

Revisiting George Bush's Middle East Peace Initiative of 1991: Lessons Learned After 22 Years

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to revisit and analyze George Bush's Middle East Peace initiative of 1991 and the lessons that could be learned after 22 years of its initiation. This paper argues that since Bush's Middle East peace initiative of 1991 was successful in the sense that it generated a comprehensive peace process between concerned Arab parties and Israel for the first time, many lessons would be learned. Chief among them is the importance and the necessity of active American involvement, the importance of inclusiveness, significance of the pre-negotiation stage, the importance of timing and the regional and international context as well as the importance of motives and willingness.

The major bulk of this study is a discussion to Bush's peace proposal of 1991, motives of the concerned parties to accept such initiative as well as key conditions behind the success of this peace initiative. To achieve such end this paper has employed a case study approach that would analyze primary and secondary literature on this subject matter so to understand different variables and dynamics that influenced this initiative.

This paper concludes that since Bush's Middle East peace initiative of 1991 was successful, many lessons would be learned such as: the importance and the necessity of active American involvement, the importance of inclusiveness, significance of the pre-negotiation stage, the importance of timing and the regional and international context as well as the importance of motives and willingness.

Keywords: Arab-Israeli Conflict, Peace Initiative, Motives and Willingness, Conducive Conditions, Pre-negotiation, Timing, Inclusiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Amid of profound socio-political changes in the Middle East that have materialized themselves in the form of Arab Uprisings which erupted late 2010, the Arab-Israeli conflict continues to remain a key obstacle to stability and peace in the region. Although Egypt and Jordan have concluded peace treaties with Tel Aviv, the rest of the concerned Arab parties failed to hammer out a comprehensive settlement to their deeply rooted conflict. However, in the midst of the current changes in the Arab World and uncertainly about the prospects of solving this conflict, Obama's visit to the region late March 2013, has generated some optimism in the sense that a resumption of peace talks particularly between Palestinians and Israelis is likely. The visit received great attention from the concerned parties, commentators, analysts; politicians as well as scholars. Moreover, the trip coincided with the

22nd anniversary of George Bush's peace initiative on 6th of March 1991 to solve Arab-Israeli Conflict. Therefore, such occasion would be inspiring and interesting to revisit this peace proposal and analyze it so to draw lessons that could be of interest to academics within the field of conflict management particularly mediation studies, politicians and people who are concerned with ending the long standing Arab-Israeli conflict.

Hypothesis of the Study

This paper argues that Bush's Middle East peace proposal of 1991 was successful in the sense that it was accepted by the disputants and received regional and international support. Moreover, it generated a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace process for the first time and produced many agreements particularly Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty and a number of partial agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. Therefore, many lessons would be learned from this successful initiative: the importance and the necessity of active American involvement, the significance of inclusiveness, the importance of pre-negotiation stage,

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timing and the regional and international context as well as the importance of motives and willingness.

Problem of the Study

In addition to the abovementioned assumption, this study would try to answer a number of questions such as: How and why USA initiated its peace proposal in 1991 and why the concerned Arab parties and Israel had accepted it. Moreover, what were these important conditions that made Bush's peace move successful? Furthermore, what lessons can be learned from analyzing such peace offer.

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this is to revisit and analyze Bush's initiative of 1991 including its different variables, dynamics, conditions and motives of the concerned parties to initiate and accept this peace proposal. Moreover, this paper aims at exploring conditions and elements that contributed to the success of such peace move. The underlying purpose is therefore to provide insights into how the US initiated its peace plan in 1991 and accepted by the concerned parties and the subsequent developments in the aftermath of this suggested peace initiative. In pursuit of this end, this paper hopefully would offer a valuable contribution in the form of lessons learned from Bush's peace move of 1991.

Methodology of the Study

To answer the aforementioned questions and deal with the key assumption of this paper, a case study approach of descriptive and explanatory nature will be employed in order to analyze primary and secondary literature on this subject matter. This method is considered to be as one of widely used tools of enquiry in social science particularly in political science and international relations. Moreover, this method of research would enable the researcher to provide in depth investigation and understanding to the correlation between different variables and dynamics that influenced the concerned parties as well as the out come of this initiative. Therefore, this approach will enable the researcher to provide a detailed account of a unique case of peace initiative including the testing of the key hypothesis of this paper.

Importance of the Study

The importance of this study stems from the

significance of its subject matter as Arab-Israeli conflict considered being one of the most deeply rooted conflicts that has always impacted the regional and international stability. Moreover, this study is particularly important since it will investigate and analyze Bush's Peace initiative of 1991 which would provide an opportunity to highlight lessons learned as they would be of academic as well as practical importance to researchers and practitioners in the field of conflict management. Furthermore, by exposing different dynamics and variables of this American peace proposal to start a comprehensive peace talks between Israel and Arab countries, this study can be an important contribution to the existing literature on the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace efforts to solve it.

Literature Review

Yehuda Lukacs and Abdul Aziz Said, "Middle East: A Constructive Vision of the Future Is Still Lacking "1991, wrote that It should surprise no one that the American initiative for an international peace conference on the Middle East has not been met with the enthusiasm it deserves among Israelis and Arabs. They added that a considerable amount of work is being done, but the inspiration of a long-term vision of peace is missing. In the absence of a charismatic leader in the Middle East, only President George Bush can offer that vision, The American president should get involved personally in the process before convening the conference, The conference should be regarded as a means of reaching the goal of creating a new order in the Middle East based on economic viability, political coexistence and cultural pluralism, they think that Bush ought to pursue public diplomacy by presenting his vision of peace in a direct message to the peoples and governments of the Middle East. This should call for common security for the people and states of the region as well as concrete steps toward a regional arms control regime.

.Charles D. Smith " Palestine and the Arab – Israeli Conflict "(1996, p313) argued that "Madrid talks were historic in that the participant engaged in official direct negotiation for the first time ,the talks produced little progress except between Israel and Jordan ,the Palestinian and Israeli remained far apart" .

Eisenberg and Caplan "Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Patterns, Problems, Possibilities"1998, p 193) and **Adnan Abu –Odeh "Jordanians, Palestinians and**

the Hashemite Kingdome in the Middle East Peace Process"(2002, pp 232-234) suggested that the timing of the US peace initiative in 1991 strongly influenced the subsequent Arab-Israeli negotiation. the Gulf War, the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the US efforts contributed greatly to the initiation of the Arab-Israeli peace process of 1991. The new regional and international climate propelled the concerned parties to enter talks. Moreover, the end of the cold war and the demise of the Arab states' soviet sponsor dictated a degree of Arab accommodation with the sole remaining superpower, which in turn required Arab reconciliation with Israel.

Avi Shlaim in "the Rise and Fall of the Oslo process"(2008,pp 254-255) highlighted the US administration in 1991 to achieve peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict where he argued that the United States took the lead in initiating a peace initiative and convening an international conference to address this long standing conference.

Michael C.Hudson in "The United States in the Middle East"(2008, pp108-109) has discussed the American efforts and leading role to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict including President Bush' initiative in 1991 where he argued that at the beginning of 1990s there were many reasons to suppose that USA had achieved much in the Middle East.

Although the aforementioned writers have made a valuable contribution to the study of the Arab-Israeli peace talks particularly US peace initiative of 1991, this research paper is considered to be one of the few studies to investigate Bush' initiative after 22 years and find out those lessons which be learned.

Structure of the Study

The structure of this paper will be consisted of four sections: Bush's peace initiative and subsequent peace talks, the motives of the concerned parties, favorable conditions behind the success of Bush's peace initiative and the conclusion.

1. Bush's Peace Initiative of 1991 and Subsequent Peace Talks

Arab- Israeli conflict has been one of the most thorny issue that received much attention and efforts from international community particularly UN. Since its inception in 1948, the international community have maintained an active involvement to manage and solve

this prolong conflict. Moreover, United States have maintained constant engagement as a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Many of US' peaceful efforts were partially successful such as the troops disengagement between Egypt, Syria and Israel in the aftermath of October War in 1973 and the Egyptian-Israeli treaty of 1979, while other attempts failed. However, the US' peace initiative of 1991 and the subsequent Middle East peace processes that were held in same year represented the most serious attempt on the part of Washington D.C to hammer out a comprehensive settlement between Arabs and Israel.

Geopolitical developments in Middle East as well as in the world that took place late 80s and early 90s of the last century provided an enticing opportunity to propose a peace initiative in order to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. The peace process became possible at that time due to international and regional developments that smoothed the way for it, such as the Palestinian Intifada of 1987, the end of the Cold War 1989, the collapse of communism in East Europe, and the second Gulf War of 1991(Dodge,2008,p230).

Early March 1991, former President George Bush delivered a speech before the Congress and proposed a "Comprehensive peace which must be grounded in UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of territory for peace. This principle must be elaborated to provide for Israel's security and recognition, and at the same time for legitimate Palestinian political rights. Anything else would fail the twin tests of fairness and security. The time has come to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict (Gerner, 1994, p180). Shortly after, the Secretary of State then, James Baker began his shuttling diplomacy where he visited the region and met the concerned parties in order to secure their approval.

Baker made eight trips to the region between March and October of 1991, each of which included meetings with the leaders of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, in addition to a Palestinian delegation in Jerusalem (Cossali, 2005, p12). During these visits, he invested great efforts to prepare for a common ground, to resolve barriers and generate support to launch talks between the concerned Arab parties and Israel. However, initially he received the approval of the parties over the necessity to find a solution to their conflict but there was a sharp difference over the issue of the format of the proposed negotiation, the formula and the Palestinian

representation (Cossali, 2005, p12). Israel continues to refuse to consider a trade of land for peace and called for direct bilateral negotiations with the concerned parties parallel to enlarged regional talks aimed at building confidence between the Arabs and Israel without external interference (Morris, 2000 ,p614). Meanwhile, Arab countries conditioned their approval to the proposed peace talks that peace negotiation should be based on United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, which call on Israel to return Arab lands it has occupied since the war of 1967. Israel refused to commit itself to such principle and instead called for "peace for peace".

Among other issues that remain unsettled are what if any connection Palestinian representatives would have to the Palestine Liberation Organization, where the conference would take place and whether the former Soviet Union would attend, the Arab position regarding this issue was unclear and ambivalent. Some Arab countries, particularly the Gulf States and Syria, conditioned their continued support for the PLO by the replacement of Arafat as its chairman (Sayigh, 1991, p19). This was because of the latter's position during the Gulf Crisis. Israel from its part insisted that no one from the PLO, the Palestinian Diaspora, Jerusalem, or members of the Palestinian National Council could represent the Palestinians. Tel Aviv would only negotiate with Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza strip as part of the joint delegation with the Jordanians (Gerner, 1994, p172) Moreover; Shamir conditioned the Palestinian participation in any proposed negotiation with the end of their uprising.

Baker came to realize that good preparations were needed so to create a common ground that could initiate a peace process in the Middle East (Quandt, 1993, pp401-402). The key breakthrough came in June and was confirmed directly during Baker's sixth trip in July: Syria approved the US proposal for direct talks at a peace conference. That step, Baker commented, "Gives us something to work with." He then pressed Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians for their agreement to attend. "In our view," he said, "the Palestinians have the most to gain from a viable and active peace process than do almost anyone else." Baker also said to Israel, "This is a moment of historic opportunity [since] Israel now has Arab partners willing to engage in direct negotiations" (International Herald Tribune 19 July 1991).

During a visit to Israel in August 1991, Baker received Tel Aviv preliminary approval to participate in

the proposed negotiations in accordance with what US suggested (Smith, 1996, p312). Shamir linked Israel's acceptance with a satisfactory solution of the issue of Palestinian-Arab representation in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and the endorsement by the Israeli cabinet of Bush's peace proposal. The issue of Palestinian representation was left unresolved; however, after intensified talks between the Jordanians and Palestinians, and Baker with the latter this issue was solved. In September 1991 the Palestinian National Council endorsed the US initiative and agreed to negotiate within a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation with and also asked for an American letter of assurances (DiGeorgio-Lutz, 1998, pp132-133)

With the approval of all concerned parties, the major part of Baker's mission was achieved; however the only issue which remained was the composition of the Palestinian delegation. The PLO agreed that the negotiating team would be strictly from the occupied territories and that its members would have no formal relation with the PLO. Moreover, no one would be included from East Jerusalem. However, an advisory group to the Palestinian team was formed from the Palestinians close to the PLO and from Jerusalem, which included members such as Faisal Husseini. This prompted the Israeli cabinet to endorse the initiative formally. As for the other Arab countries, particularly the moderates such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, they supported the US peace initiative and expressed their readiness to participate in the process particularly the Multilaterals (Baker, 1992, pp24-25). Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria also extended their support as well as their readiness to take part in the proposed peace process. Only few Arab countries such as Iraq, Libya and Sudan did not support the American move. As for the regional and international support for the American peace initiative, all the countries and organizations that were invited had agreed to back and participate in the process including UN and EU.

The abovementioned US efforts resulted in an international conference held in Madrid in October 1991 (Hudson, 2009, pp318-319). In addition to Israel and the concerned Arab countries (including Palestinians), many international and regional parties attended the conference. Madrid talks generated direct and bilateral negotiation between Israel and the relevant Arab countries like Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. However, Palestinians participated in a joint delegation with Jordan. Washington D.C hosted

these talks where the parties conducted several rounds of talks that produced no tangible results (Smith, 2009, pp246-247). However, parallel to these talks a secret track was conducted between Israelis and Palestinians in Oslo that eventually led the parties to sign the famous Oslo Agreements in September 1993 at the White House in the US. The accord produced a declaration of principles that led to the establishment of the Palestinian Self-Government Authority and mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (Bose, 2007, pp248-251).

During 1993-1999, Israelis and Palestinians went on with their bilateral talks with a continued help and active engagement from Clinton's administration during which they signed a number of additional agreements such as Oslo II agreement in 1995 and Wye River Memorandum in 1998 (Shlaim, 2009, pp255-266). Unfortunately these agreements suffered from lack of commitments and implementation from the part of Tel Aviv. During this period great damage was caused to the peace process mainly because of the assassination of Rabin in 1995 and the arrival of Netanyahu as and a Likud led government to power in Israel in 1996. Netanyahu unlike his predecessors adopted a different strategy in dealing with the peace talks with the Palestinians based on lowering the expectations of the Palestinians (Shlaim, 2009, pp255-256). However, an air of optimism spread out in June 1999 when Ehud Barak formed a labor led government after he won the elections. US President Clinton, who maintained an active involvement since he was elected in 1993, extended an invitation to the Palestinian leader Yaser Arafat and Israeli premier Barak to come to Camp David and conduct comprehensive talks over their bilateral disputed issue. Both parties accepted this offer and engaged with an intensified negotiation along with the Americans as mediators. However, the disputants failed to hammer out a final agreement that would end their historical conflict and led to the collapse of Camp David II peace talks (Jentleson, 2010, pp 452-453). The failure of these talks had a profound negative impact on the whole process that resulted in the eruption of the Al-Aqsa Uprising at the end of September 2000. Moreover, Likud party under the leadership of Ariel Sharon had won the general elections which caused further pessimism over the viability of peace talks between the concerned parties. Violence continued and intensified between Israelis and Palestinians which prompted Sharon to order the retaking of all lands granted

to the Palestinians during Oslo Process, destroying the offices of PA and isolating Arafat as untrustworthy peace partner (Cossali, 2005, pp20-2). Moreover, Likud led government decided to build a separation wall between Israel and the Palestinians.

In addition to these developments, democrats in the USA lost the presidential elections and the republican candidate George W. Bush became the newly elected president. Unlike his predecessor he was not enthusiastic to maintain an active American involvement. Instead he advocated hands-off and helping the parties whenever there is a need. However, 9/11 atrocities and continued violence between Israelis and Palestinians forced Bush administration to change its policy and engage in the pursuit of a settlement as part of the US efforts to contain global terrorism (Hudson, 2009, pp319-320).

In 2002 Bush proposed the Road Map Plan so to reform the Palestinian National Authority and resume peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis. Moreover, Bush also proposed another important initiative when he called for a two state solution in the sense that there should be an independent Palestinian state beside the state of Israel. This was actually the first time an American president would call publicly to establish a viable and sovereign Palestinian state along side Israel. This was followed with the establishment of the Quartet Committee that comprised US, Russia, European Union and the United Nations to help the concerned parties to implement these peace plans through bilateral peace talks (Cossali, 2005, pp39-47). However, Bush's administration peace efforts continued till 2008 yet nothing tangible was achieved in terms of a comprehensive settlement between Israeli-Palestinians. Moreover, The peace process suffered and remained a hostage to the ups and downs of the Israeli domestic politics in regards to peace as well as the deep division among Palestinians particularly Hamas-Fatah divide in Gaza and West Bank. Furthermore, violence and Israeli military confrontation with Hezbollah 2006 and Hamas in 2008 had overshadowed and negatively impacted the whole process (Jentleson, 2010, p 406).

In 2008 Barack Obama was elected as a president to the USA which generated hopes that the new administration will help the disputants to reach a comprehensive settlement (Jentleson, 2010, pp 437-438). During his first term in office along with his aids, Obama had invested a lot of efforts to achieve this end but there was no serious breakthrough between Israelis and

Palestinians. However, hopes become high as Obama won the American presidential elections in 2012 where he started his second term with his famous visit to the Middle East in order to resume the long-stalled talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

Oslo break through in 1993 and the subsequent agreements between Israelis and Palestinians had impacted profoundly the Arab-Israeli peace processes particularly Jordanian-Israeli peace talks (Abu Odeh, 2000, p 234). Although Israel and Jordan started their bilateral peace talks 1991 nothing serious was achieved till 1993. Shortly after Oslo agreement was signed, Tel Aviv and Amman signed their first agreement known as the Common Agenda in the White House in September 1993. Henceforth both parties accelerated their negotiation and within a year time they managed to sign two agreements: Washington Declaration in July 1994 and the peace treaty in October 1994. These three accords have solved the parties' bilateral disputed issues and put an end to their dispute (Almomani, 2012, pp500-506). The treaty achieved Israel's interests and met most of Jordan's demands about her occupied territories, water, security and Jerusalem. Henceforth, both countries started to carry the provisions of the treaty and their obligations towards peace.

Both Jordan and Israel continued to show their commitment to the peace treaty despite highs and lows in their bilateral relations. Despite these ups and downs, relations between Jordan and Israel survived serious crises, contacts at the official level continued and officials in both countries have been convinced that peace is necessary and that it is the geopolitical rationale of their bilateral relations (Almomani, 2012, pp5007-5009). However, at the public level particularly Jordanian public, peace and normalizations with Israel remained a debatable and contentious issue. The Jordanian public debated the meaning of peace with Tel Aviv, its impact on the Jordan's identity as well as its interests where a consensus was produced against the peace agreement. This is mainly because of the changes in the Israeli behavior towards peace particularly with the Palestinians and the economic dimension of peace failed to materialize.

As for the Israeli-Syrian peace track the initial stage of Damascus's talks with Tel Aviv was conducted with the Likud led government in which contention and lack of seriousness were the main characteristics of this phase of negotiation. Moreover, what has always characterized

peace encounters between the two parties is the fact that US successive administrations maintained a very active engagement. However, this cold performance by both parties had substituted by a little bit of warmth when a labor led Israeli government under the premiership of Rabin arrived to power in June 1992 (Cossali, 2005, p15). Actually the most serious attempts to forge peace between the two respective countries took place during 1992-1995. Chief among these efforts was Rabin's proposal where he accepted the principle of territorial compromise with Syria and the possibility to withdraw from the Golan Heights just before his assassination in 1995 (Rabinovich, 1998, pp43-52). However, Rabin's killing on the hand of an Israeli extremist caused great disruption and serious blow to a possible agreement between Tel Aviv and Damascus.

It is important to mention here that through out these talks US successive administrations had maintained a very active engagement in particular President Clinton and his aids. However, since 1995 and despite their mutual mistrust, and the set backs that the process suffered from, peaceful efforts continued to search for a solution with a direct involvement of US. The concerned parties invested many efforts during Netanyahu premiership 1996-1999 and in 1999 when Ehud Barak became the Israeli prime minister but no tangible outcome was reached (Halevy, 2013, pp120-125). However, between 2000 till 2008 there were also many attempts to resume talks between the Israelis and the Syrians in order to reach a settlement to their long-standing conflict. particularly the period during 2006-2008, at the time of the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert when Turkey tried to mediate between them. Despite these mediation efforts invested by Washington and Ankara, Damascus and Tel Aviv failed to hammer out any agreement that would end their historical conflict.

As for peace talks between Israel and Lebanon, these negotiation also had produced nothing and it is worthy here to mention that during much of these talks Lebanese track was almost connected with the Syrian-Israeli peace track. This was because of the Syrian influence in Beirut that continued to be there till 2005.

In addition to the previously discussed bilateral track between Israel and the concerned Arab parties, another multilateral track was initiated after 1992 during which Israel; many Arab states except Syria and Lebanon, many regional and international parties had participated in these talks. The aim behind such multilateral negotiation was to

help the disputants along with the help of the international community to develop functional relations and cooperation over low politics issues such as water, energy and economic interests. Although these talks have been perceived by the participating countries as helpful and fruitful, they were suspended and lost their relevance 1990s.

2. The Motives of the Concerned Parties

Motives got to do with all significant interests and goals, which usually lead antagonists and third parties to initiate and accept a mediation-negotiation process to manage and end their conflict. Scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict resolution have highlighted the importance of these motives in mediation and negotiation (Fisher, 1972, pp83-84). However, in regards to Bush's peace initiative of 1991 many political. Security and economic motives that made the concerned Arab parties and Israelis to accept such peace proposal and of course there were a number of motives that made the US to initiate such move.

2.1. The U.S Motives

The Arab-Israeli conflict has played an important role in the US foreign policy towards Middle East since 1948, particularly during the Cold War (Smith, 2009, p233). This is because the conflict has always been a source of instability to the region, which is of significance to American national interests. This explains the constant US engagement in continued efforts to solve this long-standing dispute. Therefore, when Bush launched his peace initiative of 1991, he was influenced by a number of interests, which represented the US motives to propose peace process between Israel and its immediate Arab neighbors. Apart from the strategic geographic location of the region, there are immediate American interests, which the US keen to keep or achieve. Chief among them is to secure an undisrupted access to the oil of the region at a reasonable price (Dodge, 2008, pp 217-233).

Although the US is considered to be one of the countries with oil reserves, in time she has nevertheless become the world's largest importer of oil. Moreover, most of the US allies, particularly the West and Japan import large amounts of oil from the huge oil reserves of the Middle East. Therefore, any interference that could disrupt the flow of oil or lead to an increase in its price would have a sharp negative impact on the economies of the US and its allies. Moreover, an unresolved conflict

with a stalemate or an accidental incident could result in a military confrontation between the adversaries in which even the US allies in the region could have no option but to be involved. A war between Syria and Israel would put Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States in a critical position in which they would find it difficult not to help their Arab ally who had stood with them in the Gulf Crisis. Therefore it was in the US interest to launch a peace initiative that could end the conflict peacefully.

Another interest that motivated the Americans to initiate a peace process is the safety and survival of Israel (Dodge, 2008, pp 216-217). The US has an emotional attachment and moral commitment towards Israel. Both countries to a certain extent share common values, which make them close to each other. Moreover, during the Cold War the US developed vested interests in Israel as a strategic ally against the intentions of the Soviet Union in the region. Furthermore, the Jewish lobby plays a central role in securing continued US commitment to the existence of Israel due to its influence within successive American administrations and the Congress. However, failure to address the Arab-Israeli conflict and continued stalemate could lead to war taking into consideration the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region. The result would be disastrous for both sides. Apart from the threat of mutual destruction, the peace between Egypt and Israel could be negatively affected. Therefore, the security of both the region and Israel would be endangered. In the light of this, the Bush administration realized that only a peaceful solution could avoid this situation. Further motive that made Bush launch a peace initiative to solve the Arab-Israel conflict, was the issue of the new world order in which the US plays a central role (Hudson, 2009, pp 311-318).

The end of the Cold War through the defeat of the communist bloc and the Gulf War of 1991 both enhanced the US role as the world leader. Peace in the Middle East brokered by the US would lead a further enhancement of the American global role. In addition to this, there was a motive related to Bush personally (Shlaim, 1992, p3). The way he had dealt with Saddam and the subsequent victory had increased the popularity of Bush as a national and world leader. Further achievements like the ending of the prolonged conflict between Israel and its neighbors could increase his popularity and could further enable him to win the next American Presidential elections.

2.2. Jordan's Motives

Jordan had a number of interests that attracted her to accept American Peace Initiative of 1991. Chief among them is the political survival of the regime, and her economic and security needs in which the Arab-Israeli conflict formed a major obstacle to these interests. Jordan's motives related to her political existence as a state. The Arab-Israeli conflict and its ramifications were the most serious threats to Jordan's political stability, because geographically and demographically, she was the Arab country most affected by the conflict (Ryan, 2010, p311). Moreover, in 1990/1, Jordan's regional as well as international position was damaged by the spillover from the second Gulf War which severely affected its relations with the Gulf States and Western countries. (Fisher, 2005, p 642). Jordan's pro-Iraqi stance led to its political isolation at the Arab and international levels. Peace with Israel would result in a mutual political recognition, which would enhance and safeguard Jordan's political stability and eliminate Israeli right-wing ambitions in its territories. Moreover, Successful talks would allow Jordan to restore cordial relations with the West, and the Arab Gulf States, which would enhance her political status.

Jordan is a small country with limited natural resources and that since her establishment she has been dependent on foreign aid to meet her economic needs. This situation has caused fluctuations in her economy, which became highly vulnerable to developments in the external environment (Ryan, 2010, p311). The Arab-Israeli conflict and the regional developments were the factors that most seriously affected economic conditions in Jordan. Moreover, the Gulf crisis of 1990 had a devastated impact on the Jordanian economy. Amman almost lost its traditional financial and economic supporters, mainly the West and the Gulf countries (Shlaim, 2010, pp 507-506). However, Participating in a peace process that might result in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict would allow Jordan to achieve short and long-term economic aims. Another motive that made Jordan accept such peace initiative was the restoration of economic relations with the West and the Gulf countries and the possibility of writing off a substantial amount of its foreign debt, mainly by the United States (Kemp, Pressman, 1997, p97).

In the long term a successful peace process would eliminate the negative impact of the conflict on Jordan's economy, such as military expenditure and the migration

of thousands of refugees and displaced persons. The geographical location of Jordan, in which she is surrounded by relatively strong countries, made it difficult to safeguard her security. Moreover, many of the security threat that Amman has always faced came as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict while others relate to the developments in the region, most notably inter-Arab rivalry. Jordanians perceived Israel as a serious threat to their security. Therefore, Amman believed that peace with Tel Aviv would eliminate the latter's potential security threat to Jordan and would put an end to the Likud illusions, which consequently would enhance Amman's stability (Bearman, 1994, p130).

2.3. Israel's Motives

When Israel accepted Bush's Peace Initiative 1991, she was motivated by a number of interests and aims, chief among them being security which most of the Israelis have considered as their top national priority (Barak, 1998, pp 60-62). *The absence of peace and the uncertainty that surrounded the Arab-Israeli conflict since its eruption, led Israel to believe that Arab countries are a major source of threat to Tel Aviv existence, mainly Syria, Iraq and the Palestinian guerrilla organizations.* Moreover, although Jordan did not constitute a serious military threat to Israel because of its relative weakness compared to the latter. But Jordan's geographical location formed an ideal military base that could be used to launch an effective attack against Israel (Evron, 1995, p163). This is because Amman has the longest borderline with Israel. Moreover, the latter lacks strategic depth in that the distance from its border with Jordan to the Mediterranean coast was quite short. Therefore, such situation has exacerbated Tel Aviv security fears that Jordanian territory might be used by the other Arab countries, mainly Syria and Iraq as a launching base against her. Therefore, peace with concerned Arab parties would end the formal state of war which would reduce the likelihood of Arab forces being stationed in Jordan (York, 1990, p11). Moreover, and of great importance to Israel, peace with Arabs would reinforce U.S. security commitments to Israel.

Although Israel was motivated by a number of political motives the major political motive that led Israel to participate in the 1991 Middle East peace talks and to conclude peace with Jordan in 1994 was to get the Arab political recognition. Right from the beginning Israel was confronted with the problem of international and regional

recognition, mainly from the Arab countries who challenged her political existence (Mc Laurin & Wagner, 1977, pp 204-205). Thus, political recognition has been considered as one of the most important aims on Israel's foreign policy agenda (Ikle, 1977, p365). Therefore, peace with the Arab parties would put an end to their political boycott and legitimize its existence as state (Weizman, 1998, p53). Moreover, such recognition would help in consolidating Israel's regional and international status and open up opportunities where Tel Aviv could forge relations with the Islamic world.

When Israel decided to participate in the peace process of 1991, she was hoping to achieve short and long term economic interests. Since her inception, the state has been economically challenged by the Arab countries, who, in 1949, decided to establish a boycott bureau to be supervised by a head office located in Damascus. Moreover, the military nature of the conflict required a great deal of expenditure that imposed an immense burden on the Israeli economy (George, Allebeck, Weintraub, 1997, pp 196-203). Therefore, Israel believed that peace with the Arab parties would help in ending the Arab economic boycott which might lead to mutual economic co-operation. Another immediate motive that made Israel to accept such peace initiative was the \$10 billion loan that Israel had hoped to get from the US so to help Tel Aviv in absorbing hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants from the former USSR and ex-communist countries (Shlaim, 1992, pp3-5).

2.4. The Syrian Motives

Many motives had encouraged Syria to accept Bush peace initiative of 1991 particularly those related to its political, economic and security interests and at the domestic level, Damascus' political situation fluctuated between one of stability and chaos (Fisher, 2005, pp 913-937). Until 1971 the country had suffered from frequent unrest in which military coups characterized its national politics. However, since 1971 when President Hafiz Al Asad came to power, the country to some extent enjoyed a considerable stability. There are many potential political threats that could disrupt the domestic stability in Syria (Hartman, 1994, p 46) Although the regime is adapting an ideology of pan-Arabism through the ruling party, *AL Baath*, the fact that Asad is from the Alawi minority while the majority of the population are Sunni forms a potential threat to the regime. Furthermore, the

Arab-Israeli conflict provided the regime with a political legitimacy in which Syria defended the Arab rights, however, a long stalemate in the conflict would form a heavy burden and could bring into question the legitimacy of the regime. Therefore, solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict in which Syria would get back its occupied territories would enhance the regime stability (Van Dam, 1996, pp129-130).

Although Syria's position at the time of the American peace initiative of 1991 was to a certain extent satisfactory, failure to respond positively would endanger such position. However, participating in the proposed Middle East peace negotiation would strengthen Syria's political position and would enable her to keep the already acquired short-term gains and also achieve long term ones. Moreover, to take part in a peace process in which she would play a major role would increase her regional political leverage among the Arab countries.

Another motive that attracted Syria to accept the US peace initiative of 1991 was security interests (Rabinovich, 1998, pp 37-39). It is probably true to say that Syria's relations with her immediate neighbors particularly Turkey, Iraq and Israel are always tense. This posed a direct source of threat to her national security and raised the likelihood of being at war with these countries. Therefore, the proposed peace initiative of 1991 provided valuable opportunity for Syria to avoid such a situation.

The final motives that attracted Syria to join the peace process of 1991 were economic ones. In terms of economic potential Syria is a relatively weak state compared to her neighbors particularly Israel, Turkey, and Iraq (Hartman, 1994, p46). Moreover, the conflict with Israel and her desire to achieve strategic parity through buying arms mainly from the Soviet Union placed a heavy burden on its financial capacity. Furthermore, most of the water resources which she depends on particularly for irrigation are under external control which prevented her from having adequate amount of water needed to expand the agricultural sector. Therefore, participating in the proposed peace negotiation with Israel would relieve Syria from the military expenditures, which would positively affect her economic situation. Furthermore, peace with Israel would prompt both US and the West to provide Syria with economic assistance as part of the regional arrangements and would also encourage foreign investment.

2.5. The Palestinians Motives

A number of motives attracted the Palestinians to accept the US peace initiative of 1991 mainly political ones in which the issue of achieving national self-determination and political independence is on the top of them (DiGeorgio, 1998, pp8-10). Prior to the Gulf Crisis of 1990-1991, the Palestinians represented by the PLO enjoyed considerable political recognition (Smith, 1996, pp 301-306). However, the PLO position during the Gulf War of 1991 was perceived as a pro Saddam that led to the isolation of the PLO. Failure to take part could result in further deterioration and could even undermine the Palestinian rights and the PLO. In contrast, participating in the Peace process would enhance the political rights of the Palestinians and their claims for national self-determination. Moreover, Peace could lead eventually to the establishment of a recognized Palestinian state after Israel withdraws something which is at the top of the PLO priorities. In addition to this, peace with Israel could result in the latter's recognition of the PLO, which consequently would give the latter an opportunity to play a major role in the predicted Palestinian State. Economic motives also contributed to the Palestinian acceptance of the U.S initiative (Eisenberg, Caplan, 1998, pp 8-10).

It is probably true to say that the Palestinians and their representative the PLO, throughout their struggle had received generous economic and financial aid, particularly from Arab oil producing countries and the Soviet Union. However, when the US initiated its peace proposal, the Palestinians were in a critical situation particularly those in the occupied territories and the PLO was no longer even capable of running its own institutions. Failing to respond to the American call would increase the misery of the Palestinians further and could undermine the PLO's legitimacy. In contrast, to participate in a peace process of which most of the Arab countries approved could result in the resumption of their financial aid. Moreover, peace negotiations with Israel that could achieve the latter's withdrawal from the occupied territories would attract the West to extend economic assistance to the Palestinians. Furthermore, a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question would also attract foreign investors to the region.

Another motive that made Palestinian accept the US initiative, which could be included, was security one. However, prior to the US peace initiative the Palestinians concern about security were high, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza strip. As a result of their activities

against the Israeli forces, the numbers of Palestinians casualties were high. This security situation could therefore be considered as a motive for the Palestinians to participate in the Middle East peace process of 1991. Since by doing so, a peaceful settlement would end the violence in the West bank and Gaza strip, and stopping the Israeli attacks on Palestinian camps in Lebanon and on PLO personnel.

2.6. The Motives of Lebanon

Prior to the US peace initiative in 1991, Lebanon achieved relative national conciliation and the civil war had virtually ended (Norton, 1999, p 41). In 1989 the disputed Lebanese factions signed the Al Ta'if agreement which was sponsored by Saudi Arabia and blessed with tacit approval of the Americans and the Syrians (Hudson, 1999, pp 27-28). The accord aimed at reforming the Lebanese political system and provided the state with an opportunity to strengthen its political authority and opened up the prospects for national reconciliation. Moreover, the ending of General Awn's mutiny relieved the state from a serious challenge. Furthermore, Lebanon's position during the Gulf crisis in 1991 increased the political support of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States and the West. This improvement in the domestic and external situation of Lebanon improved the prospects for economic aid from the rich Arab countries and the West to reconstruct the country following the massive destruction of the civil war. Therefore, the US peace initiative was an additional opportunity for Lebanon to overcome political, economic and security problems.

Peace with Israel would end its occupation of south Lebanon and this would allow the state to extend its authority and end the presence of armed factions in this area. Moreover, peace would attract foreign investment and aid, taking into consideration the fact that Lebanon had once enjoyed the reputation of being the Middle East centre of financial activity. Furthermore, comprehensive peace could end the Palestinian refugee issue which is a serious demographic problem for Lebanon. Stalemate in the conflict could lead to the settlement of those refugees in the country which would disrupt demographic fabric of the Lebanese society.

3. Conducive Conditions behind the Success of Bush's Peace Initiative of 1991

In regard to Bush peace initiative of 1991 it was a successful one. The criteria of success are derived from

the fact that the US peace initiative has been accepted and a peace process was initiated between the concerned parties. Moreover, the agreements which were concluded between Israel and the Palestinians and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty of 1994 are by-products of this initiative. Apart from the parties own motives there are also a number of constructive conditions that contributed to the success of the initiative. Chief among them were its timing and the ripeness of the regional and international conditions of the conflict (Bannerman, 1993, pp 142-145) The timing of initiation of a negotiation process between disputants either by the third party or the antagonists has received a great deal of attention from both scholars and practitioners within the conflict management field (Bercovitch, Jackson, 2001, p 29).

Prior to 1991, most of the peace efforts which had resulted in mutual agreements between Israel and some Arab countries were reflections of evolutions in the conflict itself. For instance, the 1948 Rhodes Agreements were an outcome of 1948 war and the Israel-Egyptian peace treaty came about following the 1973 war. What distinguished the 1991 peace initiative was that it came as a result of developments from out side the conflict, particularly the end of Cold War and the Gulf crisis of 1990-91(Dodge, 2008, P230). The identification of the conflict with east-west rivalry during the cold war is considered as one of the factors that made it difficult to solve. Prior to the 1991 peace initiative, the absence of understanding between US and the former Soviet Union over the Middle East conflict disrupted and complicated the potentiality of achieving a comprehensive peace. However, the changes in the former Soviet Union and the ex- communist countries caused an unprecedented understanding and even cooperation between the two super powers (Jentleson, 2010, pp 185-190). The mutual agreements regarding arms control between the US and the Soviet Union during the late 1980s and early 1990's and the Soviet's position during the Gulf crisis of 1990 illustrated this. Moreover, the Soviet perception of the Arab-Israeli conflict had changed in a sense that it became more pragmatic, which culminated in the restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel.

As for the regional developments, the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 created an adequate regional environment to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict (Cossali, 2005, pp11-12) its impact was both direct and indirect. In the first sense it resulted in the formation of a moderate Arab coalition which included Syria under the leadership of Egypt and

the defeat of the radical front represented by Iraq. This freed the moderates from potential pressure from the latter and they became more willing to support and back the US peace efforts to solve the conflict. The indirect effect of the crisis was when Saddam Hussein tried to link ending the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait with the solving of the Palestinian question (Baran, 1994, p35). During the crisis he proposed that his forces would withdraw if the Palestinian problem was addressed. Although the US refused to accept this in a sense that both issues differ from each other and because they believed that Saddam should not be rewarded, some sort of linkage did exist. In October 1990, President Bush while addressing the UN General Assembly implied that opportunities might arise after Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait which created an impression that the Bush administration was committed to solving the Arab-Israeli conflict (Cossali, 2005, p11).

The final element which contributed considerably to the success of the American peace initiative was related to the American administration, particularly Bush and Baker, and their skills (Bannerman, 1993, p145). A strong form of harmony existed between the President and the Secretary of State over the issue of peace. Both to a certain extent shared the same ideas with regards to the characteristics of peace process. This denied the concerned parties particularly Shamir's government the opportunity to take advantage of any potential dispute between Bush and Baker. Moreover, the strong domestic support that both Bush and his Secretary enjoyed and the lack of emotional attachment to Israel, enabled them to be immune from any external pressure particularly that of the Jewish lobby (Shlaim, 1992, p3).

During the American Presidential elections of 1988, Bush received little support from the American Jewish votes. This probably made him feel that he was not indebted to US Jewry. The way in which the American administration dealt with the \$10 billion loan which Israel asked for provided an illustration to the range of freedom that Bush enjoyed in this area. Furthermore, the Bush administration skillfully played the policy of carrot and stick in dealing with the concerned parties to secure their approval of the proposed peace initiative. For instance, while the US was pressuring Shamir's government through the issue of the \$10 loan, she proposed to repeal the UN General Assembly Resolution, which considered "Zionism racism"(Lovell, Amarat, 1992).

As for the Arab parties, the US provided them with

letters of assurances and accepted tacitly the Syrian steps in Lebanon in mid 1991. In addition to that, the understanding which existed between the Bush administration and the Congress contributed to the success of the latter's Middle East peace initiative (Bennerman, 1993, p143). For instance, when in September 1991 Bush asked the Congress to delay the approval of the \$10 billion loan to Israel for three months, the latter agreed and did not challenge the former, despite the Jewish lobby. Finally Baker's skills played an important role in securing the approval of the concerned parties to participate in the proposed negotiations. He made the parties agree on general principles which were ambiguous and subject to the widest possible interpretation in order to allow each party to commit to the process without compromising its own position. During a press conference in July 1991 when asked about the principle of "territories for peace" and whether was applicable in all fronts or not, he replied that "the terms of reference will be to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute based on 242 and 338, and we continually make the point that there are differing interpretations of what 242 and 338 mean and require" (Baker, 1992, p24).

Conculsion

The aforementioned analyses of different variables and dynamics of Bush's peace initiative of 1991 to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict suggest that it was a successful one in the sense that it generated a larger Arab-Israeli peace process that produced a number of agreements particularly between Palestinians and Israelis as well as between Israel and Jordan. Moreover, since this peace initiative was successful, this paper arrived at a conclusion that many important lessons can be learned. Chief among them is the importance and the necessity of active American involvement in the peace efforts so to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. The active engagement of George Bush the father and his secretary of State James Baker where they also received the support of the Congress is an illustration of such lesson to be learned. Bush administration deep involvement suggested in the after math of the second Gulf War of 1991 solving Arab-Israeli conflict become of strategic importance to USA. Therefore, for any future effective peace efforts to solve

the conflict American active engagement is of crucial importance. Moreover, another lesson that can be learned from this study is the importance of inclusiveness in peace process where all the concerned parties needs to participate in such process in order to have an effective and meaningful peace process. Israel as well the concerned Arab parties including the Palestinians accepted Bush peace initiative of 1991 and participated in the subsequent Middle East peace process. Therefore, for a future peace talks between Israel and Arabs such talks needs to be inclusive process and all concerned parties should be brought to negotiation if such process meant to be effective.

Furthermore, another lesson that can be drawn from this study is the importance of a pre-negotiation stage in the efforts to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Soon after the initiation of Bush's peace initiative, American administration particularly secretary of state James Baker had invested tremendous efforts where he shuttled the region more than seven times so to secure the acceptance of the Arabs and Israelis and prepare a common ground necessary to lunch Madrid peace conference in 1991 and the subsequent Middle East process. Pre-negotiation is an important stage particularly in protracted conflicts where the mediator and the disputants needs to explore the prospects of peace, building mutual confidence and setting the agenda over which they would negotiate.

In addition to the abovementioned lessons this study has arrived to a conclusion that further lessons can be learned mainly the significance of timing and the regional and international support that this initiative had received. Therefore, effective peace between Arabs and Israelis dictates that such peace should be of appropriate timing and that the regional and international context in which a future Arab-Israeli peace process would operates must be of supportive nature. Moreover, the analyses of Bush's peace initiative of 1991 suggest that the USA, the concerned Arab parties and Israel were highly motivated by their relative interests to initiate and accept such peace initiative. Motivation usually creates necessary willingness among disputants to accept peace efforts and hammer out a settlement. Therefore, parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict must be highly motivated if a future peace talks would be effectively conducted.

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إعادة قراءة لمبادرة جورج بوش السلمية للشرق الأوسط 1991 : الدروس المستفادة بعد 22 عاماً

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ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إعادة قراءة وتحليل مبادرة الرئيس الأمريكي جورج بوش السلمية للشرق الأوسط عام 1991 والدروس التي يمكن الاستفادة منها بعد 22 عاماً. وقد قامت هذه الدراسة على فرضية رئيسية تتمثل في أن هذه المبادرة كانت ناجحة حيث أنتجت عملية سلمية شاملة ما بين إسرائيل والأطراف العربية المعنية، لذا فإنه هنالك كثيراً من الدروس المستفادة أشهرها ضرورة الدور الأمريكي النشط وأهمية أن تكون العملية السلمية شمولية، أهمية المرحلة التمهيديّة وأهمية التوقيت والبيئة الإقليمية والدولية للعملية السلمية إضافة إلى توفر الدوافع القوية للأطراف المعنية. لقد استخدمت هذه الدراسة منهج الحالة الدراسية وذلك من أجل تحليل الدراسات الرئيسة والثانوية المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع وذلك من أجل فهم مختلف الديناميكيات والمتغيرات التي أثرت في هذه المبادرة. ولقد توصلت هذه الدراسة لعدة نتائج تتعلق بالدروس المستفادة من هذه المبادرة أهمها: ضرورة الدور الأمريكي النشط وأهمية كل من شمولية العملية السلمية، المرحلة التمهيديّة في المفاوضات، التوقيت والبيئة الإقليمية والدولية إضافة إلى أهمية الدوافع وتوافر الرغبة بالتفاوض.

الكلمات الدالة: الصراع العربي الإسرائيلي، مبادرة سلام، دوافع ورغبة، ظروف ملائمة، مرحلة تمهيديّة، توقيت، شمولية.

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