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# Peace Revolution as a Three-Dimensional Process: The Israeli-Palestinian Case

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## Abstract

The Israeli-Palestinian struggle is a classic case of intractable conflict. Establishing a long-lasting change requires a revolutionary peace process. The paper describes peace revolution as a three-dimensional process—peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping. Each of these three components is itself a three-level process. Peacemaking means involving different societal elements (leaders, elites, and people) in the struggle to reach a negotiated peace deal by using political-elite diplomacy, public diplomacy, and people-to-people diplomacy. Peacebuilding means constructing international, bilateral, and domestic frameworks for a stable peace. Peacekeeping means building political, militaristic, and civilian devices to maintain a stable social order.

**Keywords:** intractable conflict, peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, Israeli-Palestinian conflict

## 1. Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian is a classic case of intractable conflict where ordinary citizens are at the middle of the struggle. It is a lengthy fight where generation after generation is born into the reality of violence, despair, and suffering. The conflict seems to operate as a destructive evolutionary system that has a life of its own. Almost any substantial attempt to generate the conditions for a positive change in the Israeli-Palestinian case, so far, has failed and complicated the situation beyond imagination. The main argument of this essay is that a revolutionary peace process is required in order to break the evolutionary progression of violence and despair.

A revolutionary change-building program requires applying peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping measures simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> However, peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping are controversial concepts that should have different interpretations in different situations. For example, following the Second World War, the UN was established as a major peacekeeping institution. The aim was to create an institution that would be able to manage, stop, and prevent clashes between armies.<sup>2</sup> The Israeli-Palestinian case—an intractable conflict where ordinary civilians are at the center of the confrontation—is a different type of conflict. It requires the establishment of different mechanisms to build, keep, and maintain order and stability.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Galtung [1] and Kelman [2].

<sup>2</sup> See Snow [3].

Category	Meaning	Means
Peacemaking	Consensus building	Diplomacy in three dimensions: political-elite diplomacy, public diplomacy, and people-to-people diplomacy
Peacebuilding	Building a framework for a peaceful social order	International support, peaceful relationship-building between the parties and domestic reforms within each one of them
Peacekeeping	Building mechanisms to keep law, order, and stability	Political, civilian, and militaristic mechanisms to cope with tensions, disputes, and crises

**Table 1.**  
*Peace revolution as a three-dimensional process.*

The struggle to build a peaceful social order has to cope with different types of conflicts and crises. The three elements of a peace revolution—peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping—should be formulated according to the logic of the situation.<sup>3</sup> This paper suggests a multidimensional process, which might be appropriate for crises similar to the Israeli-Palestinian case. Peacemaking is a consensus-building process that involves different societal elements (leaders, political elites, and ordinary citizens) in efforts to conclude a negotiated peace deal.<sup>4</sup> Peacebuilding means constructing international, bilateral, and domestic frameworks for a peaceful social order that copes with the needs and concerns of the conflicting parties.<sup>5</sup> Peacekeeping suggests creating political, civilian, and militaristic means to maintain order and stability (**Table 1**).<sup>6</sup>

The structure of the paper follows the logic of the central argument—peace needs to be made, built, and kept. It is divided into sections: peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping. Each section focuses on different aspects of the challenge of change in the Israeli-Palestinian situation. However, each of the sections concretizes that the distinction between peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping is more of a theoretical outline that helps us to understand the complexity of the situation, shed light on the challenge of peace, and assist in developing new creative ideas.<sup>7</sup>

The paper combines theoretical research, comparative case studies, and experimental practice. It grows out of the literature on peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping. It draws lessons from peace processes in different situations of intractable conflict, such as the struggle for change in Northern Ireland during the “troubles” and the struggle to dismantle the Apartheid system in South Africa. It offers practical insights from the Minds of Peace Experiment (MOPE)—a short-term Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating assembly—which has been taking place in different forms, variations, and places. This multifaceted methodology intends to tackle the study of peace revolution from different points of view.

## 2. Peacemaking

There is an agreement among peace researchers that peacemaking means negotiating a peace contract that can put an end to a conflict. This paper suggests a

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Popper [4].

<sup>4</sup> See Fisher [5] and Handelman [6].

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Fisher [5].

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Handelman, ([6], 9–10). The three elements of peace revolution—peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping—are intertwined. Moreover, often enough, it is hard to, clearly, distinguish between peacebuilding and peacekeeping. See Lakhdar, Brahimi. “Report of the Panel on United Nations Operations,” United Nations document A/55/305 – S/200/809, 21 (August 2000): 5.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ratner [7] and James [8].

Level of operation	Mechanisms	Description
Top	Political-elite diplomacy	Peacemaking engagement between political elites
Middle	Public diplomacy	Interactions between political elites and ordinary people
Bottom	People-to-people diplomacy	Peacemaking engagement between ordinary people

**Table 2.**  
*Peacemaking diplomacy in three dimensions.*

revolutionary peacemaking approach that attacks the challenge of reaching a negotiated contract from different angles and viewpoints. It offers a look at a peacemaking revolution as a consensus-building process, which involves key elements of the conflicting parties—leaders, elites, and people—in a multidimensional negotiating process. It is a more conclusive strategy than the dominant peacemaking experience in the Middle East, which, often enough, involves only leaders and elites.<sup>8</sup>

A revolutionary peacemaking approach, according to this paper, is a consensus-building process that operates on three levels: political elite, “ordinary” people, and the interactions between the two. It suggests a three-level structure of peacemaking diplomacy: political-elite diplomacy, public diplomacy, and people-to-people diplomacy (Table 2).

**Political-elite diplomacy** offers various channels of communication between official and unofficial elites of the opposing sides, who are interested in reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict. In general, political-elite diplomacy comprises three main channels of interaction: track II diplomacy (unofficial dialog between elites who do not have official positions in the government), secret diplomacy (secret negotiations between officials), and track I diplomacy (formal negotiations between officials).<sup>9</sup>

Classical examples, such as the Oslo Accords of the 1990s, demonstrate that political-elite diplomacy offers efficient operative channels for helping leaders and elites reach innovative agreements in stalemate situations. Its main disadvantage is that it does not offer effective methods to involve the publics in the peacemaking efforts, prepare the people for a change, and help them deal with ongoing crises along the peace road. As a result, political-elite diplomacy is vulnerable to violent acts of spoilers, radicals, and extremists, who are determined to use aggressive means to crush any effort to reach a negotiated peace contract. Indeed, violent events made a major contribution to the collapse of the Oslo Accords of the 1990s. The cumulative effect of the ongoing violence has led to a loss of public belief in the possibility of creating a constructive change. The decrease of public support of the peacemaking gives the momentum to the opposition of the peace process, who makes sure that the conflict will continue.<sup>10</sup>

**People-to-people diplomacy** offers various modes of interaction linking the opposing sides at the grassroots level, such as different dialog groups, multinational workshops, educational projects, scientific collaborations, and partnership in peacemaking grassroots organizations. More focused on peace dialog than other collaborative projects, classical examples such as The Parents Circle-Families Forum<sup>11</sup> and Seeds of Peace<sup>12</sup> indicate that people-to-people diplomacy can be

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Handelman and Chowdhury [9].

<sup>9</sup> I labeled these three modes of communication “the political-elite model.” See, for example, Handelman [10] and Handelman [11]. For a further discussion, see also Agha et al. [12].

<sup>10</sup> For a further discussion, see Handelman [11] and Kelman [13, 14].

<sup>11</sup> <https://theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-home-page-en/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.seedsofpeace.org/about/>

effective in building peace coalitions, showing that there are peace supporters on both sides,<sup>13</sup> and preparing ordinary citizens for change. The main disadvantage of people-to-people diplomacy is that it, often enough, is disconnected from the leadership level. It hardly involves political leaders in the grassroots peacemaking channels and can barely motivate and influence them to reach innovative negotiating agreements. The result is that people-to-people diplomacy, which usually does not operate on a mass scale, faces many difficulties in transferring the spirit of change to the operational political level.<sup>14</sup>

**Public diplomacy**, in our multidimensional configuration, is designed to close the gaps of the two previous diplomatic modes (political-elite and people-to-people) by using different methods of marketing, public relations, and social protest. It operates in two opposite directions. In one direction, public diplomacy provides instruments for leaders to prepare the public for a substantial peacemaking process, get their feedback on new ideas, receive their input on the limits of possible compromises, and generate public support in negotiating groundbreaking agreements (top-down). In the other direction, public diplomacy offers tools for people to motivate political leaders to initiate a peacemaking process (bottom-up).<sup>15</sup>

This paper suggests creating a (peacemaking) public diplomacy institution—an Israeli-Palestinian Public Negotiating Congress. A public negotiating congress (PNC) is a democratic peacemaking institution that invites representatives of the conflicting people to negotiate different solutions to their conflict. All congress participants, who reflect the political spectrum in the conflicting societies, would have to commit to principles of non-violent discourse.<sup>16</sup>

The congress is built to involve the conflicting publics in the peacemaking efforts, prepare the people for change, and motivate the leaderships to reach agreements. The idea to establish an Israeli-Palestinian Public Negotiating Congress is inspired by the multiparty negotiations that enabled a revolutionary change in the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa and in Northern Ireland during the “troubles.”<sup>17</sup>

In South Africa and Northern Ireland, leaders came to the conclusion that they need a public diplomacy device to involve the public in the peace process. These leaders used diplomatic interactions to create the multiparty congresses. In the Israeli-Palestinian situation, so far, leaders do not even consider creating a similar public diplomacy device. They mainly focus on political-elite diplomacy in the effort to stabilize the situation. As an alternative choice, it is worth examining the possibility that an Israeli-Palestinian Public Negotiating Congress—which can be regarded as an Israeli-Palestinian version of the multiparty negotiations in South Africa and Northern Ireland—will emerge from people-to-people interactions. One people-to-people project that is designed to reach this goal is the Minds of Peace Experiment.

The Minds of Peace Experiment (MOPE) is a short-term Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating assembly. The MOPE invites teams of Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate a peace deal, generally over a 2-day period of five sessions. The assembly is

<sup>13</sup> A well-known characteristic of protracted conflict is the mirror image: each side believes that the rival is not a partner for peace and is not even capable to peruse it, to say the very least. The American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner [15] discovered the “mirror image” during the Cold War.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Kelman [16].

<sup>15</sup> The modern version of public diplomacy was developed during the Cold War. It was defined as “direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments” Gifford ([17], 199). This version of public diplomacy is hardly relevant to cases like the Israeli-Palestinian struggle. For a further discussion, see Handelman [18].

<sup>16</sup> For a further discussion, see Handelman [11].

<sup>17</sup> For a further discussion on conflict and peacemaking in South Africa, see Sparks [19]. For a further discussion on the peace process in Northern Ireland, see Mitchell [20].

co-moderated by Israelis and Palestinians, who lead the interaction in a framework of general rules. The dialog is open to the public and invites its participation.

The Minds of Peace Experiment was conducted in various sizes and formats and in different locations. It has been demonstrated as a powerful instrument for people-to-people diplomacy. The various rounds of the MOPE indicate that the initiative is effective in involving ordinary people in the struggle for peace, preparing them for painful compromises, and creating peacemaking coalitions. However, without extensive use of public diplomacy, the influence of the MOPE is doomed to remain marginal. There is a necessity to create domestic and international pressure to institutionalize the initiative. The MOPE needs to grow, develop, and transform into a major revolutionary institution—an Israeli-Palestinian Public Negotiating Congress with substantial political influence.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.1 Concluding remarks

This paper suggests looking at a peacemaking revolution as a consensus-building development that involves the different societal elements—leaders, elite, and people—in the struggle for peace and stability. To reach this goal, it is necessary to create a balance between political-elite diplomacy and public diplomacy. Political-elite diplomacy provides diplomatic channels for leaders to reach agreements. Public diplomacy intends to involve the public in the peacemaking efforts, prepare the people for a change, and motivate the leaderships to accomplish a settlement. A major public negotiating congress is a public diplomacy instrument that has the potential to create the equilibrium.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, it can serve as a political tool for leaders to create public support in a negotiating process that can produce a peace contract (top-down). On the other hand, it can serve as political instrument for people to influence leaders and demand that they initiate an effective peacemaking policy (bottom-up).<sup>20</sup> Moreover, a public negotiating congress can be discovered as a revolutionary device that could invite new political groups and leaders to the political arena.<sup>21</sup>

The multiparty negotiations in Northern Ireland and South Africa taught us that an Israeli-Palestinian Public Negotiating Congress can be an effective peacemaking institution that could open new political opportunities and push the train of change in unimagined directions. In both cases, political leaders established the multiparty talks in order to generate public support in the peacemaking. In the Israeli-Palestinian case, political-elite diplomacy is the main peacemaking setting. There are no signs of leadership interest and motivation to establish a public diplomacy device for involving the publics in the change-making efforts. As a desperate choice, this paper suggests considering the option of a public negotiating congress growing from people-to-people interactions.

The Minds of Peace Experiment is a grassroots initiative that intends to demonstrate the peacemaking potential of a major public negotiating congress, to help evaluate its possible outcomes, and to generate support for its creation. However, I did not find any example where a major public negotiating congress emerged of people-to-people

<sup>18</sup> For a further discussion, see, for example, Handelman [21, 22] and Handelman [23].

<sup>19</sup> Creation of a major public negotiating congress, our proposal for a public diplomacy institution, is designed to connect three components: influencing the leaderships, preparing the public for change, and utilizing the media to create a peacemaking atmosphere in these two dimensions (leadership and people). For a further discussion on the concept of public diplomacy, see Gilboa [24] and Soroka [25].

<sup>20</sup> For a further discussion, see Handelman [23].

<sup>21</sup> Compare to Huntington [26], who suggests a model of sociopolitical revolution.

activities.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps, the Minds of Peace initiative is doomed to fail like almost all other peacemaking initiatives so far. Nevertheless, it is impossible to predict the future.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding, in this paper, means building the conditions for a peaceful social order that can cope with the fears, needs, and concerns of the opposing factions. It is a multidimensional configuration, which needs to cope with challenges in three main dimensions: international, generating international support for a peaceful social order and marginalizing the impact of international spoilers; interparty, building peaceful relationships between the conflicting parties; and intraparty, domestic reforms within the opposing parties in order to cope with internal obstacles for peace and stability (Table 3).

**International.** In this paper, we suggest looking at the Israeli-Palestinian struggle as a communal conflict. It is a struggle between two communities—Israeli and Palestinian—who were destined to live side by side. We believe that this approach has the best chances to cope with the conflict constructively and help the conflicting parties to reach a negotiated resolution. Any attempt at “globalizing” the conflict—for example, analyzing it in Huntington’s terms of clash of civilizations—marginalizes the ability to resolve the conflict or, even, to transform it.<sup>24</sup> However, there are certain problems that Israelis and Palestinians cannot solve by themselves. They need international assistance in coping with essential problems standing in the way of peace and stability.

Coping with the problem of the Palestinian refugees, which will, probably, need to relocate in different locations,<sup>25</sup> and the urgent need to marginalize the impact of an international spoiler, such as Iran, are two examples of major problems for which Israelis and Palestinians will need international assistance and intervention. This means that any realistic peace initiative needs to establish working relationships with the international community in order to guarantee its commitment and support.

Diplomacy, as a key instrument of foreign affairs, is the tool to reach international support. Naturally, there are major disagreements between Israelis and Palestinians upon the very essence of the desired international intervention in the peace process. For example, who are the international players that should take part in the peace process? What will be their role? Where is the line between legitimate and illegitimate intervention?<sup>26</sup>

According to the methodology suggested in this paper, Israelis and Palestinians need to reach a peace agreement in bilateral negotiations (peacemaking), while the international community should support it, marginalize the influence of spoilers, and assist in implementing the agreements. The boundaries of international intervention should be negotiated and determined early in the peacemaking stage.

**Interparty.** There is a broad consensus that the only feasible settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a “two-state solution”—the establishment of a

<sup>22</sup> The multiparty negotiations in South Africa and Northern Ireland established by political leaders. See, for example, Mandela [27].

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Popper [28].

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Hassner [29].

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, the Geneva Initiative: <http://www.geneva-accord.org/>.

<sup>26</sup> No doubt that Israelis and Palestinians see any American intervention in the peace process in different lights.

Level of operation	Goal	Means
International	Generating international support for peace and stability	Diplomacy
Interparty	Building peaceful relationships between adversaries	Sociopolitical initiatives, such as economic collaboration, education for peace, and reconciliation projects
Intraparty	Building the foundations for order and stability in the opposing parties	Domestic reforms within the opposing parties

**Table 3.**  
*Peacebuilding as a three-dimensional configuration.*

Palestinian state beside Israel. Nevertheless, it seems impossible to completely separate between the two national units. Interaction between Israelis and Palestinians is inevitable. For example, there is no continuity of land between the West Bank and Gaza. It looks that the holy places in Jerusalem require a special arrangement in a framework of two-state solution. Arab residents of Israel are relatives of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>27</sup>

Israelis and Palestinians will need to create mechanisms for building peaceful relationships, which are critical for maintaining peace, order, and stability. The challenge necessitates multidimensional peacebuilding measures, including joint economic projects, education for peace and tolerance, and reconciliation. Let me demonstrate the challenge by focusing on certain aspects of these three dimensions:

1. Economic cooperation: Ordinary Palestinians and Israelis are struggling in their daily life. Palestinians are struggling to make a decent living and support their families in a difficult situation of developing their society, while Israelis are struggling under the burden of the high cost of living in Israel. Economic cooperation can benefit the two sides. For example, Israelis are interested in buying quality low-price goods, which Palestinians know how to manufacture and sell.

Creating Israeli-Palestinian free-trade zones can benefit the two sides.<sup>28</sup> Israelis, who are interested in buying quality goods at reasonable prices, can create a market for Palestinians who can manufacture quality goods at a low cost. The economic interests of the two sides can be a vehicle for peaceful relation building. For example, it can demonstrate to the people the interdependence of the two societies; it can assist in developing friendly relationships between adversaries (or more precisely former adversaries); and it has the potential of reducing hostility and the impact of prejudice on the attitude of people of the opposing sides toward each other.

2. Education: Hostile relationships between neighbors, which are destined to live side by side, are a proven recipe for clash. To live in a peaceful social order, the two sides—Israelis and Palestinians—will need to overcome classical symptoms of intractable conflict, such as chronic mistrust, prejudice, and dehumanization of the other. Education, in general, and peace education, in particular, can play an important role in coping with the challenge.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Handelman [11].

<sup>28</sup> Compare to [https://truman.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/truman/files/aix\\_group-summaries\\_lessons\\_learned-final-24-9-2016-coverttext.pdf](https://truman.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/truman/files/aix_group-summaries_lessons_learned-final-24-9-2016-coverttext.pdf) p.10.

Education has a critical influence on worldview and the sociopolitical attitude of human beings, especially of the young generation. Israelis and Palestinians will need to do major reforms in their educational curriculum—such as stopping the incitement, teaching the very essence of tolerance and pluralism, and even teaching the other's culture and traditions. However, changing educational programs is not easy. The old system has its own dynamic evolution and protective mechanisms.

Observations show that in transition periods, between war and peace, educational systems, often enough, are transformed or more precisely revolutionized, by force. For example, after the Second World War, the Allied Forces forced major domestic reforms in the educational systems of Japan and Germany. They insisted that the new educational system be based on liberal values.<sup>29</sup> These paradoxical cases, where peace and liberal education were forced by coercive means, have a general lesson. They demonstrate that building the conditions for peace and stability, by establishing a new framework of rules and institutions, cannot be free from elements of force, power, and manipulation.<sup>30</sup> Good intentions are not enough.

3. Reconciliation: In the middle of the twentieth century, after the Second World War, it was almost impossible to imagine peace and reconciliation in Europe. About 50 years later, former entrenched enemies, such as Germany and France, established a confederation, the European Union. Today, it is almost impossible to imagine a violent conflict between members of the EU. It looks that there is a reconciliation in Europe. Is reconciliation possible in the Middle East? Is reconciliation possible between two national communities, Israelis and Palestinians, whose ethnic, religious, and cultural identities seem to be so different? Is reconciliation possible after about 120 years of intractable conflict that seems to have a life, dynamic, and evolution of its own?

Analyzing the situation in the light of Huntington's theory—the clash of civilization—leads to pessimism.<sup>31</sup> In this framework, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a point of clash between different cultural units (civilizations). Therefore, it is impossible to solve the conflict and reconcile between the parties. The old city of Jerusalem, which is extremely important to believers of different religions, demonstrates the problem.

In contrast to Huntington's theory, this paper suggests analyzing the situation from a different perspective. Huntington's theory globalizes the problem and calls it a symptom of "clash of civilizations," while our approach examines the conflict as a communal struggle—a conflict between two national communities. Our approach holds better chances of coping with a difficult situation. Huntington's theory offers despair in advance. Israelis and Palestinians cannot afford to be engaged in a cold peace. For peace and stability, it is mandatory to develop tools for reconciliation.

From a practical perspective, there are good reasons for optimism in this direction. Palestinians, who believe that the Arab states have part of the blame in their situation, see the deteriorating situation of the Arab world in contrast to the prosperity of the West and Israel. It is reasonable to assume that they have a desire (or, at least, a secret desire) to be part of the success. Israelis have aspired, for a long time, to become part of the new Middle East and stop being a fortified isolated castle. Peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians may open a gate to fulfill these aspirations.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Schaller [30] and Shillony [31].

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Handelman [11].

<sup>31</sup> Huntington [32].

There are grassroots initiatives that focus on reconciliation between the two parties.<sup>32</sup> These successful programs operate on a very minor scale. They need to expand, integrate into educational systems, and operate on a mass-scale level.

**Intraparty.** The focus on the internal situation within the opposing parties adds another important dimension to the struggle for building a momentum for a peace revolution. It suggests domestic reforms within the opposing societies, within the Israeli and the Palestinian societies, in order to create opportunities to resolve the struggle and to form a framework for a long-lasting stable peace. The idea of suggesting domestic reforms within each party draws on insights of constitutional economists, like James Buchanan [33], and political scientists, like Samuel Huntington [26]. These thinkers emphasized that an adequate framework of rules and institutions is a necessary condition for the evolutionary transition from social chaos to a peaceful social order.

In our context, domestic reforms that improve the internal cohesion of each society, the rule of law, and the accountability of political leaders may help the opposing populations to discover the value of peace, to start believing that it can be achieved, and to explore possibilities for reaching it. These necessary measures could potentially create an effective framework for a substantial peace process and reduce the impact of radicals, extremists, and spoilers. The “paradox of violence” can demonstrate the importance of reforming major elements within each of the opposing societies.<sup>33</sup>

A classical characteristic of intractable conflict is the paradox of violence—almost any progression toward a positive change is likely to cause a growth in the level of violence. It is possible to identify two main reasons for this observation. The first is spoilers—radical elements increase efforts to sabotage almost any kind of peace process by violent means. The second is internal tensions—any progress toward peace between opposing societies tends to increase tensions within each one of them. This symptom characterizes developing societies that lack sufficient instruments to cope with domestic tensions and disagreements by peaceful means. Let me elaborate on the second reason, which is more related to the focus of this section (domestic reforms in the conflicting societies).

A society is built of various elements, such as individuals, ethnic groups, economic corporations, religious congregations, and political associations. These different social elements do not necessarily hold similar priorities, preferences, and sociopolitical agenda. Intractable conflict is a unifying force. Opponents may collaborate in order to fight a joint enemy. However, as soon as there is progress toward peace, tensions within each of the conflicting parties appear and become a dominant factor. For example, the struggle against the Apartheid system in South Africa had unified the nonwhite people. This “unification” made the impression that the struggle is between the “black” population and the “white” one. However, the progress toward a new governmental system exposed the diversity within the “black” people and led to violent clashes within the nonwhite camp.<sup>34</sup>

Israeli academics have emphasized that the Palestinian authority is a developing entity.<sup>35</sup> It lacks instruments to cope with social crises that can follow transition from one sociopolitical order to another. The unilateral withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip, led by the former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2005, demonstrates the difficulties and the obstacles.

<sup>32</sup> For example, visit <http://www.musalaha.org/>.

<sup>33</sup> See Handelman [11].

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Ottaway [34, 35].

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Inbar [36].

Sharon's plan to withdraw Israeli troops, and about 8000 Jewish settlers, from Gaza and 4 small areas in the West Bank had a dramatic effect on the situation. Following the unilateral withdrawal, Israel—a modern country with established democratic institutions—survived the shock, but the Palestinian authority collapsed. The events that followed were a coup by Hamas in Gaza and a bloody civil war within the Palestinian society. Since then the Palestinian society is politically divided. The radical Islamic movement, Hamas, which is committed to radical Islamism, controls Gaza, while the secular nationalist movement Fatah, whose official agenda is building an independent Palestinian civil society based on the 1967 cease-fire line (two-state solution), administers the major parts of the West Bank.

Israeli scholars point out that the tragic situation in the Gaza case enfolds a general lesson—any intention to divide the land endangers the security of Israel. The Palestinian authority in the West Bank is a developing entity that lacks instruments to cope with social crises that can follow a transition from one sociopolitical order to another. There is a grave danger that any Israeli withdrawal from the West bank will lead to a repeat of the Gaza scenario—collapse of the Palestinian authority, radical elements, such as Hamas and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), taking control and launching missiles at the center of Israel.<sup>36</sup>

In any framework of partition of the land between the two peoples, domestic reforms in the Palestinian society are a precondition to a successful peace process. For the sake of peace and stability, it is necessary for the Palestinians to establish the foundations of a modern independent state: building public institutions; creating a stable, efficient, and transparent administration; disarming violent groups; and developing all other mechanisms of a decent civil society.

The difficult task of creating the conditions for peace and stability requires preparing the opposing societies, Palestinians and Israelis, for coexistence in any possible framework. This means that domestic reforms in the Palestinian society are not enough to create a long-lasting change. There is a need for domestic reforms within the state of Israel, especially, in regard to the sensitive issue of “national identity” and its practical implications.

Israel is a multicultural society. The Israeli population includes a majority of Jewish citizens who came from different parts of the world and a large minority of non-Jewish citizens (about 20% Arabs). Nevertheless, Israel is considered a Jewish state. It is true that a major part of Arab-Israelis' integration in the Israeli society is expressed through participation of the Arab population in the democratic processes of Israel.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that a non-Jewish population belongs to a Jewish state holds many elements of exclusion. The politics of exclusion is expressed in many dimensions of Israeli social life. For example, in the psychological dimension, many Arab-Israelis see themselves as second-class citizens, and in the symbolic sphere, the national symbols of the country are taken from Jewish tradition.

According to pluralist perception, having a national home is a basic need. Human beings need a place that will accept them simply because they belong.<sup>38</sup> The non-Jewish citizens of Israel have a problem seeing the Jewish state as their national home. As Professor Joseph Agassi [38] noted, this problem has direct and indirect implications on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Inbar [36].

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Landau [37].

<sup>38</sup> In Robert Frost's words, “Home is the place where, when you go there, they have to take you in.”

According to Agassi, establishing a stable decent Palestinian state will necessarily lead to tensions within Israel. The reason is that Arab-Israelis, who live in different parts of the country and have difficulties seeing the Jewish state as their national home, can see the new Palestinian state as their natural national homeland. The inevitable result, according to Agassi, is that they will aspire to live (on their land in Israel) under a Palestinian rule. Jewish Israelis are likely to object and reject such a drastic political motivation. The different motivations can lead to a dangerous clash.

Due to the situation of the Arab world, in general, and the Palestinian society in particular, the establishment of a decent and stable Palestinian state looks like a dream at this stage. However, Agassi's analysis enfolds a lesson—Israelis will have to think seriously about how to better integrate ethnic minorities in Israel. The existence of Arab citizens of Israel has many important effects upon the conduct of the country in general and its relations with Palestinians in the territories in particular.<sup>39</sup> Improved relationships between the Arab minority and the Jewish majority in Israel might pave the way for better relations with a future Palestinian polity and create direct and indirect opportunities for peacemaking. It can help the Jewish population in Israel to overcome the obsessive fear of losing the Jewish character of the state. The implications can be substantial and dramatic. For example, the people in Israel might overcome prejudice against Arabs, be more receptive to examine seriously creative solutions to the conflict, and even consider including Arab representatives in Israeli delegations for future negotiations.

### 3.1 Concluding remarks

Transition from one social order to another is difficult for almost any society. A transitional period for developing entities, which have hardly developed political and social mechanisms to cope with new challenges, can end in disaster. Huntington [26] pointed out that the lack of an effective framework of rules and institutions in changing societies can be used and abused by a new sociopolitical force to take control. The new political player who comes to power is not necessarily able to, interested to, or knowledgeable about how to establish a new sociopolitical order that can benefit the members of society.

The collapse of Gaza to the hand of the radical movement Hamas demonstrates the danger of drastic unilateral moves in the West Bank situation. Moreover, it shows that the three elements of peacebuilding (international support, relationship building, and domestic reforms) are intertwined. For example, it is quite clear that Palestinian domestic difficulties are not the only internal Palestinian problems. They are also an Israeli problem and a regional problem. It is in the best interests of Israelis, Egyptians, and Jordanians to help the Palestinians establish a viable stable polity that could fight the expansion of religious fanaticism.

The analysis of the peacebuilding challenge in the Israeli-Palestinian situation also demonstrates that peace revolution is a composite of peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping. These elements are intertwined and need to be applied simultaneously. Peacebuilding measures (international support, relationship building, and domestic reforms) can help in providing a safety net for stability during a peacemaking process. It helps to guarantee that if the negotiation fails, the outcomes will not be disastrous as they have been in the past.

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. Landau [37], who notes that many Arab-Israelis have family relatives among the Palestinians in the territories.

## 4. Peacekeeping

After the Second World War, peacekeeping was understood as division between entrenched enemies.<sup>40</sup> The guiding principle was “Good fences create good neighbors.” The end of the Cold War and the growing numbers of intrastate struggles have led to alteration in this view of peacekeeping. The concept of peacekeeping was extended to cases where it is impossible to hermetically separate enemies.<sup>41</sup>

The unavoidable contact between Israelis and Palestinians shows that it is mandatory to design and implement a nontraditional peacekeeping strategy. A nontraditional strategy involves different societal elements—such as citizens, political leaders, and special security forces—in the efforts to maintain peace, order, and stability.

The challenge of peacekeeping is multidimensional. To simplify and demonstrate the need to design a multidimensional strategy to keep peace and stability, the paper suggests focusing on three levels of peacekeeping: political, military, and civilian: An Israeli-Palestinian Congress for Peace and Security can be a political institution for monitoring joint activities and coping with tensions, disputes, and ad hoc sociopolitical problems between the two sides. A joint border security force can be established to protect the east border of a new Palestinian state in the West Bank (the border between the new Palestine and Jordan in a framework of two-state solution). A joint civil guard can be established to help in keeping order and stability in places where Israeli and Palestinian civilians are in direct contact (**Table 4**).

Let me elaborate.

**Politics.** Peace revolution is a dynamic process, which has an evolutionary dynamic. Political instruments that were created to lead a change in the peacemaking phase need to be modified and changed in the peacekeeping stage. This evolutionary progression needs to be considered at the beginning of the process.

The peacemaking section of this paper proposes establishing a powerful instrument for the peacemaking part of a peace revolution—a major Israeli-Palestinian Public Negotiating Congress. The congress is a consensus-building institution that is planned to involve different societal elements of the conflicting societies (leaders, elites, and people) in the peace efforts. Its main tasks are to offer political alternatives to the violent struggle, prepare the publics for a change, and motivate the leaderships to reach agreements. However, once a peace agreement has been achieved, this peacemaking institution needs to be transformed, or it will become useless. The logic of the evolutionary progression of a peacemaking revolution proposes that a public negotiating congress—a major peacemaking institution—should be transformed into a major peacekeeping institution, which could be labeled as congress for peace and security.<sup>42</sup>

The inevitable friction between Israelis and Palestinians will require political instruments to cope with inevitable tensions, disagreements, and joint problems. In the post-conflict phase, a joint peacekeeping congress could deal with tensions, disputes, and ad hoc problems, initiate and coordinate joint projects in various fields (such as education, economics, and politics), and establish mechanisms for reconciliation.

Similar to the UN, which is the global peacekeeping institution, the main actual power of the peacekeeping congress (Israeli-Palestinian Congress for Peace and Security) is its very existence. In the peacemaking stage, a public negotiating congress involves the publics in the struggle for peace and generates public pressure

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Snow [3].

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 102–103.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Handelman [8, 11, 26, 36].

Level of operation	Goals	Mechanisms
Political	Coping with sociopolitical problems, coordinating joint activities, and monitoring shared mechanisms	Israeli-Palestinian Congress for Peace and Security
Military	Protecting the border between a new Palestinian state and Jordan	A joint border guard
Civilian and police	Coping with civilian problems and keeping law and order in friction points	Security cooperation and a joint civil guard

**Table 4.**  
*Peacekeeping in three dimensions.*

to reach a settlement. In the post-conflict phase, the peacekeeping congress should remind everyone of the high cost of conflict and the precious value of peace.

A difficult question is how to start and build this institutional evolution (from peacemaking congress to a peacekeeping congress), which is so necessary for a peace revolution. Unfortunately, this critical discussion is not in scope of this paper.<sup>43</sup>

**Military.** In a framework of a “two-state solution,” Israel demands that the new Palestinian state will be demilitarized. However, it is a joint interest of Israelis and Palestinians that the eastern border—the border between the new state of Palestine and Jordan—be protected from invasion of hostile forces (such as ISIS). Who will protect the border between Palestine and Jordan after Israel pulls back its military forces from the area?

In different rounds of the Minds of Peace Experiment (MOPE)—a small-scale Israeli-Palestinian public negotiating assembly, which was conducted in different locations with different delegations of Israelis and Palestinians—the delegations agreed on the creation of a joint Israeli-Palestinian security force that will operate in a security zone near the border.<sup>44</sup> This idea has different versions with different implications. For example, in some of the assemblies, the delegations agreed that the joint security force would become part of the IDF. In other assemblies, Palestinians were concerned that soldiers, with IDF uniforms, in Palestinian areas would remind the people of the occupation and the consequences could be harmful. To prevent such complications, the delegations in these assemblies agreed that the border guard unit would have their own special uniforms. In addition, it is worth considering that the border guard unit will be linked to Israel, Palestine, and the Israeli-Palestinian Congress for Peace and Security (which was, previously, proposed as a political peacekeeping institution). Of course, the details need to be discussed and negotiated by the two sides.

Another option which was raised by some scholars is that, eventually, the Palestinians will need to be in charge of protecting their border. They propose a two-stage process. In the first stage, an international force will protect the border and train a Palestinian border guard unit. In the second stage, the international force will leave, and the Palestinian force will take responsibility.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> The goal of the Minds of Peace project, which was briefly presented at the peacemaking section, is to begin such an evolutionary process. A detailed analysis of the initiative and other options to reach the same goal is beyond the focus of this paper.

<sup>44</sup> For sample agreements that ordinary people have reached, visit <http://mindsofpeace.org/category/agreements/> and <http://mopdocuments.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>45</sup> Compare to [https://www.fpa.org/usr\\_doc/Israel\\_and\\_Palestine\\_Two\\_States\\_for\\_Two\\_Peoples\\_2010.pdf](https://www.fpa.org/usr_doc/Israel_and_Palestine_Two_States_for_Two_Peoples_2010.pdf) pp./48–49.

It seems that the first proposal has better chances of being accepted by Israelis and Palestinians. It is hard to imagine Israelis and Palestinians agreeing that an international force, and later a new Palestinian security unit, will be in charge of their security. A joint Israeli-Palestinian border guard unit, as in the first proposal, can indirectly serve also as a peacebuilding instrument. Its cooperative feature can help to explore possibilities of improving the relations between Israelis and Palestinians.

**Civilian and police.** The security challenges in the making of a new social order are multidimensional. The interdependence between Israelis and Palestinians, which makes the security problem so difficult to handle, nevertheless holds peacebuilding opportunities. Let me demonstrate by focusing on the three main problems: order and stability within Palestinian territories, settlements, and holy places.

1. Order and stability within Palestine: As already mentioned, the Palestinian society is suffering from symptoms of a developing entity. Israelis, who object to the “two-state solution,” claim that any attempt to implement this type of solution is doomed to fail and would endanger the security of Israel.<sup>46</sup> The fear is that a new Palestinian state in the West Bank will collapse into civil war similar to the Gaza crisis in 2008. Since civil wars usually end in the victory of one party and not power sharing,<sup>47</sup> the results can be a hostile regime (such as Hamas and ISIS) in the West Bank. That would be a serious security threat near Israeli towns.

Building a strong and efficient Palestinian police force is necessary to prevent this dangerous scenario. Israel can help in training the Palestinian police. The cooperation between security forces of the two sides, which works quite well in the West Bank, could be modified, tailored, and expanded for the new situation. In addition, a joint civil guard can be established in order to help in stabilizing a new social order.

2. Jewish settlements in the West Bank: Any form of solution, which is based on the establishment of a Palestinian state, has to cope with the presence of Jewish settlements (about 400,000 settlers) in the West Bank. The “optimal” solution to the problem is probably a mix of three options: (1) border modifications and land exchange: annexation of Jewish settlements to Israel and compensation to Palestinians in return; (2) evacuation of Jewish settlements; and (3) Jewish settlements in the West Bank will remain under Palestinian sovereignty.<sup>48</sup>

The settlements in the West Bank that cannot be annexed to Israel (option 1) and cannot be evacuated (option 2) will need to remain under Palestinian sovereignty (option 3). This will create major security problems. For example, who will solve disputes between Jewish neighbors? Should religious Jewish settlers call Palestinian police in such matters? Can a Palestinian police officer serve as a moderator in a dispute between religious Jews?

A joint Israeli-Palestinian civil guard can be helpful in such situations. It could assist in coping with such sensitive problems that are beyond the capacity of a

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Inbar [36].

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Toft [39].

<sup>48</sup> For different peace plans, see Golan [40].

regular police force. Of course, the two sides will need to discuss and negotiate the very essence of any joint civil guard. This project—the creation of a joint civil guard—has also peacebuilding implications. It can contribute to the transformation of hostile relationships between entrenched enemies who fight one another into cooperative relationships between neighbors who are trying to cope with joint problems.

3. The holy places in Jerusalem: The holy city of Jerusalem, the walled area, which is so important to believers of different religions, needs to be administered with much care, sophistication, and creativity. A joint civil guard, which will be subject to a joint municipality, can take into consideration the needs of those who care about the city. It can become a symbol of pluralism, tolerance, and peace.

#### **4.1 Concluding remarks**

This section suggests three peacekeeping mechanisms that operate in three intertwined dimensions: congress for peace and security (politics), a joint border guard (military), and a joint civil guard (civilian). It would be important, efficient, and beneficial that Israelis and Palestinians discuss and negotiate the structure, authority, and operation of any peacekeeping mechanism beginning as early as the peacemaking step. It could help avoid future complications when implementing any negotiated peace contract. Moreover, it could be a trust-building move that demonstrates to the people that any peace agreement would be signed and implemented only when mechanisms to keep security, order, and stability are established.<sup>49</sup>

### **5. Summary**

Intractable conflict is a severe crisis. It is a longtime struggle where generations in turn are born into the reality of aggression, despair, and violence. The conflict seems to have a life of its own. It is like a disease that controls the body. A revolutionary process is needed to create a sustainable change.

Revolution is an “overthrow of an established social order” Friedrich ([41], 5). Peace revolution is a conclusive attack on the foundations and structure of the conflict and the sociopolitical destructive mechanisms that constantly feed it. Peace revolution is planned to involve, at least, three key elements of the opposing parties (leaders, elites, and people) in a change-building process that tackles the conflict from different levels, sides, and directions.

A revolutionary peace process needs to take into consideration that peace needs to be made, built, and kept. Peacemaking suggests diplomatic instruments to involve key social elements of the conflicting parties (leaders, elites, and people) in a multidimensional negotiation of a peace contract. Peacebuilding offers a program to construct a negotiated framework for a new social order, which copes with the needs, fears, and concerns of the conflicting factions. Peacekeeping advocates the creation of a multidimensional system of different operating mechanisms (political, militaristic, and civilian) to maintain law and order.

Distinguishing between the three elements of a peace revolution (peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping) is not always clear. Moreover, as this paper shows,

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<sup>49</sup> Anwar Sadat, the former president of Egypt, in his historical speech in the Israeli Knesset, addressed, quite effectively, the pathological Israeli fear. To read the speech, visit [https://ecf.org.il/media\\_items/833](https://ecf.org.il/media_items/833).

these elements are intertwined. It will be a mistake to concentrate on one element of the challenge of peace (such as peacemaking) without taking into account the others. It can lead to the same old familiar failures.

Intractable conflict, similar to almost all phenomena in the social sciences, is a complex phenomenon.<sup>50</sup> It is a composite of components, factors, and variables of different dimensions, such as psychology, economics, and religion. Peace revolutionaries need to take into account, as much as possible, the complexity of the situation and, accordingly, construct an innovative multidimensional approach to change. This is the main message of this paper.

### **Notes on contributor**

Sapir Handelman is the co-laureate of the 2010 Peter Becker Award for Peace and Conflict Research. He is an associate professor (senior lecturer) and the head of the conflict studies division at Achva Academic College, Israel. Dr. Handelman founded and leads the Minds of Peace NGO, which is based on his concepts of conflict resolution in intractable conflicts.

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<sup>50</sup> For a thoughtful discussion on the very essence of complex phenomena, see Hayek [42].

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