

Conflict Resolution

Secret Diplomacy and Peacemaking

Mohamed Rabie

On a regular visit to Tunisia in February 1988 to meet with the PLO leadership, I realized that the PLO did not know how to handle the uprising (Intifada), which had erupted in December 1987 in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Some PLO leaders expected it to produce a Palestinian state within six months but were unsure how the state would come. Others were concerned that the Intifada might die without achieving any of its objectives. Therefore, everyone was looking for a way to translate the Palestinian children's sacrifices into concrete political gains on the ground before it gets too late. Meanwhile, a few high ranking officials felt uneasy about the Intifada because the newly emerging young leaders in the Occupied Territories were undermining the power base and political influence of the PLO leadership within and outside Palestine. This paper tries to explain this dilemma and it was handled.

However, my knowledge of the American and Israeli mentality led me to believe that the Israelis would not negotiate from a weak position. Therefore, I saw no Palestinian state in the making at the time. After a second trip to Tunisia in June of the same year and much thinking and reflection, I saw the Intifada as a possible opportunity to initiate a dialogue between the US government and the PLO. Knowing that US officials would not talk to me directly, I called William Quandt, whom I had known and admired for years as a leading intellectual and an honest man; we made an appointment to meet later in the week. After explaining to him the situation in Tunisia and my idea, I suggested that he and I work as one team to convince the US administration to open a direct dialogue with the PLO, but he was skeptical. Quandt said that the Reagan administration did not trust the PLO and, therefore, it would not talk to it under the prevailing circumstances. Unwilling to take no for an answer, I suggested that we meet after a week, adding that, please, "sleep on it," and asked him to further think about the suggestion. He agreed.

The Process

One day before I went to see Quandt in his office at the Brookings Institution, King Hussein of Jordan announced that he decided to disengage from the West Bank and abandon whatever responsibility he had assumed toward the occupied territories and its population. Quandt thought that the King's announcement had made the PLO the only party representing the Palestinian people, and, therefore, left the US government with no one else to talk to

regarding the future of the Occupied Territories. Consequently, the chances that the US government might recognize the PLO and open a dialogue with it had improved tremendously. So, I suggested that he writes what he thinks are the US conditions for recognizing the PLO, and I would write what I feel are the PLO conditions for accepting the US conditions for dialogue. Quandt suggested that each of us writes what he thinks is both parties' conditions; we agreed and made an appointment to meet in a few days to compare notes and plan our next step. When we met, each one made few modifications to the other's statement, and he immediately called one of his old colleagues at the State Department and made an appointment to see him the next day.

After having his meeting at the State Department, Quandt called me to say that they were enthusiastic and thought that the time was right to pursue such an idea. The next day, Quandt's contact at the State Department called to say that George Schultz, then US Secretary of State, had agreed to pursue the proposal and formed a committee of four of his close advisors to coordinate the communications. He also informed Quandt that they had chosen the version I had prepared as a basis for negotiations. And so, the process had started, and it was my turn to fly to Tunisia to convince the PLO leadership to accept the document I prepared and presented through Quandt to the US State Department.

In Tunis, Arafat asked me over breakfast not to tell anyone of my mission's nature before we had a chance to go over it with Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) who is the current president of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. But when it was time for the three of us to meet later that evening, I found myself facing the entire PLO Executive Committee, with whom I had met more than once before. And without delay, I explained my idea to them and presented the proposal, telling them that the initiative was mine and no other party has anything to do with it, and, therefore, it was up to them to ask me to continue or abandon the effort. However, I explained to them that there was no other way to translate our children's sacrifices in Palestine into concrete political gains. I added that I had an American partner, and that Chairman Arafat knows his name, and it was up to him to reveal it to them. And as I surveyed the faces around the table, I noticed that Arafat had invited Mr. Khalid El Hassan to attend the meeting, though he was not at the time a member of the PLO Executive Committee. Khalid El Hassan has consistently called for trying to open a dialogue with the US government. Therefore, his invitation to the meeting was a definitive sign that Arafat liked the proposal and tried to strengthen the forces in its favor by involving Kalid El Hassan.

After about two hours of deliberations that showed no objections, Arafat named a committee that included Khalid El Hassan to meet with me, study the document in detail, and make the necessary recommendations. But after the committee completed its task and held a

series of meetings with PLO leaders who counted at the time, the PLO executive committee approved the proposal. However, Arafat, who promised to see me immediately after finishing our work, did everything possible, including making two trips to neighboring countries, to avoid meeting with me. Having known Arafat for years, I realized that he would not see me during that visit no matter how long I waited. Arafat wanted to have the opportunity to claim credit for the outcome of the effort if it succeeds and disclaim responsibility if it fails. Because of my enthusiasm, and due to others' encouragement, it took me four days to realize that fact.

Consequently, I made plane reservations to leave immediately and told Arafat's office to send a car to take me to the airport the next morning. When one of his advisors came to accompany me to the airport, I gave him a letter addressed to Arafat in which I said. "I know the reasons why you are trying to avoid seeing me, and I understand your concerns; however, I will proceed on the assumption that you approve my mission and accept the document produced by the committee unless I hear from him otherwise." So I took the hard decision that Arafat had refused to take on behalf of the Palestinian people. My task in Tunisia was not easy, but before I returned to Washington, I had received the green light to go ahead and try to get US approval of what we agreed to present to them.

The drafting of a joint agreement started in July 1988 and reached its destination in the middle of September; it stipulated that Schultz would make an official announcement to which the PLO responds positively. But Schultz hesitated; he set more than one date to make the announcement and canceled it at the last minute: he began to play a dirty game that almost killed the initiative. It was the Swedes' intervention that saved the initiative. However, Schultz made the agreement less substantive and less helpful in making Middle East peace possible. One of Schultz's uncalled for actions was to refuse to grant Arafat a visa to travel to the United States in November to address the UN General Assembly and explain the Palestinian position and peaceful intentions. Consequently, Schultz forced the UN general assembly to vote almost unanimously to hold a special session in Geneva and give Arafat a platform to address the international community and the world public opinion.

Just before Schultz made his announcement in 1988, Quandt told me that Schultz was furious because he learned that the initiative was mine and that the PLO did not learn of it until after Quandt presented it to his advisors at the State Department. The PLO learned of the initiative only after Schultz and President Reagan had accepted it in principle and authorized State Department officials to pursue the matter. Though Schultz did not need to recognize this fact, he wrote in his memoirs that I was sent to him by Arafat. (For more detail about this process, I advise all interested readers to read my book, "The US-PLO Dialogue," (University Press of Florida, 1995).

A little story that only very few people have heard might give a clear picture of how Schultz operated and how faithful he was to his friends and the cause of peace. During his tenure as head of Brown and Root, Schultz had made several friends and business associates and even business partners in the Arab world. Brown and Root is one of the world's largest pipelines and construction companies that have had operations in the Arabian Gulf states since the early 1950s. Schultz's association with the Middle East and its leaders made his business friends and partners very happy and optimistic when President Reagan appointed him Secretary of State. After confirmation by congress, Schultz's closest Palestinian business partner requested a meeting with him; he told Schultz that he would be bringing along two Palestinian intellectuals to explain the Palestinian position and present a peace plan for his consideration. However, one day before the meeting date, Schultz's office informed the Palestinians that Schultz would meet with them in a Washington hotel, not in the State Department. But when the Palestinians arrived at the designated hotel, they were met by a low ranking State Department official in the hotel garage waiting for them. The man told the three Palestinians that the Schultz could not meet them, and he is authorized to listen to whatever they had to say.

Confidence Building

During the 1980s, I participated in several dialogue groups and a few meetings with prominent Israelis and American and European Jews seeking a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Even though no group or meeting was able to arrive at a solution, I gained a valuable experience that helped me write my book, "Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity," which was the first book to develop a theory of conflict resolution. One of the main lessons I learned from those meetings and tried to implement in drafting the document for the US-PLO dialogue was that the so-called confidence-building measures are more likely to complicate the problem at hand rather than facilitate its resolution. Actions taken unilaterally by a party to the conflict could create new facts on the ground that cause new obstacles to be erected that could harden feelings and positions on both sides.

Therefore, the first and most important confidence-building measure to be taken is to outline the peace process's proposed outcome in concrete terms. In other words, the first step should define the final station of the peace process that ends the conflict and establish peace. If such an outcome is defined in advance and accepted by the principal antagonists, it is more likely to create a great deal of mutual trust and make things easy. It is likely to make both parties eager to reach the final destination as soon as possible to avoid recrimination and probable developments no one can anticipate or control. The second most crucial step is to convince both parties to concentrate on what I call "the positive objectives" they aspire for and

forget the "the negative ones" they wish to deny their antagonists. The positive objectives are defined as those sought by each party and seen as detrimental to its survival; the negative ones are the targets that each party likes to prevent its antagonists from achieving. However, one party's negative objectives often represent the positive objectives of the other, and vice versa. So if one party insists on denying the other its legitimate rights, it would be almost impossible to found a mutually acceptable solution, causing conflict to continue for decades or even centuries with the human and material cost rising daily.

For example, if the Israelis continue to deny the Palestinians their legitimate statehood rights and secure borders and refuse to abide by UN resolutions, no solution would be reached. The Israelis also need to end their occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, dismantle the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and restore the Palestinian refugees' rights as defined by the UN. Going back to Moshe Dayan in 1967, the Israeli leadership had agreed not to accept any solution that does not give Israel total military, economic, and political control over the West Bank. This information was published by Henry Siegman, who served as president of the American Jewish Congress for several years. Siegman quotes Dayan as saying after Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in June 1967, "the solution is what we have on the ground and therefore, the question is not how to reach a solution, but how to live without a solution." Henry Siegman's article is published in the London Review of Books; it is on my site under "outside contribution."

When mutual trust is absent, and the will to negotiate is weak, it would be hard for antagonists to negotiate directly and produce tangible results. In such a case, a third-party would be needed to intervene and provide a degree of trust by guaranteeing fairness and protection for the weaker party. However, a third party has to have the power to influence the opponents' respective positions, particularly the stronger party; it must also be perceived as credible and have a track record of being honest and fair. The failure of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in the past is mainly due to American blind support of Israel and backing almost all Israeli policies in contradiction of international law. The American team that was supposed to mediate between the Israeli government and the PLO was composed of American Jews committed to the radical and expansionist Israeli policies as if there were no Arab-Americans or non-Jewish Americans to be included.

Also, all parties with a stake in the outcome of a conflict must be given the right to participate in the peacemaking process. No party, therefore, should be excluded regardless of its position and perceived intentions. Claims that certain parties support terrorism or practice terrorism or represent obstacles to peace and, therefore, must be excluded are almost always excuses to discount such parties' grievances, ignore their interests, and demonize their

convictions and followers. Even if such parties are part of the problem, they are, at the same time, part of the solution; no lasting peace and peaceful coexistence are possible without addressing the grievances of all parties concerned satisfactorily. The Darfur negotiations in Sudan are an example of such a problem; it has proven that when certain parties are ignored or excluded or decided not to join the peace process due to a perception of unfairness, negotiations almost always fail. No agreement can guarantee long-term Israel- Palestinian peaceful coexistence unless parties like Syria, Jordan, and Hamas participate in the negotiation process and be allowed to air their grievances and express their opinions freely.

For conflicting parties to make peace, there is no need that each party should understand the other or sympathize with it. People have been making business deals throughout history without being neighbors or know each other's cultures or history or share dreams or even speak the same language. Knowing each other is more likely to make negotiations easier, but not necessarily faster or more successful. All that is needed for negotiations to succeed is fairness and guarantees that no party will cheat or undermine the other's legitimate needs during the negotiation process.

Conflict Resolution and Culture

Conflicts, in general, are divided into two major categories, interest-related and value-related. Conflicts or disputes over trade issues, state security considerations, regional influence, and even natural resources are considered interest-related. Conflicts caused by economic competition and disputes between labor and management are also interest-related. Other disputes within and between states caused by political ideologies, religious beliefs, cultural rights, and national sovereignty are value-related. However, most international and all ethnic conflicts are both interest-related and value-related at the same time.

Conflicts emanating from clashing values and hostile perceptions are hard to define and harder to resolve peacefully. In contrast, conflicts emanating from clashing economic and political interests are easier to define and often resolve without force. However, most ethnic and state conflicts are a mixture of competing interests, hostile relationships, and clashing values, making them complex and hard to resolve using one set of conflict resolution rules. Consequently, mediators and negotiators must have the right training and knowledge to switch from one set of rules to another without antagonizing either party.

Therefore, when the core issues of a particular conflict are value-related, such as national sovereignty, solutions are hard to come by quickly. Building mutual trust must precede attempts to engage in a peace process to resolve the conflict in question. However, mutual

trust needs nurturing that might take a long time before being realized. Since mutual trust is a prerequisite to successful negotiation and a must for lasting peace agreements, it must be built one stone at a time. In contrast, when the core issues of conflict are interest-related, such as borders and water resources, solutions are easier to find, and mutual trust could be built quickly.

When trust is lacking, and one or more of the respective parties' leadership is weak or lacks the will to negotiate because of public sentiment, secret diplomacy becomes imperative. Political dialogue conducted in secrecy could play an important role in clarifying the antagonists' respective positions; seek mutual understanding, and explore new ways for peace. For example, throughout the more than 70 years of the Arab-Israeli conflict, neither the Israeli leadership nor the Palestinian leadership has presented the other with a concrete peace plan. The political leadership on each side of the aisle has always felt that the maximum it could offer would not be acceptable to the other. Therefore neither party tried to take the initiative and make an offer. Such a move is more likely to be viewed as a concession that undermines its popularity at home and could cause its political demise.

On the other hand, the successive US administrations have failed to see the dangers inherent in being biased, siding with Israel, and ignoring the Palestinian people's rights and grievances. And by insisting on being the sole mediator and judge, the US policymakers have marginalized all other regional and international powers, including the United Nations, the European Union, Russia, and China. These are parties capable of offering new ideas and incentives to facilitate negotiations and provide guarantees for the weaker party. American bias toward Israel and blind support of its policies have fed despair and encouraged radicalism throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds.

The American approach to peacemaking has always boiled down to having a successful conference, not a concrete and satisfactory outcome. but successful conferences cannot guarantee successful outcomes or mutually acceptable political settlements. In 1985, a distinguished German historian approached me with a plan to engage Israelis and Arabs in a serious peace process. His goal, however, was much modest than that of any US president; he aimed at producing a mutually acceptable statement containing a set of principles to govern future Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. But for producing this statement, a three-persons group representing the Israelis, the Palestinians, and the German historian agreed to form one team and work to produce the intended statement. Members of the team were: Dr. Rudolf Hilf, an advisor to the Chancellor of Bavaria, and the person who conceived the idea, Mr. David Shaham, then director of the Center for Middle East Peace in Tel Aviv, and I

(Mohamed Rabie). Members of the team had to work for four consecutive years before agreeing on a statement of principle. The statement was called "The Minimum Consensus."

While Mr. Shaham kept shuttling between Munich and Tel Aviv, negotiating with his people, I kept shuttling between Washington, Munich, and Tunisia negotiating with the PLO leadership. When we finally produced a statement, 13 Israeli politicians, 13 Palestinian politicians and intellectuals, five distinguished Americans, and about 20 distinguished Europeans and Russians were convened in Vienna in July 1989 to endorse the statement. During that meeting, Israelis and Palestinians, and other participants expressed their views and hopes regarding peace. One of the Israeli participants, who had negotiated with the Palestinians before, said that Palestinians had shown no interest in riding the peace train. I answered him, saying that I know of no Palestinian who refuses to ride the peace train, but all Palestinians want to know where that train is going before riding it. You cannot ask people to ride a train that they do not know where it is going. What we need to do first is to identify the station to which we are going. Then we can talk about the stops that the train makes on the road and for how long. Without knowing the end station, no one will ride the train because it might be a train to nowhere.

In light of this experience, it is doubtful that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations could produce something that approaches what each party hopes to achieve in fifty years. The only way to reach a credible Israeli-Palestinian agreement is for each party to accept all UN resolutions in advance and go from there to outline a settlement. Refusal to abide by UN resolution is a refusal to make peace.

Today, probably 90% of all Arabs have no trust in America, especially after President Trump's Deal of the Century. Any action of this sort cannot be an honest attempt to make peace but a vicious act to use sheer power to impose the powerful party's will on the weak one. No American president has done anything during the last century to project a human image for America in the Arab world. Therefore, America lost the Arabs' trust. Even though Arabs fear America, they do not respect America or trust its leaders' intentions. Some Arabs seem to think, and not without good reasons, that whatever American does in the Middle East is meant first and for most to get more Arab states to normalize relations with Israel without getting anything in return.

The conflict's core issues are the Israeli state's final borders, the future of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem, Jerusalem's final status, and the Palestinian refugees' right to return to their towns and villages they left behind in 1948. Jewish terrorist gangs killed thousands of Palestinians, burned hundreds of villages, and committed many

massacres to terrorize the Palestinians and force them to abandon their homes, leaving behind everything they ever owned and inherited. In 1947 when a violent conflict erupted between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, Arabs owned 92% of Palestine's land. Yet, the UN Partition Plan of 1947, which called for creating two states in Palestine, one Arab and one Jewish, allocated 49% of the land to the Arabs and 51% to the Jews. But when the well trained and equipped military forces of the Jewish terrorist gangs overwhelmed the weak Palestinian resistance and the enfeeble Arab forces, the Israeli forces had captured 78% of Palestine. Consequently, only 22% of Palestine's land was left for its native people.

Therefore, it would be utterly unfair to ask Palestinians to give more land to Israel and allow it to confiscate an extra portion of the tiny piece left to them. Besides, almost five million Palestinians live now in the West Bank and Gaza, and probably seven million more have the right to settle in that land once a Palestinian state is established. Nevertheless, Palestinians have agreed in principle to swap land with Israel in the range of 3% of the West Bank area to allow Israel to annex the largest cluster of Jewish settlements bordering the green line that separates Israel from the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The right of return, declared by the UN in 1947, is where Palestinians can offer Israelis a meaningful compromise; but only as part of a comprehensive settlement to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict in its entirety and make peace a reality in the region. But for a mutually acceptable compromise, there is a need for creativity and creative minds that understand the value-related nature of the conflict. A creative compromise of this nature would contain at least four major components:

1. Israeli acceptance of the refugees' right of return in principle and a commitment to repatriate a total number of Palestinians that would not threaten the Israeli state's Jewish character. If Israel agrees to repatriate all Palestinians born on or before the 15th of May 1948 with their wives and children, the number is likely to be less than 100,000. And if those people were to be repatriated over five years, Israel would be required to accommodate about 20,000 newcomers each year, a small number for Israel or any other state of its size and wealth. However, many older people would certainly die waiting for their turn to return, and many of the young would pass the opportunity to go back to Palestine. They would prefer to live in the places where they grew up to remain close to their childhood friends. Moreover, I believe that between one third and one half of those approved for repatriation would probably go to Israel for a short period only to obtain citizenship rights and then depart. They would return to where they have already settled and established roots in the West or other Arab countries, especially Jordan and the oil-exporting countries.

2. Establish an international fund of \$400-500 billion to compensate all refugees for property loss and pain endured during the last 70 years, and pay Arab governments that hosted Palestinian refugees for several decades. This figure might sound large to some observers, but it is less than the rent accrued to Palestinians since 1948 due to the confiscation of their homes, land, orchards, shops, water resources, and other properties; it is also less than half of what the United States spent on the war in Iraq. The estimated 800,000 Palestinians whom Israel forced to flee their homes, villages, and cities in 1948 are estimated to have reached six million people. Assuming that each individual would receive \$50,000, then the total amount needed to compensate everyone would be about \$300 billion. The other \$100-200 billion would go to compensate the Arab states hosting the refugees. This money should also encourage those countries to settle most of the Palestinian refugees in their countries and grant them citizenship. Israel and all Western states would be asked to contribute, with the United States contributing half of the funds. If the United States was willing to pay over one trillion dollars to destroy Iraq, it certainly could pay \$250 billion to rebuild Palestine and secure the future of Israel. No matter how much the United States pays to achieve Middle East peace, it will be less than what it would have to pay over the next ten years to support Israel, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority fight terrorism, and contain extremism.

3. Western states would also be asked to accept some of the Palestinian refugees and settle them in their countries, particularly the United States, Canada, Australia, the European Union, the Scandinavian countries, and the Arab Gulf states, which employ millions of Palestinians. This provision could lead to having more than one-half of all refugees settled outside Palestine.

4. All Palestinian, regardless of their place of birth and residence and the nationality of their fathers and mothers and citizenship status, would automatically acquire the right to return to the Palestinian state once established and be granted Palestinian citizenship and passports.

The successive Israeli and American administrations have thought that time was on their side. Therefore, they resisted all calls for serious and honest negotiations; meanwhile, they continued to expand Jewish settlement in the Palestinian Occupied Territories and the occupied Golan Heights. But in light of rising fundamentalism and extremism in most Arab and Muslim countries and Israel, it has become evident to all people who have eyes to see and ears to hear that time is not on anyone's side. Time is neither on the Israeli side nor on the American side, nor the Arab side, nor the side of the world's peace-loving peoples.

Learning from my experience in negotiating with Americans and Israelis, and reading the literature on negotiations and mediation, gave me enough knowledge and courage to write a book about conflict resolution. As a part of my research, I visited Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, and Germany in 1992, where I met with active members of some of the minorities who had lived under Soviet rule before the disintegration of the Soviet Empire. Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Germany financed the trip to those countries. Based on this experience and extensive research, I divided the process to solve conflicts into four steps.

Phases of Peace Processes

We need first to understand that conflict is an integral part of our everyday life. We all experience and deal with routinely as we interact with others to build families, make friends, earn a living, define ourselves, enhance our social status, and carry out our duties toward others. Conflict may destroy existing relationships and create opportunities to establish new ones, making it both painful and promising. But to deal with conflict successfully, we need to know how it arises, what role it plays in shaping our lives and relationships, and how to manage it in a manner that minimizes the pain and maximizes the gain.

Peace processes dealing with international and ethnic conflicts generally have three phases but four components. The phases are initiating the process, negotiations to conceive and conclude agreements, and agreements' implantation. These phases constitute three of each peace process's four components, with mediation being the fourth one. While it is theoretically possible to separate the three components and identify the start and the end of each phase, mediation is the component that ties all other components together, integrating them into one peace process.

The first phase of the peace process is the initiation phase or the political dialogue phase. It is the phase through which communication gets established, and political dialogue gets underway to persuade adversaries to talk to each other and explain their differences. During this phase, the peace process's structure and objectives get defined and completed, and preparations for the start of negotiations get finalized. This phase is often called the "pre-negotiation" phase to set the tone for the phases to follow. Common understandings reached or frameworks imposed to govern the subsequent phases are more likely to determine the negotiations' fate and outcome.

The second phase is negotiations to conceive and conclude agreements to settle the conflict. During this phase, antagonists deal with substantive matters that cause conflict and hinder peace. They focus on issues that cause reaching mutually acceptable agreements

difficult, making them concentrate on ideas and projects capable of building new, more cooperative relationships. Negotiations are more likely to be conducted directly, but they could be conducted indirectly for the sake of confidentiality. Negotiators are almost always sensitive to public opinion and popular reactions, especially if negotiations last long without showing results. Negotiators also fear a backlash if negotiations fail, which could impact their political fortunes at home negatively.

The third phase is the implementation of agreements. During this phase, negotiators and mediators focus on creating conditions to end hostilities and build new relationships among the adversaries more conducive to peaceful coexistence and long-term cooperation. However, the implementation of today's conflicts has become a complicated and costly process, often requiring massive international support. This support usually comes in the form of peacemaking or peace-keeping military intervention. This is why making peace has become more costly and more frustrating than making war. Though America was able to topple Saddam Hussein in a few days, it still carries out military operations in Iraq after 17 years. The cost of America's war on Iraq is estimated to have exceeded two trillion dollars.

On the other hand, mediation is a political process that is more likely to accompany all phases of the peace process for as long as negotiations last. While mediation ties the other phases together, it integrates their functions to conceive, conclude, and implement agreements. Mediation usually begins before launching the first phase and continues after the conclusion of agreements. In most cases, the implantation of agreements is more difficult than concluding them because antagonists tend to misinterpret agreements to delay implementation or maximize their gains. The Israeli handling of the Oslo Accords concluded in 1993 proves this point.

In international conflict resolution, all parties concerned tend to emphasize negotiation to conclude mutually acceptable agreements to resolve conflict and avoid outside settlements imposed by a third party because such plans rarely work. This means that conflict resolution requires well-structured peace processes that include political dialogue, negotiation, and mediation. As negotiation continues inside the peace process and often moves slowly, political dialogue and mediation continue outside the official process and move relatively fast. Political dialogue and mediation try to smooth the official peace process and tinker with new ideas to facilitate agreements.

Peace processes are not easy to initiate and sustain, but they represent the best hope for resolving conflict, restoring political stability, and achieving peace. Since conflicts have different causes and intensity, peace processes also have to be different regarding their focus,

timing, and methods. While flexibility is necessary to minimize failure, clarity of purpose is a precondition for launching serious peace processes and maximizing the chances of success. Cultures create an atmosphere that is either conducive to making peace or hostile to reaching to the other. Therefore, all parties involved in peace processes must be sensitive to the cultural attitudes toward the other. All parties that lack good knowledge of the antagonists' cultures should abstain from getting involved in the negotiations because culture can make and break any agreement.

Prof. Mohamed Rabie

Since my motto is, "Knowledge not shared is Knowledge wasted, and the more we share, the more we gain people of knowledge" I ask all readers to recommend every article and book they like because it will help inform others. We all share the responsibility to make our world more hospitable to peace, social justice, and freedom; a lofty goal we cannot reach without spreading knowledge and awareness in every corner of our mother earth.

Prof. Rabie is a distinguished professor of International Political Economy; he attended 5 universities and taught at 11 others on four continents. He has published 58 books, about 200 scholarly papers, and over 2000 newspaper articles. Books are 16 in English, one in Albanian, and 41 in Arabic. English Books include *Saving Capitalism and Democracy; Global Economic and Cultural Transformation; A Theory of Sustainable Sociocultural and Economic Development; The Global Debt Crisis and its Socioeconomic Implications.* (Palgrave Macmillan 2013-2017) One of the English books, "History of Racism", was translated and published in six other languages: German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Polish. Arabic Books include 3 poetry collections, 2 novels, and a story; the rest is mostly academic books and collections of ideas and reflections. Prof. Rabie is president of the Arab Thought Council in Washington, DC, a member of the Arab Thought Forum, and a fellow of the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation since 1992. Grants and scholarships financed his education from high school to receiving his Ph.D. in 1970 from the University of Houston; grants covered studies in Jordan, Egypt, Germany, and America. He is the winner of the State of Palestine Lifetime Achievement Award for scholarly publications and several other awards. His writings and positions reflect a strong commitment to peace, social justice, freedom, human development, as well as social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability.

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