muslims, Christians and the Jews in a way that there has been no city in the world like Jerusalem that is so divided on historical, ideological, and religious borders. Currently, the most debating issue is that where the city belong to? (Hepworth, 1996, p.57) Not only does Jerusalem's double division- as sovereign and sacred center-pit the Israelis against the Palestinians, but within each community it structures the struggle between those who give primacy to democratic decisions in history and those who would follow divine dictates valid for all time as interpreted by rabbis, priests or imams (Friedland & Hecht, 1996, p. 491).

As regards refugees, the Palestinians' position is well-defined. Their request is to act according to the UN General Assembly Resolution 194. In other words, they want a situation where refugees could return to Palestine and the loss that imposed on them would be compensated by Israel. However, Israeli positions are against the Palestinians. They emphasize that the Palestinian refugees are not allowed within Israel (Maleki, 2000, p. 1247). Israeli

authorities definitively believe that their return will change the Israel demographic structure and social context which would be considered as a trick for Israel demolition. As regards the other final status issues the two sides' positions are still controversial, especially Zionism nationalism and Zionist extremism which are why no light is still seen at the end of this tunnel (Calvocoressi, 2008, p. 323).

Although there have been many suggestions proposed by the two sides of the conflict, states and international bodies, there has been no decisive solution on all those controversial issues. The logic is the lack of the parties' flexibility especially Israelis, international will and endeavor, and more importantly missing the forwarded opportunities.

III- The Search for Peace

In spite of growing violence and views such as 'all or nothing' (e.g. Arabs' positions towards Israel in the Arab League Summit 1967, that there will be no recognition, no peace and no negotiations with the State of Israel, the so-called 'Three No's'), that was more dominant during the 20th century, a trend has been organized as the Middle East peace process of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since 1970, numerous attempts have been made to establish a lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular so that a consistent situation would be created. The Israel-Egypt peace treaty in 1979 was the first cornerstone of all these attempts (Bickerton & Klausner, 2002, p. 154; Eran, 2002, p. 121; Quandt 2005, p. 1).

In 1979, Jimmy Carter mediated a peace treaty signed by Anwar al-Sadat and Menachem Begin according to which, Israel drew back from the Sinai Peninsula, a region that was occupied during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. The establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the occupied territories, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was proposed in the treaty, but the subsequent negotiations of 1980 failed (The Washington Post, 2010). The first direct round of negotiation among all parties involved in the

Middle East conflict was held in Madrid in 1991. The Madrid conference was a celebration of America's new global position as the sole superpower and was an important development (Parsi, 2007, p. 151). The Madrid peace conference defined a framework for the peace trend. Further rounds of talks took place in Washington until 1993, leading to separate negotiations which result in the 1994 Israeli-Jordanian Peace Treaty (Federal Foreign Office, 2014).

Secret negotiations between Israel and PLO in Norway resulted in the first agreement and mutual recognition and in September 13, 1993 a declaration of principles, called 'Oslo I Accords', was signed. The 1993 Oslo Accord gave the two sides a legal and conceptual framework upon which they could begin the historic process of reconciliation (Peretz & Doron, 1997, p. 277). The most important issue was the recognition of Israel by Arafat (Slater, 2001). Although the 'Oslo Accords' finally resulted in establishing the Palestinian Authority and their leaders' home coming, it was not effective about the settlement of final status issues, division of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees' right to return to their home in Israel, the future of Israeli settlements, and the borders. In fact, "the provisions of the Oslo Agreement were not put into effect and the key final status issues of the conflict remained unresolved" (Ramsbotham et al., 2011, p. 123).

As Deiniol Lloyd Jones in his book *Cosmopolitan Mediation? Conflict Resolution and the Oslo Accords* wrote: "the peace process is one where a stronger party slowly and deliberately crushes the aspirations of the weaker party. The Oslo process and Accords were found to reproduce structures of inequality and domination" (1999, pp. 130,160). "The Oslo peace process changed the modalities of the occupation but not the basic concept. As Shlomo Ben-Ami wrote: the Oslo peace process was to lead to a permanent neocolonial dependency for the Palestinian in the occupied territory with some form of autonomy" (Chomsky, 2003, pp. 227-28). The peace process was stopped by Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in 1995 and the disagreement between Ehud Barak

and Arafat (Friedman, 2012). Nevertheless, the Oslo process had been hailed at the time as an example of success for classic conflict resolution approaches (Ramsbotham et al., 2011, p. 6). The following efforts include: Hebron (al-Khalil) Agreement 1997, Wye River Memorandum 1998, Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum 1999, Camp David Summit 2000, Taba Summit 2001, Road Map 2003, Geneva Accord 2003, Agreement on Movement and Access 2005, and Annapolis Conference 2007 (Khan, 2014).

When Barack Obama became president, a new step of the peace process began. At first, president Obama spoke in a different tone from that of his predecessor, which made the Palestinians and other Arabs hopeful. In a major address delivered in Cairo, he called for a complete halt to Israeli settlements as the first step toward peace. However, he then backed down in the face of Netanyahu's opposition. Palestinian optimism about the new administration in Washington soon subsided (Ismael & Ismael, 2011, p. 330). Nevertheless, the US has hosted the first direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine in September 2010. The direct negotiations stalled because Israel refused to extend its freeze on settlements activity in the occupied Palestinian territory. Israel declared that there would be no agreement and the settlements' building suspension would not be extended, unless Israel is recognized as a Jewish state by Palestinians. Yet, Palestinian authorities refrained from negotiations, because Israel was not going to extend the suspension period of settlements' building (Laub, 2010).

Direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine started again in Amman, Jordan, from June 3, 2012, but they were inconclusive. In September 2012, Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas in his address to the UN presented the Palestinian upgrading status plan from 'observer entity' to a 'non-member observer state status.' On November 29, 2012 the UN General Assembly accorded Palestine new status by majority of votes (Whitbeck, 2013). From June 2013 and following the US attempts to resume the negotiations, the direct talks of the parties started

again. This round of direct negotiations was unsuccessful too. Martin Indyk, former US special envoy for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, blamed Israel for the breakdown of the negotiations. According to the US Department of State, no side was responsible for the negotiations' failure, but the measures taken by them were ineffective (AFP, 2014).

Trump and the Continuation of the Dominance Structure: Following the inauguration of US President Donald Trump in January 2017, some media sources reported the new administration was preparing a new peace initiative for an Israeli-Palestinian deal (Feierstein, 2018, pp. 7-9). At an interview given by Senior Advisor to the President of the United States, Jared Kushner, on December 3, 2017, some basic assumptions of the initiative were given. He described the initiative as a contribution to stability in the region, while helping weaken Iranian influence (A Keynote Conversation With Jared Kushner, 2017, pp. 10-12). On December 6, 2017, Trump announced the United States recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and ordered the planning of the relocation of the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, welcomed the decision and praised the announcement (Landau, 2017).

When Donald Trump unilaterally recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017, over the strenuous objections of the other UN Security Council members and the UN General Assembly, the Palestinian Authority denounced the United States, abandoned the quarter-century of negotiations under the Oslo Agreement, and asserted that the Palestinians would never allow the United States to play the role of peace mediator again (Sachs, 2018, 78). The Trump administration further raised the Palestinians' ire when it moved the US embassy to Jerusalem in May 2018, and cut hundreds of millions of dollars in annual aid to the Palestinians, citing the PA's refusal to take part in the administration's peace initiative. Palestinian leaders slammed US for "supporting the Israeli aggression against us". "Jerusalem will

remain the eternal capital of Palestine regardless of any schemes or actions,” he said (The Times of Israel, 2019).

The Trump peace plan was authored by a team led by Jared Kushner. Various news organizations have referred to the plan as the ‘deal of the century’. The plan is divided into two parts, an economic portion and a political one. On 22 June 2019, the Trump administration released the economic portion of the plan, titled ‘Peace to Prosperity’. The economic portion of the plan consisting of two pamphlets of 40 and 96 pages each are filled with financial tables and economic projections. It was presented by Kushner during the workshop in Manama, Bahrain on 25–26 June 2019 (Spetalnick & Holland, 2019). The plan proposes a \$50 billion investment fund for 179 infrastructure and business projects, to be administered by a “multilateral development bank”, with investments protected by “accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, and conditionality safeguards” (The White House, 2019). Palestinian leaders boycotted and condemned the Bahrain conference in late June 2019 at which the economic plan was to be unveiled. Trump’s peace plan, Mahmoud Abbas said, “is rejected, is rejected, is rejected” (The Times of Israel, 2019). The political portion is yet to be released.

Arab Ties With Israel: Arab contacts with Israel, far from being brand new, actually have a very long history, with many ups and downs along the way. In fact, official Arab-Israeli meetings and signed agreements date almost all the way back to Israel’s creation, with the Rhodes Armistice accords of 1949. Ever since, despite some interruptions during the second intifadah or other crises, there were periodic if generally low-level official meetings about security incidents, water, refugees, and other issues – along with many other high-level Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab summits, meetings, handshakes, and other contacts that have occurred. So, some degree of practical dialogue with Israel is nothing new, notwithstanding continual controversy about it. What is noteworthy today is that the issue is being actively and openly debated in major Arab media (Pollock, 2016: 1-2).

IV- United States: Partner for Israeli Security or Peace?

Although the US congress declared the support of a Jewish homeland in Palestine through passing an enactment in September 21, 1922 and Woodrow Wilson approved Balfour Declaration, while deploring Jews' inappropriate conditions in Europe, the congress did not support Zionism formally. Nevertheless, despite the principle of non-intervention, which the US followed before the war, it became more involved in the Middle East's economic and political issues after the World War II.

The main feature of the US support is its foreign aid offered to Israel which is under US Congress supervision and has affected the policy of different administrations since the establishment of the State of Israel. As Mearsheimer and Walt note, the Zionist lobby in the US has played a critical role in this regard. They argue, neither strategic interests nor moral imperatives can explain the US' "unconditional support" for Israel anymore. In their book, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, they conclude that US Middle East policies are influenced by the "unmatched power of the Israel lobby" actively working "to shape US foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction" (Shahidsaless, 2015: 1-3).

The bilateral relations of the two countries from the US support for establishing a Jewish homeland in 1948 to shaping a special relationship, made Israel, a small country but powerful in military capabilities, dependent to the US economically and militarily (Mark, 2004). Bill Clinton once stated: "The United States will always stand with Israel, always remember that only a strong Israel can make peace. We were, after all, your partners in security before we were partners for peace; our commitment to your security is ironclad -- it will not ever change" (Clinton, 1998). Although, the US has carried out numerous attempts in order to achieve peace in the Middle East, supported establishing a Palestinian independent state and considered a full stop to Israeli settlements building in the West Bank, as an important step toward achieving peace (Kessler, 2005; Pipes, 2015), it has never forced Israel to do it.

In June 2009, President Barack Obama declared that “the US does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements” (Obama, 2009), and even his administration abstained from voting on a UN Security Council Resolution 2334 and let anti-settlement resolution pass at Security Council on 23 December 2016 that was a relatively rare step by Washington (Lerman, 2016: 1-4), but Obama previously reminded that the US would not push Israel to stop Jewish settlements construction in the West Bank as a prerequisite toward extending the negotiations with Palestinian Authority (Kaufman, 2010; Khalidi, 2013).

On 25 March 2019, during a meeting at the White House, President Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel reinforced the close ties between their nations. Trump, with Netanyahu, formally recognizes Israel’s authority over the Golan Heights. “Today I am taking historic action to promote Israel’s ability to defend itself,” Trump said. Netanyahu compared President Trump to Cyrus the Great, Lord Balfour and Harry S. Truman— historic giants who helped secure the future of the Israeli people (Landler & Halbfinger, 2019). “For decades, the United States has claimed to be acting as a broker and mediator between the two parties, but in practice, the United States has been the guarantor and financier of Israel’s security, and the Palestinians have repeatedly rejected U.S. peace offers as one-sided in favor of Israel” (Sachs, 2018, 78).

Mearsheimer and Walt believe that the US has a rich history especially in recent years of using various tools to force other states to change their behavior to suit America’s interests. The US has definitively enormous potential leverage at its disposal for dealing with Israel and the Palestinians. Given the political division within Israel and the Palestinian leadership as well as the presence of rejectionists on both sides, achieving a final settlement would not be easy. But doing nothing or backing Israel so consistently has not made things better. On the contrary, this policy has almost certainly made things worse for Palestinians and continues to erode America’s reputation in the world (2007, p. 226),

and would turn the US into a partner for the security of Israel rather than a partner for peace.

V- An Emancipatory Attitude

The Oslo Accords had different results and instead of moderation and stability, it repeated the crisis and aggravated the disputes among conflict's parties. The circumstance is a security dilemma in which no side intends to move toward compromise until assured that it would not lose its position and interests (Posen, 1993). It is difficult to solve the security dilemma, because there are no external guarantors, or checks and balances, or even the volition of the parties involved (Walter, 1999). So there is no consensus about the promises that two sides were obliged to, and hence, no agreement can be responsible for enforcing the commitments. The Oslo Accords basically did not solve the conflict, but merely presented a framework. Realism approach involves some restrictions in managing the conflict, because it considers the conflict's symptoms as its basic factors. The small, but desirable, changes are not able to resolve a basic problem, because the crisis produced in the implementation process of the Oslo Accords traced back to the historical systematic estate of the conflict. Yet the system has continued in spite of the changes of its elements.

First, while more advanced progress has provided the opportunities to consider the opposite aspects of the discrepancies, multiple contradictions of cultural issues have remained in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The most important factor is that the local circumstances still incline to be approved through social action. Second, structure of dominance, dependence and inequality has changed but are continuing and inequality between Israelis and Palestinians has not been removed. Although the US advocates the Palestinian independent state, it does not impose Israel to stop settlements building. Third, the polarization tendency of the conflict and the existing radical views has extended the growing gaps between Israelis and Palestinians that resulted from prolonged conflict (Ruane & Todd, 2001).

So, the systematic feedback patterns remained, and by changing the elements of the system, the feedback patterns would combine new elements to the old incompatible structure. Emancipatory approach considers the grounds of the conflict directly. In other words, it is able to settle the conflict and stabilize the agreed political institutions in the short term, and also play an effective role to destroy the relationships' system and end the historical social conflict during long time. Then causal feedback patterns that recreate the system levels and reproduce the conflict and its polarization grounds, are weakened and eventually demolished, conflict and discrepancy would be dispersed on several actors instead of focused in a lasting conflict (Ruane & Todd, 2001).

Joseph Ruane and Jennifer Todd believe that an emancipatory approach would be multistranded, weakening the oppositional and self-reproductive tendencies at each level of the system by moderating and differentiating the dimensions of difference; undoing the structure of dominance, dependence, and inequality and weakening the forces producing social polarization; and breaking the feedback loops and causal patterns between the levels, which allow change at one level to be assimilated within the conflict-generating system. Practically, since the conflict' grounds are the discrepancies about religion, ethnicity, indigenous-immigrants estate and national identity, so emancipation trend could decrease the opposition on each of the dimensions and distancing the dimensions one from another (Ruane & Todd, 2005, pp. 252-53).

Culturally, this approach could be represented differently: decreasing the violence level and religious discrepancy; reinterpretation and reconstructions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and the formal valuation of the new concepts and disparities that subvert the older oppositions. Socially, the goal is that these contradictions no longer inform people about the norms of the society where they live, but it targets not only to make the opportunities equal, but also the 'parity esteem' is required to

make sure that the main social institutions no longer reproduce the disparities and oppositions. Politically, the objective is to underestimate the disparities and oppositional quality within public institutions (Ruane & Todd, 2005).

On the other hand, as the conflict is supported by the created interests and alliances in the structure of dominance, dependence, and inequality, so it would be better to change them, too. The US should complete its promises based on the Road Map devised to achieve peace and instead of supporting groups or societies, it should follow the general policy presented in the Road Map. Also the legacy of inequality has maintained between Israel and Palestinians. Here the goal is to change toward parity so that the societies' self-determination right is to be respected equal to other society. Finally it could be said that the conflict is maintained toward social polarization by the inclinations that restrain individuals' capabilities for empathy and the sense of moral responsibility all over the social borders. Emancipation reduces collective and social identities and this process requires greater individualization, a process that can be reinforced by institutionalizing a strong rights culture in both sides of conflict (Ruane & Todd, 1996, pp. 307-16).

Conclusion

As stated, despite the long-term history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there have been so many attempts since 1970, the goal of which is to establish peace. According to Lewis "The Arab-Israel Peace process began, not because of a change of heart on either side, but because of a change of circumstance, exhaustion and the realization that the wars in which they were engaged were unwinnable" (2011, p. 22). Some attempts were successful, while most of the negotiations toward achieving an agreement about the 'final status,' have been inconclusive. The unsuccessful peace process in the Middle East led to different domestic, regional and international consequences that have brought about the need for crisis management and proposition of peace plans. The conflict's

sides, mostly Palestinians have encountered a big predicament that is manifested by the large scale costs of the conflict and victims. In other words, the continuation of armed struggle between Israel and Palestine would entail increasing burdens for both sides, especially Palestinians. Undermining the violence between Israel and Palestine could remove the motivations and justifications of the conflicts' escalation and arms race in the region.

The global economic and political relations could be affected by all instabilities in the Middle East based on two factors; Middle East geographical, political, economical and cultural significance on one hand and the relationship between the most destabilizing events in the region to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the other. According to emancipation approach, realism restrictions that dominated the conflict management are the main cause of this failure, because it focuses on the symptoms rather than the root causes of conflict. In order to settle the conflict, emancipation approach considers the historical and contemporary conditions of the conflict directly. The approach is formed based on the obvious and attainable set of political goals and priorities that studies the cause and nature of conflict. It moves beyond realist plan of political compromise mediation, and also it does not ignore this concern. The emancipation approach can play an effective role in creation, persistence and developing the settlement between Israel and Palestine. By enforcing the required changes, there would be no domination of the oppositions, identities and short-term social interests on motivations; and all involved parties can find new ways to follow their interests and attempts to prevent the resurgence of conflict and social identities. In this regard, emancipation can be a practical and necessary approach.

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