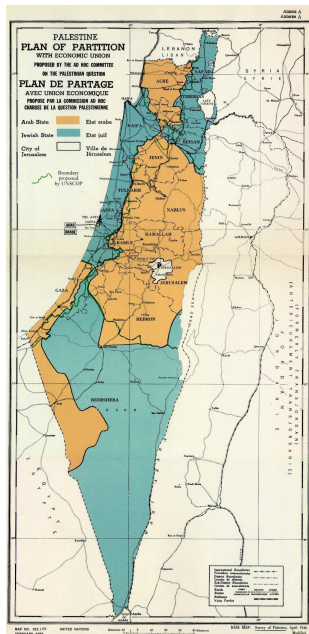


Israel Doesn't Want Peace – **FACT CHECK**

The accusation that Israel isn't interested in peaceful solutions to the Israel-Palestine conflict has gained traction in recent times. The historical record, however, tells a much different story than what pro-Palestine advocates would like you to believe.



The 1947 UN Partition plan, accepted by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, as well as nearly all other Zionist pre-State groups, but rejected by the Arab Higher Committee

1937 – The Peel Commission

Though relatively unknown, the first plan to create separate Jewish and Arab states was the report of the Peel Commission. The Commission's report concluded that the current British administration was untenable, and recommended partitioning the Mandate into two independent Jewish and Arab states. The report offered a remarkably small amount of land to the Jewish state, only about 6,625 km², whereas the Arab state was allotted 18,960 km², almost three times more land.

Despite this massive disparity in size, the Zionist Congress approved the recommendations of the Peel Commission. This was despite the fact that the expectation at the time, based on the Balfour Declaration was that the Jewish state would have sovereignty over

the entirety of the Mandate for Palestine, including Transjordan. The Peel Commission's borders accounted for just 5.5% of that 120,466 km² expectation. Despite the small amount of land relative to their expectations, the Zionist Congress accepted the plan.

The Arab community, on the other hand, completely rejected the report of the Peel Commission. The Arab Higher Committee's statement on the report condemned the partition plan, explicitly rejected the very possibility of a Jewish state, and demanded the end of all Jewish immigration and land purchase. Instead, they demanded a single Arab state be given independence instead.

1947 – UN Partition Plan

In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181 (II), proposing borders for independent Jewish and Arab states. Despite the fact that over half the area allocated to the Jewish state was the completely inhospitable Negev desert, the Jewish Agency for Palestine accepted the resolution's borders.

Even though the proposed Arab state would be almost completely *Judenrein*, with over 99% of its population being Arab, the Arab Higher Committee, as well as other Arab leaders and countries all rejected the partition plan. Their reason was simple: they fundamentally rejected the possibility of having a Jewish state exist in any form.

1967 – UN Resolution 242

In the aftermath of the Six-Day War, the UN adopted Resolution 242, proposing that in return for Israel withdrawing from the territories occupied during the war to form an independent Palestinian state, the Arab states would recognize Israel and cease any belligerence towards the Jewish state. The Israeli government immediately accepted the resolution, seizing the opportunity to put an end to the conflict and finally create lasting peace in the region.

Despite Israel's willingness to accept the resolution's peace plan, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) rejected the resolution due to the fact that it did not include the complete elimination of the State of Israel.

1978 – Camp David Accords

The Camp David Accords were the first step in the peace process between Israel and Egypt, setting up a framework for future peace negotiations between the two nations. In 1979, only a couple months after both nations ratified the Camp David Accords, the Egypt-Israel peace treaty was signed. In exchange for recognition from Egypt, Israel returned the entirety of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, and forcibly evacuated all Israeli civilians living in the Sinai.

Instead of this major development in the peace process being celebrated by the broader Arab world, it was met with widespread outrage. The PLO condemned the peace treaty, and Egypt was suspended from the Arab League. Only two years later, Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt at the time, was assassinated because he dared to make peace with Israel.

1993/95 – Oslo Accords

The Oslo Accords were a pair of agreements signed in 1993 (Oslo I) and 1995 (Oslo II), brokered by the United States. In short, the agreements required Israel to recognize the PLO as “the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” and for the PLO to recognize Israel's right to independence and to renounce violence as a political means. Furthermore, Israel would be required to withdraw Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) presence from parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Accords also established the Palestinian National Authority (PNA or PA) to administer parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with huge amounts of autonomy, virtually amounting to complete independence in regions under their control.

The withdrawal of IDF presence from PA-controlled areas was used as an opportunity to create bases of terror, with weapons being brought into PA-controlled areas *en masse*, well exceeding the amount allowed by the Accords. Furthermore, the PA refused to take action to combat terrorism emerging from its territory, instead allowing terrorist groups to operate openly and choosing

not to arrest terrorists. The PA's complete refusal to take any action to combat terrorism led to the collapse of the Oslo peace process.



Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres signing the failed Oslo Accords

2000 – Camp David Summit

The 2000 Camp David Summit was yet another attempt to negotiate a two-state solution. Participating in the negotiations were the new Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Barak, United States President Bill Clinton, and PLO Chairman and PA President Yasser Arafat. Barak offered virtually every possible Israeli concession, including full sovereignty over the Gaza Strip, full sovereignty over 92% of the West Bank, with land swaps to compensate for land to be annexed by Israel, Palestinian control over most of East Jerusalem, including the Old City, and even control over the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism.

Arafat completely rejected Barak's offer, walking away from the table without even making a counteroffer, instead immediately ordering the start of the Second Intifada, a massive wave of terrorist attacks against Israelis lasting until 2005, including shootings, suicide bombings, rocket launching, and even kidnapping of civilians, resulting in the death of well over a thousand Israelis.

In his autobiography, Clinton wrote that Arafat had once complimented him, calling him “a great man.” In reference to the Camp David Summit, Clinton responded to him saying “I am not a great man. I am a failure, and you made me one.”

2005 – Gaza Disengagement

In August 2005, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon unilaterally withdrew all Israeli presence from the Gaza Strip. Well over 8,000 Israeli civilians were displaced and evicted from their homes in the Gaza Strip. Full control of the Gaza Strip was handed over to the PA, with no Israeli military or civilian presence remaining.



Israeli security forces forcibly removing Israeli civilians from the Gaza Strip

Israel showing their desire to make peace was not met with any sort of positive Palestinian reaction. Not even half a year after the disengagement, the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections took place, with the terrorist group Hamas winning the majority of seats of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), on a platform rejecting the possibility of negotiating with Israel in any way. This resulted in a major power struggle between the Hamas-controlled PLC and President of the PA Mahmoud Abbas, a member of the somewhat more moderate Fatah party. By 2007, this culminated in a full military conflict between Fatah and Hamas, with Fatah asserting control in the West Bank, and Hamas taking complete control of the Gaza Strip.

2008 – Annapolis Conference

Under Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Israel once again entered into negotiations to create an independent Palestinian state. The offer included nearly the entirety of the West Bank, with the land in the West Bank to be annexed by Israel being compensated by land swaps, the whole Gaza Strip, an internationally governed Jerusalem, and Israel committing to accept 5,000 Palestinian

refugees as citizens. For reasons that are still unclear, Mahmoud Abbas rejected the peace offer.

Conclusion

That brings us to today. Constantly, we hear cries of "Israel has the power to end this conflict." The truth is that Israel is powerless to end this conflict. Throughout the history of this conflict, Israel has offered countless peace offers, of which not a single one was accepted and followed through on the Palestinian side. If Israel could create an independent Palestinian state in exchange for peace, there is no doubt that they would. However, there is literally no one for Israel to negotiate with. No matter the terms, the Palestinian side has consistently turned down every single peace offer. As long as one side is unwilling to truly accept an offer, there will be no viable two-state solution.