It wasn’t just Palestinian actions during the Oslo process that disappointed Israelis. The process exposed deep divisions between religious and secular Israelis, and between Israeli expectations of the international community and reality. In this chapter, we’ll explore these divisions, then turn to the failure of the July 2000 Camp David summit before concluding with a discussion of the change in Israeli society wrought by the peace process—the division of territorialist Israelis into ‘land-for-peace’ and ‘peace-for-land’.

**Division Between Religious and Secular**

An unintended consequence of the peace process was the widening division between the largely secular Israeli left and the largely religious Israeli right. This process reached its nadir in the lead up to—and fall-out from—the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on 4 November 1995. The reasons why the Oslo process would widen the religious–secular divisions within Israeli society become obvious when examined through the prism of the territorial/existential dichotomy. Rabin and the territorialist backers of the Oslo process did not appear to understand that the Israeli–Palestinian dispute consisted of distinct national-territorial and religious-existential conflicts—including a specifically Jewish religious-existential conflict. And even if they did unconsciously know this, they
didn’t appear to understand that the Oslo peace agreements were only attempting to resolve the territorial conflict. The concept of voluntarily ceding part of the divinely inherited Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel) to non-Jews was (and remains) anathema to Jewish religious-existentialists.

The secular–religious divide was not created by the Oslo process. For instance, a 1988 poll (held before the peace process) revealed that 58 per cent of Jerusalem Jews saw religious–secular tensions as the most serious problem in the city.¹ Indeed, the division between the national-territorialist and religious-existentialist camps had existed for decades before Oslo. However, loyalty to the state (most religious-existentialists were Zionist) and the lack of realistic prospects for territorial peace with the Palestinians had allowed these divisions to be papered over. As discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, the 1967 war gained for Israeli territorialists land that might be ceded for peace. However, for religious-existentialists, this was the biblical heartland. The war had the potential to bring the religious–secular division into stark relief, but the resounding Arab League rejection of the concept of peace with Israel later that year deferred the issue. Despite protests, the 1979 peace with Egypt was not met with overwhelming concern by the religious-existentialist camp in Israel, due to the fact that the territory Israel ceded was not part of Eretz Yisrael; the agreement did not pose a direct threat to their ideology. Indeed, an existentialist prime minister, Menachem Begin, negotiated and signed the agreement (and a clear majority of Israelis supported the move²).

This is in contrast to the Oslo agreements, which involved ceding part of Eretz Yisrael to non-Jews. This sparked, within the Israeli religious-existentialist camp, (largely non-violent) efforts to undermine the peace process. Because a small but persistent percentage of religious Jewish Israelis felt it was legitimate to use violence to oppose the peace process,³ it is not surprising that some religious-existentialist elements would take the next step into terrorism. Jewish religious-existentialist terrorism did not begin with Rabin’s assassination. For instance, the

¹ See Liebman 1990 “Introduction” p. xi.
² See Diskin 2015 “Domestic Israeli Politics and the Conflict” p. 51.
³ See Ya’ar and Hermann 1996 “Israeli Majority for Compromise; Minority Endorses Forceful Opposition to Evacuation”.

Gush Emunim Underground, which attempted to kill Palestinian officials in the 1980s and plotted to destroy the Dome of the Rock, was established as a response to Israel’s peace treaty with Egypt. Baruch Goldstein’s murder of 29 Palestinians in the Cave of the Patriarchs Mosque in Hebron in February 1995 was religious-existentialist in nature. Isolated murderous attacks have occurred since. Similarly, the purpose of the frequent vandalism of Palestinian property by some settlers is to pressure Israel into not acting against Jewish religious-existentialist parties.4

Prime Minister Rabin, the archetypal national-territorialist, was assasinated by the religious-existentialist Yigal Amir in the months after the Interim Agreement was signed with the Palestinians.5 While only one man pulled the trigger, the assassination took place amid religiously loaded animus against the prime minister. For instance, religious opponents of the peace process labelled Rabin a traitor and compared him with Hitler. More fringe groups suggested he deserved religiously-mandated death, due to his supposed imperilling of Jewish life. Rabin’s assassin avidly read Baruch Hagever, a book in which various rabbis praised the actions of Baruch Goldstein.6 In Amir’s confession, he was unapologetically clear that he killed Rabin to prevent further concessions being made to the Palestinians, in order to protect the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael.

Five years after Rabin’s assassination, the faltering Oslo process collapsed after the failure of the July 2000 Camp David summit and the subsequent outbreak of the second intifada in September that year. The near-universal Jewish Israeli view that the Palestinians were at fault for refusing to negotiate in good-faith at the Camp David summit,7 in combination with the violence of the second intifada, bridged some of

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4 See Anti-Defamation League 2015 “Price Tag and Extremist Attacks in Israel”.

5 For a discussion on Amir’s religious justification for killing Rabin, see Fine 2015 Political Violence in Judaism, Christianity and Islam pp. 136–137. Others have argued that increasing Islamist terrorism led to the radicalisation of the settlement leadership (See Aronoff (citing Sprinzak) 1999 “Political Violence and Extremism” p. 239). While that was likely a factor, it discounts the threat to the religious-existentialists posed by Oslo. That is, Oslo triggered the radicalisation of the settler leadership; Islamist terrorism only convinced them that they were right.

6 See Aronoff op. cit. p. 240. The book’s title, which plays on the meaning of Baruch, means both ‘Baruch the Man’ and ‘Blessed Be the Man’.

7 See Ya’ar and Hermann 2000 “Peace Index—July 2000”; and Ross 2004 The Missing Peace p. 693.
the left–right, religious–secular division (mostly by shifting Israeli political sentiment to the right). As will be discussed in Part IV, the belief that Israel has no negotiating partner has largely continued in the two decades since the collapse of Oslo, preserving the papering over of territorialist–existentialist differences. If an Israeli–Palestinian peace process resumes in earnest, tensions between Israeli territorialists and religious-existentialists will once again increase. As discussed in Part I, a peace agreement is an inherently territorialist document. It has little chance of being accepted by the respective populations until the various existentialist arguments are refuted to such an extent that existentialist opposition to the agreement is reduced to an insignificant proportion of the population. This does not mean convincing religious people to become agnostic. Rather, it means presenting alternative messages to religious communities, potentially allowing them to maintain their faith while conceding a territorialist outcome. Ardent atheists like Rabin struggle do this—what is required is the engagement of people from the territorialist and existentialist communities who are mutually acceptable, and the beginnings of a national conversation.

**INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY**

An Israeli expectation of peace with the Palestinians was that its international legitimacy would be enhanced—and, indeed, it was. As a direct result of the 1993 Declaration of Principles, a number of countries—not least Jordan—that had hitherto refused to establish diplomatic relations with Israel now did so. In the wake of the Oslo agreements, Israeli embassies around the world increased from 100 to 150. Foreign direct investment in Israel increased, putting the Israeli economy on an upwards trajectory, which, aside from a hiccup caused by the ‘dot com’ crash of 2000 (combined with the immediate effects of the second intifada), continued until the COVID-19 pandemic. Even international performing

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8 See Schulze 2001 “Camp David and the Al-Aqsa Intifada” p. 222. In December 2000, 69 per cent of Israelis thought Palestinians were violent, compared with 47 per cent in July. See Ya’ar and Hermann 2000 “Peace Index—December 2000”.

9 See Peri 2000 “The Assassination” p. 26. That said, it was the 1991 Madrid talks (and the breakdown of the Soviet Union) that led to the establishment of Israeli relationships with Russia, India and China.
artists such as Sting and U2 visited, ‘giving Israel the post-Oslo seal of approval’. All this helped increase Oslo’s legitimacy within Israel.

This increased international legitimacy was largely premised on the expectation a final status agreement with the Palestinians would soon be signed. As the pace of the peace process slowed, this legitimacy was used as leverage to pressure Israel into making further concessions to the Palestinians. However, because so many Jewish Israelis saw the increase in Palestinian terrorism as being a result of the peace process, they came to believe the international community’s pressure on Israel meant it did not have Israeli interests at heart. As Ross points out, given security is Israel’s priority, if Israel feels the international community does not take Israel’s security concerns seriously, it will be unwilling to heed international calls to make concessions for peace.

This premise was tested by the first Netanyahu Government from 1996. Netanyahu was elected vowing to slow down the peace process, proceeding only when Palestinians had proven their peaceful intentions. Much of the international blame for the stalled peace process subsequently came to rest on Netanyahu’s shoulders. This criticism was answered with incredulity by Netanyahu, who complained of wilful international blindness to Palestinian violence and their alleged unwillingness to implement their Oslo obligations.

10 Kaye and Brinn 1997 “U2 Includes Israel in Upcoming Tour”.
11 See Makovsky 2003 “Taba Mythchief” p. 127.
12 In May 1998, 60 per cent of Israelis felt that Western European countries were pro-Palestinian. See Ya’ar-Yuchtman and Hermann 1998 “Peace Index—May 1998”. By April 2002, provided with a list of 10 countries and institutions, Jewish Israelis were asked whether they would welcome any of them intervening in the peace process. Only the United States (at 88 per cent) and the United Kingdom (at 63 per cent) received positive responses. (Sixty-seven per cent were against EU involvement.) See Ya’ar and Hermann 2002 “Peace Index—April 2002”.
13 See Ross 2004 op. cit. p. 6.
14 See Eisenberg and Caplan 2010 Negotiating Arab–Israel Peace p. 96. For an example of Netanyahu expressing these sentiments, see Israel Minister of Foreign Affairs 1996 “Press Conference by Prime Minister Netanyahu at the National Press Club, Washington, 10 July 1996”.
15 See, for examples, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998 “Address by Prime Minister Netanyahu to the National Press Club, Washington, 21 January 1998”; Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998 “Interview with Prime Minister Netanyahu on the BBC’s Arabic Service, 1 March 1998” and Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998 “Interview with Prime Minister Netanyahu on ABC’s ‘This Week’, 15 May 1998”.
The reason for Western pressure on Israel in regards to the dispute becomes clear in light of the territorial/existential dichotomy. The international community largely perceives the Israeli–Palestinian dispute as a territorial conflict. Thus, the Palestinian leadership’s official acceptance of a two-state solution in the late 1980s brought legitimacy to the Palestinian movement in the United States (Palestinians had gained legitimacy from the 1970s elsewhere in the international community, as discussed in Part II). With Palestinian acceptance of the two-state solution, the only impediment to Israeli–Palestinian peace, so went the Western territorialist perspective, was Israeli occupation of the land destined to form the Palestinian state. Signing the 1993 Declaration of Principles and making the initial withdrawals was seen as Israeli acceptance of this view. Israel thus earned some of the legitimacy it had sought for so long. However, as the peace process faltered, Israeli unwillingness to make further withdrawals was seen as an unwillingness to end the occupation. The increase of Israeli ‘symbols of the occupation’, such as checkpoints and settlers, added to this perception. Though rarely defended, Palestinian terrorism was perceived by some foreign territorialists as an outcome of frustration at the slow pace of peace agreement implementation, and humiliation associated with the increasing number of checkpoints and settlers. The legitimacy Israel had gained in the mid-1990s was subsequently used as leverage to pressure it into making more concessions, with accompanying explanations that further Israeli withdrawals would decrease Palestinian terrorism.

**Camp David and the Second Intifada**

Ehud Barak was elected in July 1999 on an electoral platform pledging a fulfilment of Rabin’s legacy of peace. The result, at Barak’s urging, was the invitation by US President Bill Clinton for both sides to attend Camp David in July 2000. Amidst international media fanfare, the teams committed themselves to achieving a Palestinian state and an end to the Israeli–Palestinian dispute. However, on 25 July, failure was admitted. Claims and counterclaims were made about what each side offered or

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16 See Lacey 2011 “The Role of Humiliation in the Palestinian / Israeli Conflict in Gaza”. See also Blake 2009 “Experts: Many Young Muslim Terrorists Spurred by Humiliation”.
refused. This was certainly the perception among Jewish Israelis. Of interest is that polls in Israel revealed that even if the Palestinians had committed to an ‘end of conflict’, only 39 per cent of Israelis would have supported the peace deal reported to have been offered to Palestinians. That Barak’s offer to Arafat was beyond what most Israelis would have agreed to offer made Arafat’s rejection of it all the more evident to many Israelis that he was not interested in resolving the dispute.

There are many reasons and theories as to why Barak’s offer was rejected, ranging from the fact Barak had lost the confidence of the Israeli Parliament, the lack of tact in his negotiating tactics, the possibility Arafat did not want to take on the responsibility of statehood or concede on refugees or Jerusalem, to the idea that Barak simply did not offer enough.

International opinion broadly sided with Israel when the Camp David talks broke down, not least because senior officials in the US administration laid the blame at Arafat’s feet. However, this feeling of renewed Israeli legitimacy ended as a result of the international criticism of Israeli tactics adopted after the outbreak of the second intifada just two months after the Camp David talks ended. On 28 September, then-opposition leader Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount. Violent

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17 Incredibly, the US team did not make any (official) detailed notes during the Camp David negotiations. See Miller 2009 *The Much Too Promised Land* p. 241.

18 See Makovsky *op. cit.* p. 120.

19 For a succinct summary of the Israeli perception of the Camp David rejection and its consequences, see Shikaki 2015 “Ending the Conflict” p. 37.

20 See Arian 2001 *Israeli Public Opinion on National Security* 2001 p. 25; and Ehrlich *op. cit.* p. 19.

21 See Makovsky *op. cit.* p. 120; and Schulze *op. cit.* p. 219.

22 See Ehrlich *op. cit.* p. 19; and Bonney 2004 *Jihad* p. 312.

23 See Schulze *op. cit.* p. 217.

24 See Abunimah 2006 *One Country* p. 71; and Miller *op. cit.* p. 288.

25 See Schulze *op. cit.* p. 220. According to Ross (2004 *op. cit.* p. 705), Clinton told Arafat that he had ‘been here for 14 days and said no to everything’.

26 See, for example, BBC News 2000 “‘Excessive’ Israeli Force Condemned”. 
Palestinian protests erupted the following day. Palestinian police joined some of the protests. Israel initially used non-lethal means, but, in the face of deadly force, moved to live ammunition, which increased both Palestinian deaths and rage. Within months, the protests had morphed into a sustained campaign of suicide bombings against Israeli civilian targets. Palestinian gunmen began shooting into Israeli civilian homes in Jerusalem from an adjacent West Bank town.

The message from the Israeli right adequately explained the violence to an increasing number of Israelis—when the time came for Palestinians to make the painful though necessary compromises for peace, they balked, and instead turned to violence, knowing that the image of armed Israelis confronting Palestinian civilians was bound to see international pressure on Israel mount. As David Makovsky puts it, ‘Israeli public opinion began to change dramatically: either the Palestinians were using violence as a tool in negotiations or Arafat did not want peace at all’. The peace camp was unable to offer a convincing argument as to why Arafat said no. Barak was ousted in a landslide in the February 2001 elections.

The Israeli reaction to Arafat’s rejection of the Camp David proposal—and the subsequent violence—is easily understood when examined in light of the territorial/existential dichotomy. To a large number of Israelis, it was proof that the Palestinian leadership and people remained existentialists. This was especially the case given the willingness of the Palestinian leadership to tap into religious symbolism (e.g. Sharon’s visit being a ‘threat’ to al-Aqsa Mosque) to inspire Palestinians to violence. See Schulze op. cit. p. 225. Schulze (p. 226) also writes that Barak attempted to avoid playing the religious card while his opposition used it.

27 Although the Sharon visit to the Noble Sanctuary/Temple Mount was the pretext, there is considerable evidence that the second intifada had been pre-planned. See Bonney op. cit. p. 313; Middle East Media Research Institute 2012 “The 2000 Intifada Was Premeditated, Planned by Arafat”; and Abu Toameh 2002 “How the War Began”.

28 See Schulze op. cit. pp. 221–222; and Ross 2004 op. cit. p. 788. Shanahan (2009 “A Little Bit Pregnant” p. 185) writes that from the time of the first intifada, Israel’s Arab enemies realised they could effectively use ‘information operations’ against Israel.

29 Makovsky op. cit. p. 121.

30 Barak, who, as prime minister, had pushed for the Camp David summit, became convinced that Arafat and the Palestinian leadership were existentialist after all. See Morris 2002 “Arafat Didn’t Negotiate—He Just Kept Saying No”.

31 This was especially the case given the willingness of the Palestinian leadership to tap into religious symbolism (e.g. Sharon’s visit being a ‘threat’ to al-Aqsa Mosque) to inspire Palestinians to violence. See Schulze op. cit. p. 225. Schulze (p. 226) also writes that Barak attempted to avoid playing the religious card while his opposition used it.
to show his hand by rejecting it. Indeed, Barak, who was not convinced of Arafat’s territorialist credentials, saw his Camp David proposals as a way to test this proposition.\(^{32}\)

The international community and media (who provide explanations of the dispute to most people) continued to perceive the dispute as a territorialist conflict. They blamed the Palestinians for the failure of the Camp David talks, because they saw the talks as necessary to bring peace. However, they heavily criticised Israel during the violence of the second intifada because they see Israel’s occupation as the key reason for the dispute’s continuation—and Palestinian violence a regrettable but understandable outcome of that occupation.\(^{33}\) For those Israelis who had become convinced that Palestinians were existentialist after all, the occupation was not the reason for the violence—Israel’s continued existence was.

**Was the Palestinian Authority Existentialist?**

Itamar Marcus, whose organisation monitors Palestinian media, wrote two weeks *before* the outbreak of the second intifada,

> Palestinian Authority [PA] television broadcasting of violence and hate has reached unprecedented levels this summer and has created an atmosphere of the eve of outbreak of war. Palestinian television is currently broadcasting a systematic campaign that negates the peace process and reconciliation. Included are abundant violence clips, the depiction of Israeli soldiers as rapists and murderers, call for eternal war against the Jews, military marches, libellous accusations, denial of Israel’s right to exist, and education of Palestinian children to see all of Israel as stolen ‘Palestine.’ These inciting broadcasts appear frequently each day, beginning with afternoon children’s programming and ending with the closing of the programs at night.\(^{34}\)

Marcus claimed that the change in Palestinian messaging—from delegitimising Israel to active encouragement to kill Jews—began immediately

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\(^{32}\) See Rynhold 2008 “The Failure of the Oslo Process” p. 9.

\(^{33}\) This perception continues—see, for example, Redden 2016 “UN’s Ban: Violent Response to Israeli Occupation ‘Human Nature’”.

\(^{34}\) Marcus 2000 “Rape, Murder, Violence and War for Allah against the Jews”.
after the failure of the Camp David talks. 35 This idea is supported by Palestinian journalist Khaled Abu Toameh’s provision of numerous examples of Palestinian leaders stating, before the violence began, that a new round of confrontations was being planned. 36 (Interestingly, Moshe Ya’alon, the former Israeli military intelligence head (and later senior government minister) thought the second intifada was planned, whereas Ami Ayalon, former head of Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security agency, did not. 37) Marcus appears to believe the Palestinian Authority retained existentialist motivations and primed its population—particularly its children—to begin a round of violent confrontation in order to shift international opinion. Arafat had learned from the 1989 to 1993 intifada that Israel suffers losses of international public opinion because of the way it responds to Palestinian violence. Moreover, Arafat believed, Israel becomes ready to concede to Palestinians in the face of popular violence. 38

Whereas Marcus is convinced the Palestinian Authority remained existentialist at the end of the Oslo period, Ross had no doubt that Mahmoud Abbas and Ahmed Qurei—deputies to Arafat—were territorialists: ‘No two Palestinians were more committed to the Oslo process and peace with Israel’. 39

As for Arafat, in the final analysis, Ross determined that he could not turn himself from revolutionary into statesman. 40 This might well be true, but does not necessarily mean that Ross believes Arafat was existentialist. If the Palestinian Authority was, indeed, territorialist, its decision to use incitement to turn to violence still makes sense, for one (or both) of two reasons. First, confronted with a definitive choice at Camp David, Arafat did not want to accept the responsibility that statehood would bring—not

35 See *ibid.* See also Palestinian Media Watch 2000 “PA Cleric Says Allah Destined Palestinians to Fight Jews Until Resurrection”. For other examples, see Marcus and Crook 2005 *Kill a Jew—Go to Heaven* pp. 22–26.

36 See Abu Toameh *op. cit.*

37 See Miller *op. cit.* p. 308.

38 See Arian 1993 “Vox Populi” p. 148. The Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in the face of Hezbollah violence would have also contributed to this conclusion. See Ross 2004 *op. cit.* p. 761.

39 Ross 2004 *op. cit.* p. 392. See also Brown 2011 “The Palestinians’ Receding Dream of Statehood” p. 348.

40 See Ross 2004 *op. cit.* p. 761. See also Makovsky *op. cit.* pp. 127–128.
only being responsible for security, but also being the Palestinian leader to tell the Palestinian diaspora it would not return, and being the Muslim leader to tell the world’s Muslims that Jews would retain overall control of the Noble Sanctuary (indeed, Arafat expressed these concerns to American negotiators during the Camp David summit). Thus, he turned to violence, knowing Israeli overreactions would take the pressure off him. The second possible reason is similar—that the Israeli offer simply was not good enough, but in saying no, much of the international (and particularly American) blame fell on Arafat. Thus, he turned to violence to shift attention.

Regardless of the reason, the Palestinian Authority explicitly endorsed religious violence in its television media from summer 2000. The message to most Israelis (in combination with the rejection of Barak’s offer and the actual violence) was clear—that the Palestinian Authority was existentialist and not interested in a peaceful, territorialist resolution; in October 2000, 73 per cent of Jewish Israelis felt that the Palestinian Authority had no interest in making peace with Israel.

**LAND-FOR-PEACE—PEACE-FOR-LAND**

Differing Israeli perceptions of Palestinian willingness and capacity to forge peace led to what is dubbed here as the ‘land-for-peace’ and ‘peace-for-land’ concepts in Israeli society. The land-for-peace formula, born of UN Security Council Resolution 242 (and the idea on which Oslo was premised) was that Israel would give up some or all of the territories occupied in 1967 in exchange for peace. However, what some Israelis came to believe in the 1990s is that land ceded to Palestinians could be and was being used to organise anti-Israel activity—whether it be incitement or terrorism. Whereas a promise of peace is just that, land is tangible, and hard to get back once handed over. Thus, from the early days of the peace process, the Israeli right began to urge for proof that Palestinians were willing and able to produce peace before Israel ceded more

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41 See Ross 2004 *op. cit.* p. 693.

42 For examples, see Palestinian Media Watch 2000 “PA Cleric Says Allah Destined Palestinians to Fight Jews Until Resurrection” and *ibid.* “PA Cleric Calls for Genocide of Jews and Killings of Americans”.

43 See Ya’ar and Hermann 2000 “Peace Index—October 2000”.
land—that is, they demanded peace-for-land.\textsuperscript{44} Many of the proponents of this peace-for-land grouping were still territorialists—they were not against an Israeli–Palestinian peace agreement.\textsuperscript{45} Indeed, that the Oslo process provided the Palestinians with autonomy for a limited period before statehood was because Israel insisted (over Palestinian objections) on testing the Palestinian commitment to peace before ceding them full statehood. That is, ‘peace-for-land’ was built into the Oslo process from the beginning.

It is of interest that official Israeli–Palestinian negotiations (held in Washington before the secret and originally unofficial Oslo negotiations became known) initially involved only Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. The details discussed were mainly about Israeli withdrawal and the status of the future Palestinian entity—issues of prime relevance to West Bank and Gazan Palestinians. However, the ‘external’ PLO became involved and widened the scope of negotiations, including regarding the ‘right of return’ and the refusal of Palestinians to view a permanent agreement as an ‘end of conflict’. This, in the words of Shmuel Even, ‘led to fears in Israel that the PLO had not abandoned the dream of “Greater Palestine” and was thus no different from Hamas’.\textsuperscript{46} The Israeli fear that Palestinians remained existentialist led to both the interim-style agreement eventually forged and to the land-for-peace/peace-for-land split among Israeli territorialists. (Beyond Israeli perceptions, this anecdote might also indicate that West Bank and Gazan PLO members were largely territorialists, whereas diaspora PLO members remained largely existentialists.)

Notwithstanding the peace-for-land notion built into Oslo, territorialist critics of Oslo wanted to renegotiate (or unilaterally reshape) the way the agreements were implemented due to the increase in Palestinian terrorism.\textsuperscript{47} Thus, Netanyahu, whose Likud party was of the right, demanded, during his first premiership, Palestinian reciprocity in

\textsuperscript{44}See Schulze \textit{op. cit.} p. 228; and Ross 2004 \textit{op. cit.} p. 27.

\textsuperscript{45}Despite concerns about Palestinian terrorism, Israeli public support for a Palestinian state as an outcome of the peace process increased over time. See Ya’ar and Hermann 1999 “Peace Index—March 1999”.

\textsuperscript{46}Even 2013 “Twenty Years since the Oslo Accords” p. 75.

\textsuperscript{47}See Ehrlich \textit{op. cit.} p. 29; and Ross 2004 \textit{op. cit.} p. 369.
exchange for his observing the Oslo agreement. Palestinians balked at this unilateral change to the terms and spirit of the peace agreements. Ross makes clear that US President Clinton, his Secretary of State, European leaders, the Israeli Labour Party and the Palestinians all thought that Netanyahu was deliberately attempting to undermine the peace process. However, this represents the ignorance of the distinction between land-for-peace and peace-for-land. Before becoming prime minister, Netanyahu had written of the need for security and the danger of giving too much to the Palestinians unless they first proved they were genuine about peace. He was not convinced the Palestinians had become territorialists, and so slowed down implementation of the agreements. Further, he was beholden to a cabinet that was strongly peace-for-land (and included existentialists). Statements by Netanyahu since his first premiership shows that he remained a peace-for-land territorialist, not an existentialist, during the Oslo period.

This ignorance of the distinction between land-for-peace and peace-for-land continues. Under considerable US pressure, in 2009 (when Netanyahu was once again prime minister), Israel announced a 10-month partial freeze in settlement building, inviting the Palestinians to participate in negotiations. Palestinians did not join negotiations until the last month of the freeze, and demanded that Israel extend it. When Israel did not do so, the talks collapsed. In the lead up to the abortive talks, Netanyahu offered to withdraw from parts of the West Bank. US President Obama, who had a difficult relationship with Netanyahu, apparently thought the latter was serious in this offer. However, according to Ross, who was present,

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48 Netanyahu was an adherent to the peace-for-land concept from the beginning; it was this sentiment that helped him get elected in 1996. See Lochery 2000 “The Netanyahu Era” p. 229; Klein Halevi 2012 “Bibi’s Political Inheritance”; and Ross 2004 op. cit. pp. 319, 338. Sharon, also of the Likud, demanded a cessation of Palestinian violence before returning to talks during his premiership from 2001 to 2006. See Ehrlich op. cit. p. 29.

49 See Ross 2004 op. cit. pp. 349–350.

50 See, for example, Netanyahu 1993 “Peace in Our Time?”

51 See Ross op. cit. p. 339.

52 See Netanyahu 2009 “Full Text of Netanyahu’s Foreign Policy Speech at Bar Ilan”.
Netanyahu was not prepared to say much about the scope of withdrawal without evidence that the Palestinians were serious about security. Abu Mazen [i.e. Abbas] spoke only in generalities about Israeli security needs.53

What this exchange shows is that Netanyahu presented himself as a peace-for-land territorialist. According to Ross, Netanyahu’s reluctance to go into details about the scope of the withdrawal made Obama sceptical about his intentions. Clearly, Obama did not appreciate the difference between land-for-peace and peace-for-land.

As the Oslo years progressed, existentialist Israelis, opposed to the concept of a Palestinian state anywhere in what they consider Jewish land, found themselves aligned to the territorialist peace-for-land camp. Arguably, the Palestinian rejection of proposals at Camp David and Taba (Taba is discussed in Part IV) and the violence from September 2000 papered over any remaining differences between the Jewish religious-existentialists and peace-for-land grouping; from that point, both groups did not see the value in peace negotiations with the Palestinians. However, fundamental differences remain—the territorialist Israeli peace sceptics (the peace-for-land grouping) were still willing to accept a Palestinian state to end the conflict, even if they believed that the Palestinian Authority was not interested in peace. Once the Palestinian leadership becomes willing, in the eyes of these Israelis, to end the territorial conflict (i.e. a leadership that appears both willing and able to sell the necessary compromises to its people), the peace-for-land Israelis will be supportive, but the existentialist Israelis will still be opposed to any Palestinian state. Division in Israel similar to that seen in the 1990s will likely re-emerge.

Among territorialist Israelis (i.e. those willing to accept a peaceful Palestinian state), opinion remains divided between the land-for-peace formula and the peace-for-land concept. This division is broadly reflected in the left–right political division that, since 1996, has seen the right (i.e. the peace-for-land plus religious-existentialists) dominate. The only ‘land-for-peace’ Israeli government elected since 2000—the 2006–2009 Olmert Government—vigorously pursued a peace agreement with the Palestinians, to no avail.54

53 Ross 2016 *Doomed to Succeed* p. 376.

54 As an aside, foreign observers frequently describe Israel’s recent governments as ‘right-wing’ or ‘conservative’, which is arguably true. But these observations tend to hide the very progressive nature of much of Israeli society. Because security and the state of
International opinion is broadly in favour of the land-for-peace concept, as opposed to peace-for-land (with the notable exceptions of the 2001–2009 Bush and 2017–2021 Trump Administrations in America), which has led to sharp disagreements between peace-for-land Israeli governments and foreign leaders in how to move the peace process forward.

In this chapter, we continued the discussion of Israeli perceptions of the Oslo peace process in light of the territorial/existential dichotomy, by examining: the widening gap between the secular and religious in Israeli society; the impact of international opinion on Israeli willingness to compromise; and the failure of the July 2000 Camp David summit. The discussion then moved to the division, exacerbated by the Oslo process, between the land-for-peace and peace-for-land groupings within territorialist Israeli society. The failing peace process saw the peace-for-land Israelis increasingly side with existentialist Israelis, to establish a solid ‘peace-sceptic’ majority, which has influenced Israeli voting habits and resultant governments ever since. However, the chapter also found that this perceived alignment between peace-for-land territorialists and existentialists is based on a shared view that the Palestinian leadership is existentialist. If and when this perceived view changes among peace-for-land territorialists, this ‘peace-sceptic’ majority will likely fracture, and Israeli society will likely experience the same sort of religious-secular divisions in regards to a future peace process that it experienced in the 1990s.

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Israeli–Palestinian relations are a prime factor in determining Israeli governments, the progressive nature of much of Israeli society is not reflected in ruling coalitions.

55 It is of interest that the Bush and Trump Administrations gained a significant part of their popularity from the Evangelical vote, many of whom maintain a religious-existentialist view of the Israeli–Palestinian dispute. See Abunimah *op. cit.* p. 101.
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