

Academic Study

Foreign Policy of the Palestinian Authority 1993–2013

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Introduction

The Palestinian issue is almost unique in constitutional jurisprudence given the intricacies of the structure of the political authority on the one hand, and the powers of political forces concerned with international issues on the other. This makes it necessary to use a non-traditional approach to analyze the foreign policy of the Palestinian Authority (PA). The following factors provide the context in which the PA’s foreign policy should be studied:

1. Since the establishment of the PA in 1993 (after the Oslo Accords), there was confusion in the structure and role of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the authority which was created by the Oslo Accords. The PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people according to decisions of the Arab League, the observer at the United Nations (UN), and a large number of countries and international organizations. This confusion was demonstrated in the tension, which has occasionally erupted between the PLO political department and the PA Foreign Ministry in the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS) regarding the strategy of Palestinian international relations management.

2. After the appearance of the PA in 1994, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation was established to serve as a Foreign Ministry, which was formally established later in 2003. This was followed by adoption of the Diplomatic Corps Law in 2005, then the adoption of the organizational structure of the Foreign Ministry in 2006. This means that from 1994 to 2006 (12 years) the PA did not have a Foreign Ministry in the fullest sense of the phrase to manage its international relations.

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It is important to note that the Palestinian Diplomatic Corps Law of 2005 stipulates that the adoption by the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) of the Palestinian Diplomatic Corps Law does not constitute an infringement on, or detract from, the PLO being the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and that it is the reference point for the PA, in line with the introduction of the PA Basic Law.³ Ultimately, such a provision would further complicate the lines between the powers of apparatuses concerned with foreign policy.

With the gradual fading away of the role of the PLO political department through deliberate policies rather than legal measures, the role of the PA Foreign Ministry grew and developed. However, as Salam Fayyad assumed the PA Ministry of Finance, a decision was made in 2003 to establish the General Directorate of International Relations and Projects in the Ministry of Finance as a department that would adopt the policies of the PA's different political, economic and financial institutions on the local and foreign levels.

Given the complicated and difficult economic conditions in the WB and GS, especially following the second *Intifadah* in 2000, the role of this directorate grew at the expense of that of the Foreign Ministry. This was clear when maintaining relations with the international partners of the PA to secure financial support from donors, to support the PA and help it fulfill its obligations towards citizens and evaluate and following up on relations between the PA and international donors,, and between PA institutions. However, on its website, confusion prevails when examining the division of power in international relations between the PA and international community, as the functions of this directorate include:

- Coordination and cooperation with the international community to lift the siege on commodities and persons.
- Advancement towards peace, which requires supporting the PA to comply with its commitments towards both its citizens and the international community.

³ The Diplomatic Corps Law No. 13 of 2005, Birzeit University, Palestine, Institute of Law, The Palestinian Legal and Judicial System (Al-Muqtafi), 24/9/2005, <http://muqtafi.birzeit.edu/pg/getleg.asp?id=14909> (in Arabic)



- Urging the international community, especially the international Quartet, to exert pressure on Israel to show its commitment to peace accordingly with the understanding reached at the Annapolis Conference. It had to address the immediate and tangible measures of lifting physical and administrative restrictions imposed on movement and commercial activities as well as ending the siege in order to support the implementation of the PA's plan of reform and development that was supported by the international community.
- Management of international relations and agreements as it represents the Ministry in forums and negotiations based on instructions from the General Directorate of International Relations and Projects.
- Supervision, coordination and communication with Arab and foreign countries, and supervision of all media coverage, including media statements, and following up on protocol measures related to the directorate in particular and the Ministry in general.
- Follow-up and supervision on continuous cooperation with different ministries to secure the success of all forms of international cooperation in harmony with general policy of the Ministry, in addition to presenting periodic reports.⁴

3. In addition, the confused international legal status of the PA is reflected in the status conferred by the UN on the Palestinian mission after General Assembly resolution on 29/11/2012. By virtue of this resolution, the mission became known as Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the UN,⁵ thus upgrading its status from a “non-member observer entity” to a “non-member observer state.” This issue is the subject of thorny debate between two legal theories, which are the declaratory and constitutive theories.⁶ Notably, the Oslo Accords postponed the discussion of the international relations of the Palestinian state, along with other issues, to a later stage.

⁴ Ministry of Finance, Palestine, General Directorate of International Relations and Projects, Introduction to General Directorate of International Relations, <http://www.pmf.ps/web/guest/95> (in Arabic); and see List of Diplomatic Missions in Palestine, site of Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_diplomatic_missions_in_Palestine

⁵ Site of Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, New York, <http://palestineun.org>

⁶ The constitutive theory states that an entity is considered a state exclusively via recognition by other states. Whereas the declaratory theory states that an entity becomes a state as soon as it meets certain criteria including power, geographically defined territory, and commitment to respecting international law and custom. For more details see Thomas D. Grant, *The Recognition of States: Law and Practice in Debate and Evolution* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999), chapter 1.

4. Moreover, the fragmentation that of the Palestinian political scene, primarily between Fatah and Hamas, further complicated the analysis of Palestinian international relations network. Following the conflict in GS, which broke out after 2007, Palestine had two foreign ministries working without any coordination and even in opposite tracks in most situations, which makes it difficult to describe Palestinian foreign policy.

Based on the above structural circumstances, the author will approach the international policy of the PA by defining their general trends in diplomacy, politics and economics, especially with major countries and the most influential regional and international organizations in the international system.

First: Palestinian International Diplomatic Relations

After the failure of the PA to secure membership as a state in the UN in 2011, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) accorded Palestine non-Member Observer State status. 132 countries recognized the Palestinian state (less than those who voted for the aforementioned resolution in 2012), representing 64.8% of the international community with a total population estimated at 5.5 billion.

However, if we categorize states that recognize the Palestinian state on the 1967 borders we see that 96 countries recognized Palestine before the establishment of the PA in 1994, while 36 countries recognized it later. This means that 27.3% of the international community has recognized Palestine thanks to the PA's diplomatic efforts, while 72.7% of the recognitions were the outcome of PLO's efforts before the Oslo Accords.

The PA enjoys full membership in 17 international organizations, and as a non-member state in ten international organizations. It is also a member of three international sport federations and eight international trade agreements (free-trade zones, investment, etc.). This means that the PA's success in expanding the circle of international legal recognition of Palestinians' legitimate rights is relatively modest, where most recognitions took place before the Oslo Accords, which was the period when armed resistance was the strategy adopted by the PLO in light of a more balanced global order than the one witnessed today.



In this context, it is necessary to define the most important variables that have contributed to the international community's wide recognition of the State of Palestine. These variables are:

1. Recognizing Israel as a legitimate state, a position the PA clearly upholds. This standing was present in all agreements between the PA and Israel including the Gaza-Jericho Agreement in 1994, the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II) 1995, Hebron Protocol of 1997, Wye River Memorandum of 1998 and Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum of 1999. These agreements divided WB and GS into three regions (A, B and C) and distributed powers between the PA and Israel. This position continued through PA cooperation with the Quartet (UN, United States (US), European Union (EU) and Russia), which worked to implement the Roadmap crystallized by George W. Bush in 2002–2003.

Ultimately, the PA's relative success in expanding recognition of the Palestinian state is not commensurate with the size of its concessions, which affected on all Palestinian political fundamentals.

2. There is a connection between the expansion of PA's international relations and its consent to reconsider what Palestinian political history considers to be "strategic fundamentals." This has been clear in the position of some powers in the international community towards the Palestinian issue after Hamas' victory in the legislative elections in 2006. American policies adopted by Congress have ensured continued cooperation between the US administration and the PA, especially in the economic field, as follows:⁷

- a. No aid is permitted for Hamas or Hamas-controlled entities, and no aid may be made available for the purpose of recognizing or otherwise honoring individuals who commit or have committed acts of "terrorism."
- b. No aid is permitted for a power-sharing PA government that includes Hamas as a member, or that results from an agreement with Hamas and over which Hamas exercises "undue influence," unless the President certifies that the PA government, including all ministers, has accepted the following two principles

⁷ Jim Zanotti, "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians," Congressional Research Service (CRS), site of Scribd, 18/1/2013, <https://www.scribd.com/document/126890441/Rs-22967-U-S-Foreign-Aid-to-the-Palestinians>

embodied in the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006 (PATA): (1) recognition of “the Jewish state of Israel’s right to exist” and (2) acceptance of previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

- c. No aid is permitted for the PLO or for the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation (PBC).
- d. No aid is permitted for a future Palestinian state unless the US Secretary of State certifies that the “governing entity of the state has demonstrated a firm commitment to peaceful coexistence with the State of Israel,” and is taking appropriate measures to counter “terrorism and terrorist financing” in the WB and GS in cooperation with Israel and others. Moreover, such state should work with other countries in the region to “vigorously pursue efforts to establish a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that will enable Israel and an independent Palestinian state to exist within the context of full and normal relationships.”
- e. No aid is permitted for PA personnel located in GS. Although the PA does pay salaries to individuals located in GS, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) maintains that US direct budgetary assistance to the PA goes toward paying the PA’s suppliers and commercial creditors.
- f. No Economic Support Fund aid is permitted to the PA if the Palestinians obtain from this point forward (the restriction does not apply to Palestinian membership in UNESCO) “the same standing as member states or full membership as a state in the United Nations or any specialized agency thereof outside an agreement negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians.”
- g. The above conditions shall continue to be monitored by concerned American bodies.

This means that the humble success that Palestinian diplomacy has achieved in expanding international recognition is the result of the “price” paid by the PA for this recognition. In addition, recognition by many countries in the developing world was not the result of the PA diplomatic efforts but rather as a response to the ideologies adopted by such countries as Iran, Venezuela, Cuba, and Vietnam and some countries in Scandinavia or in South Africa. However, Palestinian diplomacy could not convince the US, the United Kingdom (UK), or Germany to



recognize full Palestinian UN membership or even its membership as a non-Member Observer “State” despite heavy Palestinian concessions.

Second: International Policies Towards the Palestinian Issue after Oslo

Studying the PA’s international political relations requires defining the principal characteristics of the policies of central powers in the international system towards the Palestinian issue during 1994–2013 on one hand, and the interaction of the PA with these international policies on the other hand.

1. The US

Doubtless the repercussion of the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Egypt’s departure from the Arab-Israeli conflict, in addition to Iraq’s preoccupation with regional wars with Iran and the reverberations of the Kuwait crisis have made the regional environment more susceptible to American influence. They also enhanced US ability to secure its high strategic interests represented in Israeli security, control of the flow of oil, and the employment of the region’s geostrategic resources, to serve the US interests.

In return, these developments have narrowed the options for the Palestinian leadership, who adopted the policy of late Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat when claiming that “99% of cards in the Middle East are in the hands of the US.” However, the relative weight of Egypt has secured it some gains when adopting this policy, the case is not the same for the Palestinian leadership given its relative lack of power. Thus, the Palestinian leadership chose to comply with American demands regarding direct negotiations and full recognition of Israel in pursuit of the “land for peace” principle. However, it disregarded the fact that it entered negotiations at a time when the Palestinian side was in a state of maximum weakness for the above mentioned reasons, which made the Palestinian gains commensurate with the relativity of the Palestinian power at the negotiations table.

The US worked within an integrated strategy throughout 1994–2013 as follows:

a. Making Palestinian recognition of Israel a tool for convincing other Arab countries to open up to Israel. Thus, a peace agreement was signed later between

Israel and Jordan, then came the opening of trade bureaus, meetings with Israeli leaders, and media openness to Israel. Restrictions were imposed on Arab boycott programs until their complete paralysis.

This further limited Palestinian options, a fact realized by American diplomacy. Consequently, it sought to adapt the PA structure to be more consistent with American demands. This was manifested in the pressure put on Yasir ‘Arafat to appoint a prime minister with sweeping powers, then to accept security coordination with the occupation (as shall be explained later), and guarantee no return to armed resistance, which further restricted Palestinian options during following rounds of negotiations.

b. Imposing restrictions on Palestinian organizations opposing the Oslo Accords. This policy was pursued through putting pressure on Arab and international countries to include these organizations on “terror” lists, then dry up their financial resources, and impose restrictions on the diplomatic movement of their representatives. Later their participation in a Palestinian national government was prevented, despite their victory in elections, which was described as democratic and fair by the American observer, former President Jimmy Carter.

c. Employing the “dollar diplomacy” in the Palestinian issue, which has meant linking financial aid to the PA to the degree of adherence to American demands (as shall be explained later) then working to urge other countries, especially European countries (the top contributors to PA aid), to comply with American diplomacy. This aspect of American diplomacy has been among the most influential factors affecting the Palestinian decision where the influence of American aid to the PA far outweighs its financial size, which reflects severe flaws in the PA’s management of negotiations (this will be elaborated on later).

d. Curbing any potentially effective international measures taken against Israel in response to its violations of international law or when it does not implement its agreements with the PA, to which the US is a signatory, including the agreements mentioned at the beginning of this study. The most prominent features of this US policy include heavy use of its veto in the UN Security Council (to be described later) to abort any resolution Israel does not accept. Another feature is the continued provision of Israel with military and financial aid regardless of its noncompliance with international will or even American policies, such as its refusal to halt settlement construction. It even accelerated the



pace of settlement building despite the unequivocal US stance stating that settlement building lacks legitimacy and is harmful to the peace process, or its stance towards the recognition of the Palestinian state although the US, in theory, backs its establishment. US support for Israel is also clear in international legal forums where, for example, in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ issued its Advisory Opinion on the legal consequences arising from the construction of the Separation Wall built by Israel in the West Bank, and 14 judges voted for the opinion that the wall violates the law, while the only US justice dissented. There is also the US position in human rights committees or towards reports of international investigation as was the case with the Goldstone report.

e. Employing negotiations to achieve accumulated Israeli gains. The US insists that it should be left to the Palestinian and Israeli “parties to the conflict” to determine the outcome of negotiations, which ultimately means a strategic flaw in the balance of power and that ultimately impacts any negotiations. This strategy has never been pursued by the US in any other region where the balance of power has not been in favor of its allies, such as the case in the Iraqi-Kuwaiti crisis, or the conflict in Afghanistan, or the last power conflict in Libya in 2011, among others.

f. Due to its central international role, the US often eases the Palestinian issue aside to make room for other international issues. This has quite obviously impacted the pace of the peace process, for example during the Kuwait crisis 1991–2003, the financial crisis in 2008, the nuclear program and, the possibility of an American or Israeli attack against Iran, the crisis in North Korea, and finally the repercussions of the Arab spring, most notably the Syrian crisis.

In addition, and due to suspension of Palestinian resistance work, especially in WB, Palestinian diplomacy has not sought to bring the Palestinian issue back into the limelight through various forms of resistance.

2. The EU

The patterns of voting of EU countries in international organizations shows relative consistency in foreign policy issues, at around 80%. The Palestinian issue is one of the issues where EU countries stances are discrepant in most details, although all these countries agree that negotiations are the most suitable way to achieve peace. European discrepancy is obvious in issues of recognition

of the Palestinian state, UN membership, the pursuit of any measures against Israel in case of its violation of international law, the level of diplomatic representation with the PA or labeling some Palestinian organizations as “terrorist,” etc.

However, the EU is the top international party providing aid for Palestinians in most periods covered by this study (as will be shown later). In addition, the Quartet statements, since its establishment in Madrid in 2002, reflect the EU position. It has issued several statements per year and has issued more than 40 statements to date.

Tracking EU orientations through the stances of its powerful countries (UK, France and Germany) during 1994–2013, the following has been established:

a. There is consensus among European countries on the establishment of a “viable Palestinian state” beside a “secure Israeli state.” This was clear in the decision taken in Florence in 1996, to which these countries have remained committed since then. Yet, European countries did not take one position upon voting on upgrading the status of Palestine to a state or even as a “non-member” state in the UN, as was the case upon voting in 2012.

b. Although the EU has labeled Hamas as a “terrorist movement,” it remains less stringent than the US as to not engaging in dialogue with it. Thus, the EU has held numerous, multi-level meetings with Hamas representatives on different occasions the details of which were included in reports by the International Crisis Group.⁸ Nonetheless, this position underlined a clear discrepancy in which France and some other European countries refused to grant visas to Hamas leaders while Sweden, for example, departed from this stance.

c. The EU has linked its aid to Palestinian “political conduct.” This was obvious after Hamas won the legislative elections in 2006, where the EU issued a statement supporting the Quartet statement of March 2006, which stressed Hamas’ commitment to peace principles. It was reflected in a motion by French President Jacques Chirac to control the PA-bound aid and which was later developed into specific financial mechanisms (these will be mentioned later when addressing economic factors).

⁸ International Crisis Group, *Enter Hamas: The Challenges of Political Integration*, Middle East Report no. 49, 18/1/2006, https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/49-enter-hamas-the-challenges-of-political-integration_0.pdf



d. European officials' abstention from pursuing any effective measures against Israel was accompanied by their defense of, and support for, Israeli policies, a fact that was clear during the Israeli offensive on Lebanon and war on Hizbullah in 2006. It was also clear in 2008 through deepening the network of agreements, some of which were concluded in 2006, between the EU and Israel regarding fighting "terrorism," security coordination, diplomatic consultation and participation in civilian missions in European security and defense operations.⁹ Notably, these agreements were renewed the same year Israel attacked GS (2009).

3. The BRICS Group

Following a series of meetings of foreign ministers of Brazil, the Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, and India in 2006, their countries agreed to form an international group that would work towards the coordination of international policies and increasing cooperation in a number of common fields. In 2010, these countries were joined by South Africa, and the group was known by the initials of its member states as the BRICS.

The group gains its importance from a number of indicators, including that the population in this group amounts to around 43% of the world's population. In addition, its share of international trade is 18% and it controls 53% of total foreign international investments.

This group includes two countries that maintain permanent UN security council seats and three nuclear countries. Besides, most of its members have high strategic interests in the Arab region, and some of them even have deep historic relations with its different countries.

Based on the statements of the foreign ministers of the BRICS during 2006–2013, it is possible to define the group's stance towards the Palestinian issue as follows:¹⁰

- a. Supporting the "establishment of an independent, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State with full sovereignty within the 1967 borders, with agreed-upon territorial swaps and with East Jerusalem as its capital."

⁹ Mohsen Mohammad Saleh (ed.), *The Palestinian Strategic Report 2008* (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2010), pp. 236–237.

¹⁰ Joint Communiqué on the Outcome of the Meeting of BRICS Deputy Foreign Ministers on the Situation in the Middle East and North Africa, Moscow, Russia, 24/11/2011, BRICS Information Centre, site of University of Toronto, <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/111124-foreign.html>

- b. Supporting political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict “on the basis of the universally recognized international legal framework including the relevant UN resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.”
- c. Supporting “Palestinian efforts to achieve UN membership.”
- d. Avoiding unilateral steps, in particular settlement activity in occupied Palestinian territories.
- e. Advocating the “earliest reunification of the Palestinians. A united position of the Palestinians based on the PLO principles and the Arab Peace Initiative would contribute to progress towards a Palestinian-Israeli settlement, achieving lasting peace and providing security for all the countries and peoples of the region.”

As for economic aid, the role of the group is still limited although it is the most sympathetic with Palestinian orientations. It is also the least effective regarding the Israeli political conduct in the region because of each member state’s considerations.

4. Japan

The mercantile nature (commercial, based on economic interest) of Japanese foreign policy affects its stance towards Middle East issues in general and the Palestinian issue in particular. Practically, the interests of Japan in the Middle East are in getting Arab oil especially after the oil shock resulting from continued increases in prices of oil due to a lack of political stability in the region. Japanese policy believes that if stability prevails in the region, oil prices are more likely to decrease or remain stable. Suffice to mention here that Japanese oil imports increased during 1994–2010 from ¹¹\$35.198 billion in 1994 to \$134.334 billion in 2010,¹² which indicates Japan’s need for peace in the Middle East that provided around 90.9% of the country’s oil needs in March 2011.¹³

The other reason has to do with Japan’s need to secure a share of trade deals which include the purchase of civil goods by Middle East countries. Japan knows that while stability and peace enhance civil trade, instability in the region leads

¹¹ US Dollar.

¹² Japan Oil – imports, site of IndexMundi,
http://www.indexmundi.com/japan/oil_imports.html

¹³ Site of PanOrient News, 9/5/2011, <http://www.panorientnews.com/en/news.php?k=941>

its countries to buy military commodities, which are not among Japan's important exports.

Consequently, Japan was quick to join those countries that blessed the relations between the PA and Israel and it opened up to relations with the Palestinians, opening an office representing Japan's interests in GS in 1998, transferring it to Ramallah in 2007, while the PA re-opened the Permanent General Mission of Palestine in Tokyo in 2003, five years after the opening of Japan's representative office to the PA in GS. It must be noted that the PLO opened an office 1977–1995.¹⁴

Japanese efforts were effectively represented through the development of the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity” project in 2008, which sought to develop the Jordan Valley in cooperation with the PA, Jordan and Israel, a project that is still stalling at the time of writing.

Japan tries to maintain general diplomatic communications with the PA and Japanese officials frequently visited the region and met with PA officials during 1995–2012.

5. Iran and Turkey

Despite Iran's and Turkey's membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the political orientations of each country towards international powers and Middle East issues are quite different, and the discrepancy in positions further increased following the Arab spring, especially in relation to Syria.

Given the difficulty of separating the circumstances of the region's problems and their repercussion on the Palestinian issue, it is possible to define the policy of the two countries towards Palestine as follows:

a. Turkey: Turkey was the first Muslim country to recognize Israel. However, as the Islamic-affiliated Justice and Development Party (AKP) assumed power in 2002, a rift started to appear in the Turkish-Israeli relations, especially at diplomatic level yet without particularly touching on the military cooperation or economic relations except to within certain limits. Thus, commercial exchange

¹⁴ Japan-Palestine Relations (Basic Data), site of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 24/4/2017, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/palestine/data.html

between Turkey and Israel grew from 2002 (when Islamists assumed power) to the end of 2013 from \$1.2 billion to around \$4.9 billion, an increase estimated at 308% in 11 years.¹⁵

Given Turkey's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its desire to join the EU, as well as its historic relations with the US, Turkey's stances and its last diplomatic conflict with Israel do not constitute solid grounds for radical transformations in the country's orientations, especially considering Turkey supports all the consequences of Oslo.

As for relations between the Turkish and Palestinian sides, it is noted that Ankara's relations with GS outdo its relations with the PA in Ramallah, both in terms of aid and diplomatic meetings between the two sides.

b. Iran: The Iranian Republic is the Islamic non-Arab country mostly involved in the Palestinian issue for a number of reasons:

1. The religious orientation which was clear from the first days of the Iranian revolution as it severed ties with Israel and completely opened up to Palestinian organizations 1979.
2. Israel's enmity to the Iranian nuclear program, which embeds potentials for military confrontation that have fluctuated from one period to another.
3. The depth of relations between Iran and Lebanese Hizbullah as a central resistance power in the countries surrounding Palestine.
4. Strengthening the relations between Iran and Palestinian organizations opposing the peace process such as Hamas, the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine (PIJ) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC).

These dimensions have impacted relations between Iran and the PA, where in the period 1979–1993 good relations prevailed with the PLO and its President 'Arafat. However, the Oslo Accords and Palestinian recognition of Israel have negatively impacted the relations between the two sides as Iran announced its opposition to all PA agreements and chose to side with the organizations that rejected the Oslo Accords as mentioned previously.

¹⁵ See Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS),
http://www1.cbs.gov.il/shnaton55/st16_05x.pdf
<http://www1.cbs.gov.il/publications14/yarhon0214/pdf/h8.pdf>

Iran has played a role in supporting the Palestinian government in GS on the financial and military levels. This was confirmed by leaders of different factions without specifying the size and nature of this aid. Nonetheless, the reverberations of the Arab spring, especially the Syrian crisis, led to some “estrangement” between Iran and Hamas mainly due to what Iran perceived as aggressive stance by Hamas towards the Syrian regime, which is one of Iran’s most important allies in the region.

Third: Stages of Palestinian International Policy following Oslo

Despite the difficulty of distinguishing the difference in the Palestinian structure and orientations before and after Oslo, it is possible to divide Palestinian diplomatic efforts after Oslo into two stages, taking into account the inclinations of central powers in the international system mentioned earlier. These stages are:

1. First Stage: 1994–2006

This stage represented the phase of PA’s monopoly over Palestinian decision making, during which post-Oslo Palestinian political work was established; agreements and treaties were signed with Israel through international political efforts and conferences.

This stage was characterized by the following:

- a. The failure of the PA to urge the international community, especially the international Quartet, to stop Israeli settlement building in WB.
- b. Gradual deterioration of the status of Palestinian issue as a concern for the international community, which became preoccupied with other international and regional issues, such as the Iraqi crisis during 1994–2006 that attracted wide international resolution efforts, and then ended with the occupation of Iraq. Iran’s nuclear file also distracted international efforts away from the Palestinian issue and despite the second *Intifadah* which broke out in 2000, international efforts’ main focus was on the repercussions of the World Trade Center attack in September 2001.
- c. An increase in the international role in setting Palestinian security structure and policies, where more restrictions were imposed on armed resistance forces and the prospects of renewed Palestinian popular uprisings. These efforts started

in December 1993 when the first international conference was held in Oslo to support Palestinian security. The conference was attended by 14 countries besides the US, EU and the World Bank, in addition to two Arab countries: Jordan and Egypt. Despite the humble outcome of the conference where two Arab countries pledged to train Palestinian security, another conference was convened at the request of Norway in March 2004 and it was attended by 21 countries besides the US and the EU. The conferees discussed the deployment of Palestinian Authority Security Forces (PASF) in Jericho, Gaza and Hebron without any financial pledges where the American delegation, headed by Dennis Ross, was the largest delegation among the participants.¹⁶

Some studies show that this stage has laid the basis of cooperation between PASF and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), based on an agreement concluded between President 'Arafat and US Secretary of State Warren Christopher in 1994. Thus, one day after the Gaza-Jericho Agreement had been concluded, the US provided \$5 million to support the PASF.¹⁷ Other studies show that the US, especially the CIA, was keen to provide financial aid and “mentoring” to PASF. This was clear from the US aid provided in 1996 to PASF when resistance activities increased in the occupied territories, especially “self-immolation”¹⁸ operations, and the aid was directed to impose restrictions on members of armed resistance, a policy which continued during the 1996–2000 period. The cooperation between PASF and the CIA was formalized in the 1998 Wye River Memorandum, including all aspects related to imposing restrictions on resistance members, such as interrogation methods and the detection of explosives and communication devices.¹⁹

During the second *Intifadah* from 2000 to 2004, Israel destroyed most Palestinian security headquarters and it started to build the Separation Wall in the

¹⁶ Brynjar Lia, *Building Arafat's Police: The Politics of International Police Assistance in the Palestinian Territories after the Oslo Agreement* (London: Ithaca press, 2007), pp. 28–42.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 37 and 288.

¹⁸ The overwhelming majority of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims consider these operations to be “martyrdom operations” while most Israelis and western writers and media describe them as “suicide operations”. We used the word “self-immolation” in this report to be as neutral as possible. However, such terms may need more discussion.

¹⁹ See more details in: Elaine Sciolino, Violence Thwarts CIA Director's Unusual Diplomatic Role in Middle Eastern Peacemaking, *The New York Times* newspaper, 13/11/2000; and Jim Zanotti, “U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority,” Congressional Research Services (CRS), 8/1/2010, p. 5, www.fas.org/sfp/crs/mideast/R40664.pdf

West Bank. However, US-Palestinian security cooperation covertly continued during this period.²⁰

After the US administration prepared the Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East plan during the tenure of President George W. Bush, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice worked towards the establishment of the American team for security coordination to help the PA restructure the PASF. This commission started its work in March 2005 on the proviso that it was the only channel for US–Palestinian security cooperation.

Nonetheless, Palestinian-international security cooperation was subject to a number of commissions (namely the Palestinian-International Transitional Security Planning Team) criticized by the Palestinian apparatuses, which foiled cooperation in many aspects.²¹

Following the appointment of Lieutenant General Keith Dayton in 2005 to head the office of US Security Coordinator (USSC), legislative elections were held and Hamas won. Consequently, the US restricted aid to President Mahmud ‘Abbas, specifically to the Presidential Guard, the US considered Hamas a “terrorist organization” not entitled to participate in any Palestinian government.²²

During this period, US policy was characterized by foiling any efforts to establish a national government while working on fueling the inter-Palestinian conflict through focusing security aid on apparatuses affiliated with the President. This policy was revealed by Álvaro de Soto who stepped down from his position as the UN Special Envoy to the Middle East in 2007, when he said that the US led the Quartet to set impossible demands and it opposed a National Unity Government, it also “clearly pushed for a confrontation between Fateh and Hamas.” This was implied in western media, which reported that “the US involvement has contributed to it [internal Palestinian dispute] negatively.”²³

²⁰ Jim Zanotti, “U.S. Security Assistance to the Palestinian Authority,” p. 6.

²¹ Roland Friedrich and Arnold Luethold, *Entry-Points to Palestinian Security Sector Reform* (Baden Baden: Normos Verlag, 2008), p. 4.

²² Erlanger Steven, US Offers Plan to Strengthen Abbas, *International Herald Tribune* newspaper, 4/10/2006.

²³ Álvaro de Soto, “End of Mission Report,” May 2007, <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2007/06/12/DeSotoReport.pdf>; For more details, see David Rose, “The Gaza Bombshell report,” *Vanity Fair* magazine, April 2008, <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/04/gaza200804>; and Dan Murphy and Joshua Mitnick, Israel, US, and Egypt back Fatah’s Fight against Hamas, *The Christian Science Monitor* newspaper, 25/5/2007.

Developments in the Palestinian arena, including the establishment of a Hamas-led Palestinian government in GS and another controlled by Fatah in Ramallah in 2007, encouraged the US to resume security aid to the PA under supervision of Lieutenant General Dayton until October 2010, when he was succeeded by Lieutenant General Michael R. Moeller until 2012, while Vice Admiral Paul J. Bushong assumed the position after that.

In a 2009 speech, Dayton explained that “forming the USSC was to... mobilize additional resources and to allay Israeli fears about the nature and capabilities of the Palestinian security forces.”²⁴ Ultimately, all other international aid for PASF fell within the framework defined by the US.

Based on the above, the following can be concluded:

- a. The PA, due to the American role, was transformed into a tool for implementing the security aspect of all agreements between the PA and Israel. These confirm the importance of peace and not resorting to violence, while declaring armed resistance work a form of “terrorism.”
- b. Assuring the Israeli side that Palestinian security would not be a threat to Israel’s security.

2. Second Stage: 2007–2013

This stage was characterized by schism in the structure of the Palestinian political authority where there emerged a bilateral track of Palestinian foreign policy the first of which was led by Hamas through its Gaza-based government and the other run by the PA in Ramallah.

Internationally, it was suggested in this stage that the viable Palestinian state would be formed in 2008 at the latest. Yet, various conditions and events had negative implications on the Palestinian issue and the dream of the state:

- a. The Israeli attack on GS, which lasted over three weeks during which the PA could not assume any useful measures to support the Strip especially towards mitigating the international siege imposed on it. It is enough to mention in this context the Quartet statement issued in Berlin in June 2008, which “looked forward to increased humanitarian and commercial flows through the Gaza crossings under the management of the Palestinian Authority,” alongside

²⁴ Keith Dayton, Michael Stein Address on U.S. Middle East Policy, Program of the Soref Symposium, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 7/5/2009, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/html/pdf/DaytonKeynote.pdf>

European willingness to “resume its monitoring mission at the Rafah crossing point.” It also “emphasized the importance of unobstructed delivery of security assistance to the Palestinian Authority.” These international measures aimed to strip Hamas of any form of legitimacy and to affect the organization’s morale.

Quartet statements after all subsequent meetings focused on the precondition of linking the establishment of a national unity government to “accepting prior agreements,” which meant changing the strategic inclinations of all resistance factions opposed to the Oslo Accords.

b. A surge in political reports regarding an imminent Israeli attack against Iran had an impact on international diplomatic concern about the Palestinian issue, notwithstanding the changing influence of this variable through different periods.

The Iranian issue has had an impact on the Palestinian issue at different levels, including Iranian relations with particular Palestinian factions. The PA (namely Fatah) has the shallowest relations with Iran given the disparity of their political visions. Iranian relations with Palestinian armed resistance factions (Hamas, PIJ and PFLP-GC in particular) have witnessed continued development and cooperation up to the beginning of the Arab Spring where the divergent positions of the two sides towards the Syrian crisis had a grave impact on their relations and even affected the structure of some Palestinian factions.

Indeed, the Syrian crisis has had an impact on the size of Iranian diplomatic activity towards the Palestinian issue, as it became the center of Iranian concerns. In addition, the continued Western sanctions and the economic siege imposed on Iran had an impact on the level of Iranian aid to Palestine.

Notably, Iran frequently expressed support for efforts to achieve reconciliation between the two authorities in GS and Ramallah, while always stressing that such reconciliation would enhance armed resistance, which is not accepted by the PA.

c. Large increase in prices of oil where despite the disparate impact of this increase on oil producing and oil consuming countries in the international community, Arab support for the PA is not clearly linked to this factor.

The PA needs around \$240 million per month to meet its commitments. However, it could not secure this sum in most periods and it even failed to urge

the international community to put pressure on Israel to commit to the transfer of Palestinian taxes to the PA treasury as provided for in Paris Agreement in 1995.²⁵

The PA is 65% dependent on international aid. The sum of Arab aid during 2000–2009 amounted to around \$5.53 billion, with an annual average estimated at \$615 million over the same period. It represents 15.4% of average Palestinian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and around 61.5% of average official international aid, although this value of Arab aid does not include other forms of technical and in-kind aid.²⁶

d. The outburst of the international financial crisis: This factor affected the size of international aid for the PA, especially as some European countries, such as Spain and Greece, absorbed European efforts to deal with their financial crises, which was reflected in the distribution of European and US aid in other countries of the world.

e. The start of what has been known as the “Arab Spring” and the preoccupation of the Arab world and international community with the possible outcomes of this development. An analysis of one thousand banners bearing Arab Spring slogans showed that the Palestinian issue received only 6% of themes covered by these slogans, whereas 71% focused on the internal economic situation for every Arab country and on democracy.²⁷

Fourth: Principal Themes of Palestinian Foreign Policy

Examining Palestinian diplomacy throughout 1994–2013, there appears to be a disparity in focusing on one specific issue as follows:

1994–2000: The PA was indulged during this period in signing successive agreements with Israel under international sponsorship with Arab participation in some agreements. Palestinian efforts were focused on expanding international relations as mentioned earlier in the chapter.

²⁵ Site of Albawaba, 3/1/2013.

²⁶ Arab League, The General Secretariat: Sector of Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories, Arab Assistance to Support the Palestinian People and Their National Authority in Occupied Palestinian Territories 2000–2009, site of United Nations (UN), <http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/docs/Istanbul2010/Arab%20League%20Arabic%202.pdf> (in Arabic)

²⁷ Walid Abd al-Hay, “The Arab Political Scene 2012: Unstable Region,” Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/reports/2012/01/20121151288785324.htm> (in Arabic)

2000–2006: The PA worked during this period on building on the second *Intifadah* on one hand and repairing its repercussions on the other hand. Thus, it consecrated Israel's negative image in the international community through highlighting the inhumane practices of the occupation authorities pursued during the uprising, which impacted (as a result of the uprising) the inclinations of international public opinion, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

However, another aspect of the Palestinian efforts was focused on the attempt to repair the economic repercussions of the uprising, particularly regarding provision of the delayed international aid in reaction to the uprising. This was clear from the deterioration in international aid during and after the *Intifadah*, except for Arab aid which increased during this period.

2006–2007: PA diplomatic efforts focused during this period on absorbing the international impact of Hamas' victory in the Palestinian legislative elections with a primary focus on reconciling respect for the electoral outcome with the American and some European rejection of this outcome. The Palestinian diplomatic dilemma was represented in how to reconcile before the international community the commitment to agreements based on peace, normalization and renouncing recourse to armed resistance on one hand, with the participation in a government led by Hamas, which rejected all agreements signed with Israel and stressed the right to armed resistance on the other hand.

Palestinian diplomacy then started gradually responding to international demands through disengagement from its relations with Hamas, which ultimately led to bloody confrontation between the two sides and the schism in the PA structure.

2007–2013: This period witnessed accumulation of confusions faced by Palestinian diplomacy. On one hand, clashes with Hamas continued and were even fueled by international environment clearly and explicitly.²⁸ On the other hand, Palestinian hopes for the establishment of a Palestinian state in 2008 increased but then sank into disappointment. Added to that was the PA's diplomatic embarrassment in managing its international relations during the Israeli offensive on GS, the increase in settlement construction, the foiled negotiations and the continued link between aid and Palestinian negotiation conduct. The following problems remain unresolved:

²⁸ See series of *The Palestinian Strategic Report* issued by al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, Beirut, during 2007–2012.

1. International Palestinian Efforts to Stop Israeli Settlement

There is almost consensus among international law jurists and among international organizations as well as the international community generally, that Israeli settlement building in Arab territories occupied in 1967 is illegal. It contradicts international law, especially the Fourth Geneva Convention, which does not allow the occupying power to “deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”

This means that the legal basis for the unlawfulness of settlements has been available since 1967 through UN resolutions and the ICJ ruling of July 2004 although the American envoy voted against all provisions opposed to the Separation Wall or other violations.²⁹ Nonetheless, Israel has disregarded the legal dimension and continued settlement construction at increased pace. This dictated that Palestinian political efforts must focus on pushing the international community towards stopping settlement construction on one hand, and dismantling those already built on the other hand.

In GS, settlements were evacuated in 2005 because of armed resistance, and because of Israel’s economic burdens given the high GS population density.

Statistics available from Israeli sources show that the number of settlers in WB (including east Jerusalem) was 265 thousand when the PA assumed power in 1994. The number increased to around 570 thousand settlers at the end of 2013, which means it almost doubled during the PA’s term,³⁰ while according to the Applied Research Institute Jerusalem (ARIJ), a Palestinian center specialized in lands and settlement, the number of settlers in WB has reached 656 thousand by the end of 2013.³¹ In addition, the pace of building settler units and land

²⁹ Abdelrahman Mohamad Ali (ed.), *Israel wa al-Qanun al-Duwali* (Israel and the International Law) (Beirut: Al-Zaytouna Centre for Studies and Consultations, 2011), pp. 235–239.

³⁰ The figure is based on 2012 estimates and the average growth of settlements is estimated at 5%. See *al-Hayat* newspaper, London, 14/2/2013.

There are discrepancies in the Israeli figures concerning the number of settlers in the West Bank, see for example, site of Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies (JIIS), http://www.jiis.org.il/upload/yearbook2013/shnaton_C1013.pdf; *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper, 17/9/2013; and Jewish Virtual Library, Israeli Settlements: Settlements Population in the West Bank, October 2013, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/Peace/wbsettle.html>

³¹ The Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ), Israeli Settlements and Violations: Israeli Activities Report in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2013, site of Project of Monitoring the Israeli Colonization Activities (POICA), 2/3/2014, <http://poica.org/2014/03/israeli-settlements-and-violations-israeli-activities-report-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory-in-2013/>



confiscation during 1994–2012 increased dramatically to an extent that threatens the possibility of establishing a contiguous Palestinian state. This means that all international Palestinian efforts failed to secure a positive outcome, and all American and European statements rejecting settlement changed nothing. In addition, it is important to draw attention to an expression which is recurrent in most international statements regarding settlements, i.e., to “halt or freeze” settlement building rather than “dismantling” them. The term “land swap,” which is recurrent in the Quartet statements and in the statements of Western, Israeli and Palestinian officials, embodies the possibility of expanding the concept to include the settlement issue in one way or another.

Once the PA takes any measures perceived by the international community as contradictory to Palestinian commitments, the US and some European countries will take immediate measures against it (this is clear in Congress’ decisions in particular and some EU decisions in general). Whereas the same sides calling Israel openly and explicitly to stop settlement building in WB including east Jerusalem are faced with open and explicit Israeli defiance without any effective measures taken against it. This issue has led the PA to stop direct negotiations while maintaining communication with international mediators to resume them.

2. Correlation Between International Economic Aid and Palestinian Political Orientations

The fourth annex of the Oslo Accords (Declaration of Principles) provided for regional cooperation and it implicitly called for international community to provide aid to the Palestinians, Jordan, Israel and the whole region. The first donor conference was held in Washington in October 1993, two weeks after the signing of the agreement, where donors met to pledge \$2.4 billion for the Palestinians over the subsequent five years, 1993–1998.³² The second donor conference was held following the Wye River Memorandum where participants pledged \$2 billion to be paid to the PA between 1999 and 2003.³³

³² The World Bank, Operations Evaluation Department, West Bank and Gaza: An Evaluation of Bank Assistance, Report no. 23820, 7/3/2002, [http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/DB1BC6952F401E0785256B8A0067B726/\\$file/west_bank_and_gaza.pdf](http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoclib.nsf/DocUNIDViewForJavaSearch/DB1BC6952F401E0785256B8A0067B726/$file/west_bank_and_gaza.pdf)

³³ Press Conference at Conclusion of Conference to Support Middle East Peace and Development, as released by the Office of the Spokesman, Washington, DC, U.S. Department of State, 30/11/1998, <http://1997-2001.state.gov/www/statements/1998/981130.html>

International aid to the PA witnessed two major phases:

First Phase (1994–2001): This is the period that followed the Oslo Accords when the flow of aid was characterized by a level of stability. The American, European and Japanese sides covered most of the aid, which amounted to around \$3.897 billion during the first phase, with the main focus being on the implementation of the peace agreement between the PA and Israel.³⁴

During this period, international aid was characterized by several features:³⁵

- a. Aid was focused on the development of central apparatuses, which enhanced the centrality of the PA at the expense of the development of civil society bodies.
- b. The size of aid fluctuated from one year to another based on the development of the political process and negotiations between the PA and Israel in which all economic pressures were directed at the Palestinian side, while the “diplomacy of financial seductions” was pointed at the Israelis, facts that were clear in 1996 and 1998.

Second Phase (2001–2013): Disruption of the peace process because of Israeli stalling and the outbreak of the *second Intifadah* in 2000 led to a disturbance of international aid. Ultimately, the aid from Arab and Muslim countries topped the list of donors during 2000–2011, followed by the EU and US. Notably, international non-Arab aid was in the form of relief and less concerned with development. The role of Arab aid to the PA was enhanced after the 2008 financial crisis, which seriously impacted the EU as well as the US and Japan.³⁶

European aid had constituted the backbone of international aid before it was affected by the international financial crisis as shown in the figures below:³⁷

³⁴ See The Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ramallah, International Aid, Third and Fourth Quarters, 2001, p. 12. (in Arabic)

³⁵ Rex Brynen, *A very Political Economy: Peacebuilding and Aid in the West Bank and Gaza* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2000), passim.

³⁶ The Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Planning, Information and Decision Support Center, Gaza, “Impact of International Aid on Economic Development in Palestine,” 2012, pp. 7–14. (in Arabic)

³⁷ European Union (EU), Directorate General for Internal Policies Policy Department on Budgetary Affairs, EU Financial Assistance to the occupied Palestinian territory, 2010, p. 8, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/budg/dv/2010_fayyad_eu_financial_assistance_/2010_fayyad_eu_financial_assistance_en.pdf

Note: The exchange rate of dollar against Euro in 2008, 2009 and 2010 was based on the European Central Bank (ECB) data, which was 0.68, 0.717 and 0.754 respectively.



2008: €383.27 million (around \$563.63 million)

2009: €289.95 million (around \$404.39 million)

2010: €207.5 million (around \$275.2 million)

In comparison, the average annual US aid was as follows:³⁸

1994–1999: \$70 million.

2000–2007: \$170 million.

2008–2013: \$500 million.

In addition, between 1995 and 2013 the US provided the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with around \$2.831 billion, an annual average of \$149 million.³⁹

General US aid to the Palestinians decreased from \$152.9 million in 2006 to \$69.5 million in 2007, then went up to \$414.5 million in 2008 and to \$980.7 million in 2009, and deteriorated again reaching \$426.7 million in 2013.⁴⁰ Notably, US aid, barely amounting to 10% of total international aid, was conditioned on funding American projects under slogans of revitalization of democracy and women's participation.⁴¹

Figures of the Arab Economic Report for 2005 show that around 7% of total international aid from 1994 to 2000 was contributed by Arab countries, especially the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Arab contribution increased to 63.5% during the *Intifadah* years (2000–2005).⁴²

As for Japan, total aid provided to the PA from 1993 to 2012 reached around \$1.2 billion, at an average \$60 million per year.⁴³

³⁸ Jim Zanotti, "U.S. Foreign Aid to the Palestinians," CRS, 30/9/2013, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf>

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid; and Jim Zanotti, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Palestinians," CRS, 18/1/2013.

⁴¹ Nabil al-Sahly, "The Palestinian Authority and Limiting International Aid," site of Aljazeera.net, 22/2/2007, <http://www.aljazeera.net/opinions/pages/f47942c0-a75b-4384-b4ed-4b58c9e68251> (in Arabic)

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 14/4/2012, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/middle_e/palestine/meeting1204_pm.html

Generally, the size of international aid to the PA fluctuated between 2001 and 2011 as shown in the below table:⁴⁴

Table 1: International Aid to the PA during 2001–2011

Year	Aid (\$ million)
2001	1,600
2002	1,400
2003	1,300
2004	1,400
2005	1,200
2006	1,500
2007	1,800
2008	2,400
2009	2,700
2010	2,500
2011	2,400

Examining the orientations of international aid reveals the link between the size of aid and the nature of political developments in the Palestinian society and the development of negotiations with the Israeli side as follows:

a. Second *Intifadah* Phase, Especially 2000–2002

Aid decreased during the second *Intifadah* but then increased after the uprising died down. In addition, demands by international donors after the death of President ‘Arafat in 2004 focused on building Palestinian institutions, especially security apparatus, a demand that was explicitly outlined in the Quartet statements.

b. Post–2006 Phase, After Hamas’ Victory in the Legislative Elections⁴⁵

The International Donors’ Conference for the Palestinian State that was held in Paris after the Annapolis Conference pledged to provide \$7.7 billion during the 2008–2010 period.⁴⁶ However, Hamas’ victory in the legislative elections pushed donors to almost freeze aid, except for some institutions, thus urging the

⁴⁴ Site of Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA),

<http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/countryprofile/palestineopt>

⁴⁵ Criteria set for Palestinian aid, site of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 31/1/2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4665670.stm

⁴⁶ Opening Address at the AHLC Meeting in London, AHLC Chairman’s statement, 2/5/2008, site of The World Bank, <http://go.worldbank.org/JT8T7NHXB0>



EU to pursue the Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) which would provide aid for three months at a time. Ultimately, the continuation of aid would depend on the development of Palestinian political positions in the direction expected by donors.⁴⁷

In 2008, the European Commission introduced a new mechanism known as PEGASE (Palestino-Européen de Gestion de l'Aide Socio-Economique) to channel assistance to the building of the Palestinian state.⁴⁸ In addition, India provided \$20 million to the PA in 2008, “a grant of \$10 million as budgetary support to the PNA to help meet its immediate requirements and another \$10 million as assistance for development projects.”⁴⁹

In 2009, a conference was held in Sharm el-Sheikh after the Israeli war on Gaza where participants pledged \$4.5 billion for the reconstruction of the Strip.⁵⁰

The two international envoys, James Wolfensohn and Álvaro de Soto, have both revealed that there is a strong link between the financial aid to Palestinians and their political stances, and that the aid is used as a tool for pressure.

This phase saw a disparity between European donors and the US. The former started to provide direct, limited aid to the concerned Palestinian administrations, however, it had only a minor impact on Palestinian economic conditions.

It should be noted here that some European countries, notably Germany, blacklisted some Arab and Islamic charities due to their provision of aid to Hamas, which the EU considered a “terror” organization.

These European and US policies were reiterated when it was declared that if Fatah and Hamas agreed to form a “national unity government,” foreign aid would stop. This was very clear after the 2006 election, and after increased efforts for reconciliation from 2010 until the time of writing.

⁴⁷ Oxfam International, EU must resume aid to Palestinian Authority, 13/9/2006, http://www.oxfam.org/en/news/pressreleases2006/pr060914_palestine

⁴⁸ PEGASE Information Sheet, Overview of PEGASE, site of European External Action Service (EEAS), EU, http://eeas.europa.eu/palestine/tim/pegase_en.pdf

⁴⁹ Site of ThaIndian News, 7/10/2008, http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/india-gifts-embassy-to-palestine-pledge-20-million-aid_100104602.html

⁵⁰ BBC, 2/3/2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7918105.stm

Based on the above, international aid to the Palestinians shows the following:

a. A grave disparity between the value of pledged aid and what is actually provided to the PA, whether from Western or Arab and Muslim countries. This has been recurrent since the Oslo Accords, aiming at dragging the PA into a series of concessions under the pressure of financial needs. However, after the concessions have been made, aid promises have been scarcely fulfilled in order to secure more concessions, which could be observed during the two stages mentioned above. For example, total aid pledged by donors to the PA during the first stage (1994–2001) was around \$6.898 billion, whereas total commitment amounted to \$5.738 billion, constituting 83% of the pledged sum, while actual spending reached \$3.897 billion (67%), with an annual average of around \$486 million.⁵¹ The gap between requested funding from donors and the actual funding provided was \$438 million in 2011 and \$694 million in 2012.⁵²

b. Using international aid to shape internal Palestinian relations as demonstrated in the stance towards the national unity government on one hand, and towards reconciliation on the other, and the insistence of donors, especially the EU, that armed resistance movements comply with all PA agreements with Israel. Ultimately, this issue might develop to include linking aid to accepting Israeli demands regarding Palestinian recognition of the “Jewishness of the state,” with detrimental strategic results.

However, some countries, such as China and Russia, have not acquiesced with these Western orientations. Russia, for instance, opened a representative office in GS in 1995, then transferred it to Ramallah in 2004, while quasi-annual negotiations continued to be held between the head of the PA and Russian officials. Moreover, the disparity of the Russian position compared to Western positions was clear after Hamas’ victory in legislative elections, where Russia presented an initiative for dialogue with the movement. Moscow also criticized the halt of aid to Palestinians as a result of the movement’s victory and it provided financial aid estimated at \$10 million paid in two batches in 2006 and

⁵¹ See The Palestinian National Authority, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ramallah, International Aid, Third and Fourth Quarters, 2001, p. 12. (in Arabic)

⁵² Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development, Palestine: A State Under Occupation, The Government of Palestine’s Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Brussels, 19/3/2013, p. 21, http://www.mopad.pna.ps/en/images/PDFs/SoP_AHLC%20Report_14%203%202013_Final%20Print.pdf

2008. It also provided food aid to the Palestinians in GS after the Israeli war on GS in 2008. There was also Russian communication with some Russian churches in the occupied Palestinian territories.⁵³

3. Palestinian Relation with International Civil Society

Three variables have affected the orientations of international civil society towards the Palestinian issue. These can be summarized as follows:

a. The Palestinian *Intifadah*, especially in 1987 and 2000: The PA has tried and still is tirelessly attempting to prevent its recurrence, despite its huge effect on the orientations of international public opinion.

b. The GS blockade, which since 2005 has commanded the attention of differing levels of international public attention given its humanitarian nature. When Israel escalated its military operations against the Strip and targeted civilian facilities including schools, hospitals, gas stations, electricity network, and food stores, while further tightening the blockade, international solidarity actions and levels of interest increased. Civil bodies sent aid via land and sea, reaching a peak with the Freedom Flotilla, an aid convoy which was attacked by the Israeli forces who killed and injured a number of solitary activists on board.

The PA's diplomatic effort was humble in its support of these orientations on the international level. Thus, when Martin Nesirky, spokesperson for the UN Secretary General, stated, "The secretary-general called on all governments concerned to use their influence to discourage such flotillas,"⁵⁴ no PA official reacted to such declaration.

c. Ideological and religious orientations of some communities, bodies, non-governmental organizations and parties.

International public opinion polls during 2007–2013 revealed a number of important indicators, which should be invested by the PA on the international level:

a. Measuring orientations of international (non-Arab) public opinion in 27 countries, home to 80% of world population, show that 48% of respondents view Israel negatively, 19.6% positively, and 32.4%, are neutral.

⁵³ Site of Russia Today (RT), 3/4/2009, <http://arabic.rt.com/info/27606/>

⁵⁴ RT, 28/5/2011; and see site of Reuters News Agency, 27/5/2011, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/05/27/uk-gazaflotilla-un-idUKTRE74Q68K20110527>

b. Support for Israel is deteriorating, albeit slowly, where the gradual deterioration might have significant results on the long run. Indeed, Jewish American scholar Noam Chomsky stressed in the International Conference of Applied Linguistics and Literature held by the Islamic University in Gaza, that international solidarity with the Palestinian issue was increasing and the change has started to affect American society and public opinion. He also said that international solidarity with the Palestinian issue has reached high levels compared to previous phases where it has become the center of more debate and support. Chomsky said that international solidarity was significantly increasing and that the Israeli war in late 2008 tipped the balance and contributed to changing the picture about the facts on the ground.⁵⁵

However, an academic study regarding the effect of PA media on international public opinion shows negative indicators represented in:⁵⁶

- a. Weak language diversity in Palestinian media outlets, a problem that is quite clear when looking at the PA foreign Ministry's English website.
- b. The Palestinian media (in Ramallah and Gaza) focus is on inter-Palestinian conflicts rather than addressing the international community.
- c. Deficit in media expertise in addressing the international community.

Remarkably, Palestinian civil society has been more effective in contacting international counterparts than the PA, although there are some reservations on some of these organizations.

4. Palestinian Diplomacy in International Governmental Organizations

The UN is the most important international organization and it reflects official international orientations towards international issues. Examining UN activities concerning the Palestinian issue, the following can be noted:

⁵⁵ Naom Chomsky: International Solidarity with the Palestinians is Increasing and the Arab Revolutions Shocked America, site of Lakome, 20/10/2012, <https://www.lakome.com> (in Arabic)

⁵⁶ Firas Abdullah Islaih, Palestinian Public Opinion and Its Impact on the Determination of Political Orientations of Decision-Makers and the Process of Making the Palestinian Political Decision During 1993–2006, Master's Thesis, An-Najah National University, 2009, p. 93 and after (in Arabic); and see Khalid al-'Azzi, Palestinian Media Crisis, So How Does It Address the International and Regional Surrounding...!!!, Alrakoba electronic newspaper, 1/6/2014, <http://www.alrakoba.net/articles-action-show-id-44105.htm> (in Arabic)



- a. The UNGA issued 91 resolutions between 1994 and 2012 regarding the Palestinian issue or related issues, which means an average of five resolutions per year.
- b. The US veto has paralyzed the effectiveness of the UN Security Council in resolutions related to the Palestinian issue. During 1995–2011, the US has vetoed 17 pro-Palestinian resolutions as follows:

Table 2: US Use of Veto 1995-2011

Number	Year	Subject
1	1995	Considering East Jerusalem occupied territory.
2	1997	Condemning settlement building and considering East Jerusalem occupied territory.
3	2001	Sending civil observers to WB and GS.
4	2002	Condemning Israel for the killing of several UN employees working in occupied Palestinian territories.
5–6	2003	1. Demanding that Israel not deport or threaten the safety of Palestinian leader Yasir ‘Arafat. 2. Declaring the construction of the Separation Wall illegal.
7–8	2004	1. Condemning Israel’s assassination of Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin. 2. Demanding an end to the Israeli military offensive in GS.
9	2006	Demanding Israel halt its two-week military offensive in GS.
10	2007	UN affirmation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.
11–14	2008	1. Affirming Palestinian sovereignty over territories occupied in 1967. 2. Affirming Palestinians’ right to self-determination. 3. Calling on Israel to pay the cost of cleaning up an oil slick off the coast of Lebanon. 4. Condemning settlement construction in occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.
15	2011	Calls for stopping settlement construction in the occupied territories.
16	2011	Israel’s facilitation of movement of UN relief workers in the occupied territories and providing aid for the displaced.
17	2011	Calls for stopping settlement construction in the occupied territories

The above table shows that the US vetoes resolutions that it officially agrees with in its statements, as it wants negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides to bring about final results, where the balance of power plays major role in determining the outcome. The US stepped up its use of its veto in 2008, a year in which the US President promised Palestinians that they would witness the establishment of their state on the occupied territories, thus meaning dismal failure for Palestinian strategic orientations.

Fifth: General Assessment of the PA International Political Performance

To evaluate the PA's performance, it is important to define the determinants of evaluation as follows:

1. Positive Indicators in the International Palestinian Scene

Despite the difficulty of defining the outcome of the regional Arab scene after the deep disorder that has hit the Arab political system, it is important to identify some relatively positive indicators in the international Palestinian scene as follows:

a. Improvement in legal status after upgrading the status of the State of Palestine to a non-member observer state, and broad international recognition in this respect. This makes the legal framework an important dimension, supportive of communication between the PA and the international community, especially from less sympathetic countries. It also dedicates the Palestinian right in all international institutions, particularly those institutions of a legal nature.

As mentioned earlier, the greater size of support for Palestinian rights was attained prior to the PA's establishment and during the period when Palestinians adopted "armed resistance." This means that political and legal gains achieved by the Palestinian side have not been commensurate with the concessions provided from Oslo onwards.

b. Israel is increasingly viewed quite negatively in the world, where a study between 1993 and 2013 shows this result, with Palestinian uprisings and the continued resistance, along with the aggressive actions of the settlers, deepening this phenomenon. Moreover, different media outlets, whether print, audio or visual, have played an important role in shaping this world view.



Nevertheless, academic studies reveal a limited role played by PA apparatuses in this transformation where Palestinian civil society was more successful than Palestinian diplomatic missions.

c. There are orientations, which should be considered and studied thoroughly, and the possibility of their development makes it important to take them into account when building strategic visions. These orientations appear in the policies of US President Barak Obama and will possibly be seen in the near future. They are as follows:⁵⁷

1. Imposing part of the burden of preserving US interests in the Middle East on NATO, where Obama explicitly expressed such an inclination during his famous tour to Europe when he called for “burden sharing” between the US and Europe. Apparently, there is an inclination towards decreasing American presence in the region to pave the way for an “attempt” to expand the NATO role, especially regarding joint US-European interests.
2. Gradual decrease of reliance on Middle East oil by increasing the number of oil exporters to US from outside the region. Although this cannot be attained easily, there is an inclination in this sense, which would influence Gulf States politically in the long run.
3. Gradual reorientation towards Pacific-Rim nations, a complicated issue that is beyond the focus of this study.
4. Attempts to resolve the relationship between economic competition and political alliance. For example, while European countries and Japan are allies of the US, they are also its competitors in international trade, investment and access to crude resources. The American financial crisis further complicates matters, and it seems that the US is inclined towards the elimination of what Paul Kennedy has called “excessive expansion,” which remains consistent with the previous orientations.

In case of their achievement, the previous orientations will have deep impact on the structure of the Middle East regional system. However, the PA is apparently not preparing to deal with the development while there is a plethora of Israeli studies in this sense.

⁵⁷ Haim Malka, *Crossroads: The Future of the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011), ch. 4, p. 56; Louis Rene’ Beres, Israel’s Uncertain Strategic Future, *Parameters Journal*, Spring 2007, pp. 37–54; and Yehezkel Dror, Foundations of an Israeli Grand Strategy Toward the European Union, *Jewish Political Studies Review journal*, vol. 16, no. 3–4, fall 2004.

d. Gradual transformation in the international system, which will see the influence of Russia and China grow. They are less committed to the Zionist project for different reasons. Nonetheless, this has not had any immediate influence on the Palestinian issue where the size of Palestinian Chinese relations is still less than that expected. The PA must also work towards enhancing its relations with the BRICS.

2. Negative Aspects in PA Management of its International Relations

a. Confusion between the concept of “academic debate and rational argument” and negotiation which means “intelligence in employment of available power variables to achieve greatest gains with least losses.” The PA has renounced armed resistance, toiled to prevent uprisings, depended on the enemy for economic stability, and relied on a structure of fragmented authority. Consequently, it lost all of its tools for exerting pressure, regardless of the weight of these variables.

b. Stalling in international relations between overt and secret negotiations without accomplishing any tangible results.

c. The Palestinian negotiations team represents a unique case, as this team has been involved in talks for two decades without changing any of its members, an indication of the PA’s failure to renew itself.

d. Continued settlement construction coupled with inability of the PA to transform international rejection of settlements into tangible action to stop it.

e. The PA has pursued an unclear stance towards refugees, especially as it has consented in its agreements with Israel to a provision stipulating that the refugees’ issue be solved through agreement between the two sides, which means the right of return has become negotiable.

f. Flaws in the Palestinian negotiations style. This has been demonstrated in hasty retreats from strong stances and the acceptance of specific obligations, without reciprocal obligations from the Israeli side. In addition, the negotiations team makes appearances in the media in ways that do not reflect the deep persecution and oppression imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people.

Because of all these indicators, the PA has not been capable of achieving satisfactory results in its international relations, which makes it necessary to reconsider all its strategic orientations, especially its international and regional relations and alliances.

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السياسة الخارجية
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2013-1993

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