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Framing and Counterframing of the Middle East Peace Process in the Arab -Israeli Press: a Comparative Analysis of "Assafir" and "The Jerusalem Post".

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**FRAMING AND COUNTERFRAMING OF THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE
PROCESS IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI PRESS
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ASSAFIR AND THE JERUSALEM POST**

A Dissertation

**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
In partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

in

The Department of Speech Communication

by

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**"It isn't enough to talk about peace.
And it isn't enough to believe in it.
One must work for it."**

Eleanor Roosevelt

DEDICATION

**Much inspiration has been given to me by my fellow citizens who have struggled and
died for the sake of all what is right, good, and beautiful**

To them I dedicate my work

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I am deeply indebted to my advisor, Dr. Andrew King, for his support, mentoring, and encouragement throughout my graduate studies. I truly appreciate his tolerance and patience with my numerous errors. His technical and editorial advice was essential to the completion of this dissertation and has taught me innumerable lessons and insights on the workings of academic research. This work is his as much as it is mine.

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ABSTRACT

The Arabs and Israelis have been negotiating peace for the past ten years; however, the conflict still ignites with no apparent hope for any near resolution. Understanding the rhetorical construction of the peace reality may help in managing this conflict. This study examines the symbolic construction of the peace process in the Arab and Israeli press. It comparatively studies how the Arab and Israeli press, through language choice, define peace, elucidate its implications, and judge actors and actions involved in the peace process.

This study identifies the metaphors used and the dominant rival frames constructed in two conflicting newspapers, Assafir (Lebanese newspaper) and The Jerusalem Post (Israeli newspaper) in their coverage of the peace process in 1993 and 1996. Then the study contrasts the different perspectives of the two papers in order to specify the point of conflict and check if any basis of “shared values” exists across the perspectives that might be useful as a basis for negotiations. The analysis is based on the media framing and agenda setting theories as well as Johnson and Lakoff’s metaphorical analysis paradigm.

This study reveals the power of metaphors, images, and symbols in the discourse of peace. This discourse is surrounded with language of violence, victimhood and accusations; a discourse that casts pessimism on any chance for cooperation and peaceful resolutions. Similar terms repeat themselves but are treated differently. The image of victimhood is present in both papers but attached to two different parties. In their characterization of actors, both papers follow the same strategy with similar agenda

setting geared toward two different groups. Both papers discipline their readers with opposite doxas.

The study concludes that both papers are involved in a rhetoric of stasis. Both seem to cooperate in producing a deadlock. This dissertation reveals that rival perspectives can be collaborative as well as competitive. Both can cooperate to spread an atmosphere of ambiguity, passivity and pessimism. Finally, the use of framing contributed less to the understanding of the dilemma than the patterns of imagery. Future studies should look at how imagery opens options and creates new ways of considering solutions.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The Arab-Israeli conflict has entered its fifth decade and despite the peace negotiation that has been going on for more than ten years, the conflict remains unresolved. Although it is the leaders of both parties who are directly involved in the peace negotiation, it is also important to study the role of the Arab-Israeli media in the peace process for these provide the lenses through which political acts are seen and judged.

Most of the research involving the Arab-Israeli conflict has dealt with the historical and political aspect of the conflict. Few scholars examined the rhetorical dimension of the struggle. For example, how the Arab-Israeli press framed the peace process remains an untouched issue that needs to be pursued if we want to come to a better understanding of the conflict. The discourse of the Arab and Israeli press regarding the peace negotiations is of vital importance. Examining this discourse may help us understand the role of the press in shaping the perception of the Arab and Israeli public opinion regarding peace talks.

The importance of this issue is rooted in a particular communication problem. The problem is as follows: Although the Arab and Israeli media speak of "peace," each has its own definition of the situation. Each defines a different reality while using a similar vocabulary. The same events and language are used to construct widely different accounts of the process and to praise and blame different heroes. The papers to be examined do more than tell their readers what to think about, they supply interpretation and judgment. Thus, this study will examine the media's symbolic construction of the peace process. In addition it will entertain a secondary question: To what extent is the response of the press on both sides affected by changes in the political identity of the Israeli government?

The objective of this study is to qualitatively examine the rhetorical frames and dynamics used by the Arab and Israeli press when covering the peace process. There are four specific questions this study answers:

1. How did the Israeli Press frame the Middle East peace process?
2. How did the Arab Press frame the Middle East peace process?
3. At what time, if at all, did these frames converge to present a unified contextual whole?
4. At what times did these frames diverge to perhaps augment the conflict?
5. What are the rhetorical components of divergence and convergence?

In other words, the broad objective of this study is to comparatively examine how both the Arab and Israeli press, through language choice, define the peace process, explicate its implications, form moral judgments, and recommend remedies. The study may help us understand the heuristic and pragmatic value of Arab and Israeli press framing of the peace. The convergence/divergence of the framing between the rival parties may shed new light on the role that the media can play in conflict resolution.

This study advances the understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict by uncovering the language patterns and perspectives used by both press parties and how such metaphors, images, and perspectives either undermine or bolster the peace process. A knowledge of the rhetorical construction of this public reality may help in the management of conflict in other sites of struggle and negotiation.

Significance of the Method of Study

This study differs from earlier media studies in that it takes a close look at the text in order to build up a metaphoric mosaic from which a perspective can be identified. First, this study will identify the metaphors used in rival newspapers covering similar events or

issues. Next, it will determine dominant patterns of metaphors within each story and across stories. Third, it will examine how metaphoric clusters build up a moral perspective within each context (editorial versus news item). Fourth, it will contrast each paper's dominant perspective with its counterpart. Fifth, it will draw conclusions based upon the data in the light of events, commentary, and suggested correctives.

Studies that focus on the relationship between framing and metaphorical analysis are few. Those related to the rhetoric of Arab-Israeli conflict are almost rare. By focusing on a highly charged and apparently polarized situation, this study aims at uncovering the importance of metaphors as a master cue, which the audience can use to understand events, and then participate in the making of the extended text. In particular, by examining the metaphors and language use in the rival press coverage of the Middle East peace process, one can develop a better comprehension of how newspapers assist in constructing the social reality of the peace process for a significant audience.

Moreover, through metaphorical analysis of the discourse about peace, one may uncover the various meanings given to peace in oppositional discourses. My initial supposition is that the Arab and Israeli press invest the same words with different, perhaps even opposite meanings. These verbal patterns reflect and help sustain the political perspectives of their readers while leaving basic assumptions unchallenged. Third parties often assume consensual (trans-national) meanings of words and fail to understand the depth of national division. Thus this study tries, through a metaphorical analysis of rhetorical framing, to provide insight into the social and political struggles that take place around the issues of Middle East peace process. It may provide insights that alert us to unexpected shadings of meanings and codes that mask apparent differences. On the other hand, it may alert us to oppositional terms that remain as historical residues or to

conventional images based on temporary political advantage rather than responsible long-term policies.

Further, the author believes that these “patterns” may support perspectives that reflect habit as much as authorial choice. The idea of analyzing the way in which such perspectives are built up may make writers more alert to their use of unconscious social myths, conventional ideas and time-honored shibboleths. In this way, the study would function as a corrective to our media practice. Newspaper writers, however reluctant they are to admit it, are rhetoricians. To make events coherent, significant, and useful they must write from a consistent perspective, they must adopt an attitudinal voice, and a persona that includes aspects of mentor and guide as well as reporter. Perspectives have consequences and thus political reporters must be aware that they may be mobilizing opinion rather than merely informing their public.

Research Methodology

The press facilitates public perception by providing a context that makes events coherent and meaningful. The heart of this study is an examination of the rival frames constructed by The Jerusalem Post (Israeli press) and Assafir (Lebanese Press) in reporting the Middle East peace process. Specifically, I identify the dominant perspectives used by each newspaper in its discussion of the peace process. One purpose is to contrast the different perspectives of the two papers in order to determine the points of conflict. Another purpose is to discover if any basis for “shared values” exists across the perspectives that might be useful as a basis for negotiation. In doing so, I want to do more than identify “missed opportunities.” Shared beliefs could provide the tropes for a future leadership of peace and cooperation. Accordingly, I have selected the news stories, opinions and editorials from 1993, when the Labor party was presiding over the

government, and 1996, when Likud was leading the government. In order to perform the comparative analysis, the following steps are followed:

1. I will examine the general mood of the news articles and editorials. Do they reflect a positive/optimistic or negative/pessimistic mood with regard to the peace process? I will mainly focus on the headline and the lead.
2. I will look at key words, metaphors, images, concepts, and symbols associated with “peace” that are used in the news stories. In this case, I specifically examine the clusters and agons related to “peace” (my hypothesis here is that the cluster in one newspaper is an agon in the rival press.) Through such examination I uncover the value(s) given to peace in each paper and how peace is transformed into other concepts.
3. After examining the pattern of imagery, I will identify the rival narratives, that is, I will look at the plot lines (extended actions) and the characterization of the actors. For example characters may be portrayed as victims or oppressors and events may be presented as survival stories.
4. Based on my survey of image, plot, character and discourse, I will attempt to identify the unique frames used by each newspaper in its coverage of the peace process.
5. Next I will examine how framing affects the peace process by showing how the selection of a particular frame affects the characterization of peace (i.e., how framing affects which events and persons are emphasized and how they are presented and evaluated).

Framing will be seen as far more than disposition and arrangement. It is a perspective act with immense consequences for human understanding. Ideas and beliefs

simply do not fall from the sky or rise up from the ground. They are a product of human interaction. The settling of Israel may have encouraged one type of national identity rather than another. The point is that beliefs about that identity had to be spoken, interpreted, and reified in order to exist. This dissertation may provide a snapshot of how beliefs about peace in two countries were explained and promoted over time by their most significant media. It may also reveal how conflicting beliefs were blended into adaptive functional mega-narratives about the peace process in general. Finally, the dissertation might suggest the presence of “shared values” across the narratives that could provide the basis for a rhetoric of peace in the future.

The above steps are the means to discover the nature of the rival strategic symbolic representations of reality that each newspaper tends to reflect.

Method of Selecting Press Articles

Assafir and The Jerusalem Post were selected because they have a high percentage of readership among their constituents. Both papers are considered to be somewhere in the center between liberalism and conservatism. Thus, unlike press on either of the extremes, Assafir and The Jerusalem Post serve better the purpose of this study: to find any base for “shared values” among both press. In addition, The Jerusalem Post could easily be accessed through the Internet while Assafir had all its archives on CDs. Thus it was easier to have access to the articles of both press. It is worth noting that Assafir is published in Arabic and the author translated the article into English. The Jerusalem Post is published in English.

The articles were selected as follows: All articles including the keywords “peace” and peace process” were downloaded. Then the author read every single article and selected the articles that centered on the peace process. The final number of articles analyzed in both papers were 200 articles

The rest of this work consists of six chapters. Chapter Two provides the historical background to the Middle East peace process. Chapter Three provides an overview of agenda-setting and framing theory. Chapter Four provides an overview of metaphors and discourse analysis. Chapter Five is the analysis of Assafir's coverage of the peace process. Chapter Six is the analysis of The Jerusalem Post's coverage of the peace process. The dissertation concludes with Chapter Seven, which is composed of the findings of the analysis process, their significance, and their implications for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

In order to understand the language games used by the Arab and Israeli press regarding the peace process, it is important to narrate briefly the historical background of such language games. Since the Likud and Labor party regimes are the two crucial periods on which the current study focuses, the background will be centered on the history and ideology of Likud and Labor in terms of their relationship with the Arabs. It is important to note that the Israeli-Arab conflict has always been strongly affected by the nature of the Israeli party that is in office. During the past thirty years, the time during which Labor and Likud witnessed their birth as the two major political parties in Israel, Arab regimes and foreign policies have remained relatively stable.

Introduction

On November 2, 1917, Balfour Declaration was issued. The Declaration stated that the Jewish people have the right to establish a homeland in Palestine because of the “historical connection of the Jewish people to Palestine”¹. When Belfour Declaration called for the establishment of the State of Israel in Palestine, Jews started forming their political parties each with a vision of an “ideal” State of Israel. These parties range from the extreme right to the extreme left. Although they share an ultimate common goal, establishing a strong Jewish state, they differed in their beliefs and ideologies.

Israel is geographically oriental, but socially and culturally western. The main concern and interest of Israel is the Jews in the world who are free to immigrate to Israel anytime they want.² As Israel celebrated its 53rd anniversary this year, the State has witnessed many changes in its political system. Politics in Israel is dominated by a multi-party system. Ever since its establishment, the State has witnessed the rise and fall of many

parties that range from extreme right to extreme left. These parties changed policies along the way depending on the demands of the time. Despite the relatively large number of parties that are still functioning in Israel, Likud and Labor remain the major parties that compete to win over the government and the Knesset. The policies of these parties change over time and so does their rhetoric.

Debate in Israel is strongly influenced by ideological divisions. There have been two major schools of thought in Israel. The first school, identifiable with the right wing, can be called “territorial” school. The main concern of this school is that Israel should try to “maximize its control over as much territories as possible of the historical Land of Israel.”³ This emphasis on territoriality emerges from the belief that the control of more historical territories implies a more Jewish and Zionist country. Thus one will be more of a Zionist if he claims that Judea and Samaria are parts of the Jewish State. Since the Land of Israel is that of Eretz Israel, the government of Menachem Begin had no ideological problems of giving up Sinai to Egypt, while settlements in the West Bank was an important Jewish claim of the territory of the Land of Israel. From this perspective, the Likud refused any compromise over these 'sacred' territories. According to Likud, “Israel would continue to maintain territorial control of the area; Israel would be responsible for security; public land will be under Israel jurisdiction; natural resources will be controlled by Israel; and Israel will have the exclusive right to decide about where and when to put new Jewish settlements.”⁴ This vision sees Israel as a country with a frontier, a “Wild West” to be settled.

The second school of thought, identifiable with the left wing, can be called 'sociological' school. This school agrees that Judea and Samaria have a historical link to Israel. However, the most important consideration for this school is internal structure of

Israel. Unlike right wing, this school believes that more territories mean less Jewishness because Israel would encompass more Palestinians and Arabs. Therefore, if Israel maintains control over the West Bank and Gaza, that means giving the non-Jewish population civil and political rights. That would change Israel from a Zionist State to a bi-national one. Hence the Labor would go for territorial compromise over the West Bank and Gaza after assurances of security for Israel.

Another ideological difference between right wing and left wing is related to the use of force as a means to realize the Zionist dream. The left considered the use of force as a last resort. To the right, the use of force was always a “legitimate expression of sovereignty and independence.”⁵ Zionism underlies the wish to found an independent Jewish state in Palestine. Modern Zionism was developed by Theodore Hertzl who “called for the creation of a Jewish state that would absorb European Jewry and thus end the anti-Semitism that still prevailed even in Western Europe and proved that assimilation was impossible.”⁶ The right wing and the left wing share Zionism as a goal but differ in the means to an end.

The Period of 1918-1939

There were four major issues during the founding period on which the policies of the parties were based. The first issue was related to economic equality, social justice, and the distribution of production between private and public organization. The second issue was related to security in terms of defending Israel's existence and maintaining territories. The third issue was foreign policy; and the fourth issue was related to the “status of the Jewish religion in state and society.”⁷ The relative importance of these issues to the parties varied according to electoral competition, the parties' internal structures and their outside responsibilities.

These issues have remained the basis of every party's policy since the establishment of the State till the present time. With the establishment of the State, right wing and left wing parties emerged. Each had a specific ideology and a set of policies to guide the political, social and economic development of Israel. The parties faced many difficulties that resulted "from the structure of Israel's society, and its definition as a nation."⁸ These difficulties were the result of unresolved problems regarding many matters: the State's territorial boundaries; the ideological differences; Israel's occupation of territories; the need for political stability; social gaps among classes; the rift between Arab population and Jewish majority. All these elements contributed to the complexity of Israel's socio-political status.⁹

The labor parties were the first parties to be organized in the Jewish State. These parties competed against one another. In the 1920s, the General Zionists, a right wing party, the Revisionist Party, a radical right wing party, and the Religious-Labor party were founded.¹⁰ Along with the Labor movement, these parties formed three major blocs in the Knesset: the left bloc, the right bloc, and the religious bloc. In the twenties, the Jews began to purchase more lands in Palestine followed by mass immigration of Jews to the "Promised Land." This inflamed Arab sentiment against the Jews in Palestine.¹¹ Mapai, which later merged into the Labor party as it is known today, was the dominant party from mid-1930s till its defeat in 1977.¹² The major goal of the Mapai party was to pursue international recognition of the 1949 borders of State of Israel. Although Mapai was reluctant to accept the Peel partition plan^a in 1937, it found that there were two advantages

^a The plan called for the partition of Palestine into two separate independent States, one Arab and the other Jewish. Accordingly, the Jewish state was awarded 20% of Palestine, while the Arab were given the remaining part of the area. Great Britain was to remain a mandatory power to watch over the zone that included the holy places. This plan was seen as the resolution to the conflict and fighting between the Arabs and Israel.

to the partition: "sovereignty for the Jews and a way to keep the Arab population of a Jewish state within manageable proportions."¹³

During the founding period, Mapai's governmental responsibilities affected its policies. As the party in power, it had to shoulder a set of fixed tasks. Mapai's priorities revolved around security in terms of Israel's relation with its Arab neighbors; economic development related to what instruments should be used to improve the economy; the legitimate place of Israel in the international arena. Once these issues were settled, Mapai's top priority went to the gathering of the exiles because, after all, this was the main reason that the state was founded. In addition to this, Mapai believed that in addition to their policy of defense, they should also have a policy of peace that would guarantee the support of the international community. In economic matters, Mapai supported private and public enterprises. As the ruling party, it typically emphasized class cooperation and social and political compromise as the means to achieve prosperity. As far as religion was concerned, Mapai supported the population's religious needs "as long as there was no coercion of either religious or non-religious sections of society."¹⁴

Mapai received the greatest number of votes to the Knesset. According to Isaac, along with other left bloc parties, Mapai believed in Labor's secular vision of a Jewish state that would be an ideal state.¹⁵ They also advocated Israel's mission to become "socially 'redeemed' society, in which the perfect social arrangements would be worked out and from which the message would go forth that the ideal society could be achieved on earth."¹⁶

The Period of 1939-1949

This period of time witnessed the birth of more parties both in the left bloc and in the right bloc. Although the left wing parties adopted an approach of political appeasement

and justice and asserted that military force is an immoral and cannot be used to impose peace, they still disagreed on when to use military action. Mapam was a supporter of this rationale. It believed that the political system in Israel ought to promote social justice. However, Mapam considered that “just wars” such as wars for self-defense are justifiable.¹⁷ Mapam major policy had always called for “moderation in affairs of national security, emphasis on the need for Israeli diplomatic initiatives, and actual willingness to recognize the rights of the Palestinians for political self-determination as a basis of the creation of political justice and the achievement of peace.”¹⁸

Mapai, on the other hand, adopted a “strategy of defense with tactics of offense.”¹⁹ It always justified military actions for the purpose of assuring the existence of Israel and saving Israel's security. Mapai supported the initiation of periodic war aimed at forestalling anticipated and committed terrorist strikes that threatened the existence of Israel.²⁰

In 1947, the United Nations passed a resolution that called for the partition of Palestine, into two states, one Jewish and one Arab .²¹ During this time, Arabs threatened to prevent the establishment of the Jewish State through violence, bloodshed and disorder.²²

In 1948, the “Arab Liberation army” began entering Palestine to dominate the roads and prevent the communication between the two states. Most Palestinians did not join the Army and favored the partition since they feared that the Arabs had their own design for Palestine’s future.²³ In the same year, right after national independence, the Herut movement, led by Menachem Begin, was formed as a mixture of former terrorists, dissatisfied new immigrants, professionals, businessmen and supporters of the old

Revisionist^b. Herut was an extreme right wing party that attacked the State control over the economy. They insisted on carrying preventive war against the Arabs as the only guarantee of Israel's survival. By 1949, although Herut lacked an organizational network, it was the third largest party in Israel. Ever since its establishment, Herut tried to present itself as “a party trying to transform itself from a dissident movement into a legitimate anti-labor, anti-government opposition party.”²⁴ Regarding foreign policy, Herut emphasized a nationalist, expansionist, and militant stand.

The Herut party adopted an approach of powerpolitik and coercion. According to this approach, initiation of preventive war is justified whenever circumstances reveal an opportunity to destroy the capabilities of the enemy. Proponents of this strategy saw that initiating war was a useful way of solving “problems of strategic-political and strategic-military nature, including the problem of dealing with acts of terror.”²⁵ The public perceived Herut as the voice of military activism. Its major goal was to criticize the government's weaknesses and its futile effort to negotiate peace with Israel's neighbors.

Herut's leader, Menachem Begin, was the major player in shaping the direction of the right wing bloc. He was almost always in an offensive position, attacking and criticizing the government policy. From the very beginning, Begin rejected the idea of partitioning. He believed that Israel could not prosper unless it was completely freed from invading armies. He accused the Ben-Gurion government for failing to reclaim all the Land of Israel that included the slopes of Lebanon and the approaches to the Nile. Begin always viewed Mapai as the appeaser of Arabs. When Ben-Gurion accepted America's request for withdrawal from Gaza in 1949, Begin considered that an act of betrayal.²⁶

^b Vladimir Jabotinsky the founded old Revisionist in 1925. The Revisionist's concern was to create a Jewish state, a concern that surpassed all other considerations. The Revisionists called for the unity of Palestine.

The Period of 1949-1967

The 1949 armistice ended the War of Independence, but did not bring any peace between Arabs and Israelis. It was a lost opportunity. Consequently, the 1950s was characterized by two fears: a continuing danger of renewed war and “terrorists raids from across Israel's borders.”²⁷ These two threats were always at the top of the agenda of the parties from both the left bloc and the right bloc. Their presence affected the stance of the parties on various domestic and foreign issues and became particularly salient during election campaigns.

In 1956, Mapai, led by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion saw that the blockade imposed by Egypt on Israel navigation, the attacks by Egyptian terrorist gangs, and the rearmament of the Egyptians endangered Israeli's existence. Thus, as a part of their realpolitik strategy, Ben-Gurion initiated a war against Egypt in which Israel annexed Sinai Peninsula.²⁸ Mapam opposed the Sinai Campaign (October 30-November 5, 1956). In 1957, Israel withdrew from Sinai.

While Mapai was occupied with internal problems and governmental responsibilities, Herut was reshaping its policies preparing for the upcoming elections. The 1959 elections embodied Herut's position on foreign policy. Herut's political agenda then emphasized three major points. First, the right of the Jews to the entire historical state of Israel; second, the realization of this right makes the peace treaty possible; and third, Israel reserves the full right to self-defense. In addition, Herut's position on internal issues focused on the same goals of the party policy on which it was founded.²⁹

While Israel was dealing with various internal social and political changes, the Palestinians were developing an agenda that would threaten the security of Israel in the years to come. In 1964, the Palestinian Liberation Organization was founded and, along

with other Palestinian organizations, started to press for war against Israel. The PLO had its bases first in Jordan. Then after Black September, it began to establish bases in Lebanon.

In 1965, Herut retained its position as the second largest party in Israel. The party was no longer satisfied with its constitutional opposition role. It wanted a role in governing the country. Thus it demanded a share in the Labor coalition party. In the same year, a new party, the Liberal Party, joined Herut to form Gahal Bloc. With the formation of Gahal, the right bloc began to make strategic modifications in their ideologies. Their 1965 and 1969 platform had reference neither to the “historic boundaries to Israel” nor to any distinction between “peace treaty” and “peace conditions”. In fact, the platforms called for constant effort to achieve peace with Arabs.³⁰ In other words, the right bloc, which had once demanded a unified sole Jewish state of Israel without any compromise with the Arabs, now softened its attitude and saw peace with the Arabs as an important task. A formerly “taboo” subject had become a political objective.

The Period of 1967-1977

This decade witnessed many changes in the politics of Israel; it saw the birth of two major parties, Labor and Likud. These parties have been locked in a power struggle since their conception. The period between 1963 and 1973 witnessed the third decade of Mapai's dominance. Eshkol was the Prime Minister between 1963 and 1968. In 1967 with the efforts of Menachem Begin a National Unity Government was formed with Eshkol as its Prime Minister. However, in 1970, Herut withdrew from the government after the latter decided to consider a settlement with the Arabs. The unity government played a major role in legitimizing Begin as a respectable leader.

In 1967, Mapai realized that the naval blockade imposed on it posed a threat to Israel's existence. Based on its realpolitik strategy, Mapai initiated the Six-Day War on Syria, Egypt and Jordan after diplomatic efforts failed. The war began when Israel attacked Egypt, occupied the west Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai, and the Golan Heights. The UN passed Resolution 242 calling for the withdrawal of Israel from territories occupied in 1967.³¹ Mapam declared that Israel should abstain from initiating the attack in the Six-Day War.³² Ever since the Six-Day War, Mapam emphasized on the Palestinian right to self-determination and strongly supported coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis.³³

After their victory, Mapai leaders had confidence in the power of Israel's army to defeat the Arab army. However, between 1970-1973, the party came to believe that their dependence on the U.S. for political, economic, and military seriously limited the preemptive strike as a policy option.³⁴ Consequently, in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Israel's leaders decided not to initiate preemptive strikes on Syria and Egypt although they saw real signs of danger. Ever since, Labor Party modified Israel's national security doctrine based on Israel's best interest and on the timing.

Following the 1967 war, Herut (later known as Gahal, 1965-1973), headed by Menachem Begin, concluded that Israel's victory and occupation of territories was enough to safeguard its existence. Thus the party changed its political conception regarding the nation of the "Land of Israel." They abandoned their political goal regarding the inclusion of the East Bank of Jordan under Israeli sovereignty. Rather, Herut/Gahal's practical goal was to win national support and participate in the National Unity (1969-1970). To achieve this goal they had to modify their definition of "Land of Israel" to mean only the area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.³⁵

After 1967, Israel abstained “from defining its final borders.”³⁶ However, the controversy over the border did not abate and revolved around two issues, ideology and security. The Israeli had emotional and historical reasons for the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967. This was considered as a “symbol of the revival of the Jewish people within their homeland.”³⁷ Moreover, they also regarded the 'liberation' of the West Bank as a messianic event. Later, the 1973 war crystallized the ideological dispute over border issues. The territorial issue was no longer merely a matter of security but one of “historic right.” This led many religious activists to call for settlements in the occupied territories.³⁸

The Labor party was formed in 1968. It included Mapai, Achdut Haavoda and Rafi. Mapam joined the Party to form the Labor Alignment. The leaders of this party were considered the pioneers in building the State of Israel. They represented the Zionist values of egalitarianism, voluntarism and chalutzit (Zionist pioneering). The Labor's ideology encompasses universalistic democratic ideology, egalitarianism, land settlement, and pioneering.³⁹ The Labor party gained newcomers' support because it encouraged the influx of immigration and it offered many services to the new settlers. Labor stayed in power for 29 years because it was able to meet the challenges of the time: defense against the Arab hostility, absorption of immigrants and the need for economic growth. Labor was successful in integrating survivors of the Holocaust from Europe with those immigrants coming from North Africa and the Middle East.⁴⁰

In 1968, Golda Meir became the Prime Minister after Eshkol's death. Her administration was not a Golden Age for the Labor party. It was during her time that the Yom Kippur war took place. In 1973, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel. Although Israel won the war militarily, the nation became dependent on the United States and suffered substantial economic and human losses. The Arabs lost militarily but won diplomatically.⁴¹

Golda Meir resigned soon after, leaving behind a country weakened by war, politically isolated, with a high inflation rate and a party trying to overcome the shock of a pyrrhic victory.⁴² In 1974, Yitzhak Rabin became the Prime Minister and Shimon Peres the defense minister.^c Rabin insisted that the West Bank remain an integral part of Eretz Israel. On the other hand, Yigal Allon, a member of Achdut Haavoda was more lenient toward substantial Israeli withdrawals in return for peace.⁴³ The heyday of the Labor movement came to an end in 1977.

In 1977, it was obvious that the Labor Party's dominance was threatened by growing opposition. There were many reasons that led to the growth of the opposition in Israel and to the victory of Likud in the elections. Among these was economic growth, demographic changes, and increasingly unequal distribution of income between ethnic groups.^{44 d} Golda Meir and Israel Galilee left the party and were no longer active leaders. Their departure affected the election turn out in 1977. Despite the fight over leadership, ideological differences among the various factions of the Labor party dissipated especially after Rabin became the first non-Mapai prime minister in 1973.⁴⁵

In the 1977 elections, Likud's agenda focused on economic issues including inflation, corruption, taxes, and deteriorating living standards. Peace with Arabs came sixth on their agenda. They called for settlements in all the Land of Israel with the proviso that Arabs in Eretz Israel be welcomed to gain citizenship and receive equal rights if they

^c In 1969, Mapam joined Labor party to form the Labor Alignment. When Mapam joined the labor party to form Labor Alignment, it worked with certain dovish leaders to ease their positions on peace and territories. In the meantime, Peres was the leader of Rafi and was considered too hawkish.

^d The influx of Jewish immigration from different parts of the world to Israel led to a change in demographics. The Ashkenazis were no longer the elite majority. The Sephardis became a potential ethnic group that played a major role in changing the politics of the nation. They were no longer the working class who had to submit to the orders of the Ashkenazi. They had more opportunities to improve their educational and economic status and viewed Likud as a better Party to lead the country than Labor

showed their loyalty to Israel.⁴⁶ In this year, Likud negated its pledge to annex the West Bank.⁴⁷

The Period of 1977-1992

When Begin claimed to control not only the West Bank but also the East Bank, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Western governments disputed Begin's claims. They were afraid that Begin's hard-line ideology would leave no chance for peace negotiations in the Middle East.⁴⁸ The British and Americans reacted negatively to Begin's victory because of his violent history. He was the commander of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi that was responsible for blowing up the King David Hotel, the Deir Yassin massacre and the hanging of the British Army sergeants.⁴⁹

In 1977, the image of Begin as a terrorist and demagogue blinded the people from understanding the Likud's real position on various issues.⁵⁰ However, at the end of that year, Begin surprised the West with his autonomy plan that called for the abolition of military presence in the Territories and for "Palestinian elections to an Administrative Council."⁵¹ The responsibility of the Council encompassed education, religious affairs, health, housing, finance, the administration of justice, and supervision of local police force, security and public order, while water and land rights remained the responsibility of Israel.⁵² The Palestinians could choose between Israeli and Jordanian citizenship.

Begin also surprised the West in 1979 by signing the Camp David Accord. This treaty declared the return of Sinai Peninsula to Egypt since the latter agreed to stop its terrorist attacks on Israel and have normal relations with Israel. Part of the Camp David Accord was Likud's recognition of some collective rights for the Palestinians.⁵³ This act suggested that Begin now possessed a less extreme personality. Begin had shifted from Jabotinsky's ideology regarding the territorial issue. Although Israel regarded the territories

as a strategic tool, Israelis welcomed Camp David Accord because they never considered Sinai as part of Eretz Israel. By contrast, Israeli leaders in both Likud and Labor initially considered the 1981 annexation of Golan Height a security strategy and only over the years developed an ideological commitment.⁵⁴

However, not all the Israelis were happy with the Accord. Immediately after the peace treaty in 1979, a new party emerged. Former members of Likud who were on the extreme right created Tehiya in 1979. In response to the Camp David Accord, the party believed that the agreement was harmful to Israel's interest because it relinquished important and strategic territories that had an effect on Israel's security. Consequently, Tehiya called for full annexation of the West Bank and Gaza. In 1981 it won three Knesset members. In 1984, it gained five.⁵⁵

The 1980s was an important decade in the history of Israel. The 1981 election was violent and polarized the electorate. It caused tensions and anxiety. Begin was anxious to win another term so that he could continue his plans of building more settlements in the West Bank. Moreover, he hoped that a victory might overcome the pariah image that had characterized him and his party.

Begin succeeded in rewriting Israel's history to include the names of the Likud heroes. Henceforth, Likud as well as Labor shared the glory of nation building. The Likud succeeded in using mythology and history "to interpret contemporary political events, to gain ideological legitimacy, and to attempt to establish dominance."⁵⁶ From 1977 to 1984, the Likud tried to establish its legitimacy by co-opting religious nationalism and by exploiting ethnic tensions. In 1981, the Likud reduced taxes on consumer goods, which were considered luxury items by Labor. In addition, the Likud passed a number of popular laws. These laws included a bill that granted huge benefits to the soldiers once they were

discharged from the Army, and a “bill that obligates the government to protect the real value of the public's savings.”⁵⁷

When Likud came to power in 1977, one of its aims was to solve the problems of terrorist attacks emerging from Lebanon. Likud didn't distinguish between basic security problems and day-to day security problems. They found it difficult to moderate or fine-tune their military responses to perceived threats. Therefore, their 1981 decision of full military strike against Lebanon was justified by their claim that the terrorist raids from Lebanon threatened Israel's existence. The increase in military actions against terrorism, argued Likud, was the only way to “eliminate the strategic problem of terror for a considerable period of time.”⁵⁸

The military action against Lebanon was delayed as long as Moshe Dayan, the foreign minister, and Ezer Weizman, minister of defense, remained in power. These two leaders perceived the high economic, political and military price that the military strike might cost. Thus as an alternative to a full military action, they called for a limited action. However, after the resignation of Dayan and Weizman from office in 1979 and 1980 respectively, full military strike was imminent. The appointments of Ariel Sharon as Minister of Defense, and of Shamir as foreign minister removed all the barriers. In 1982, the military strike against Lebanon was implemented.⁵⁹

According to their strategy adopted in 1973 and on, in 1982 Labor opposed the military strike against Lebanon unless it was implemented against terrorists and restricted to a range of maximum 45-50 km from Israel's borders.⁶⁰

The Lebanon invasion caused friction among political parties in Israel. Some called for immediate withdrawal while others insisted that Israel remain in South Lebanon to protect its borders. In this tense atmosphere, the Likud went to the election with a poor

economic record in 1984. Some of the oriental Jews withdrew their support because of the money that they lost on October 6, 1983 with the collapse of the bank stocks, a devaluation of the currency and a high rate of inflation.⁶¹ The economic and political condition led to the formation of a unity government between Likud and Labor. This government was headed by Labor leader Shimon Peres until 1986, when it shifted to the Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir. In the first two years, the government focused on domestic issues, mainly the economy. Peres knew that his party had to accomplish its objectives in a limited time. It is worth noting that any decision was made on a consensus basis. The two parties were consistent on domestic issues. The major gulf between them appeared in foreign policy and security issues. These two issues revealed the underlying contradiction in the coalition. The economic issues overshadowed foreign policy issues until 1985. That helped Peres maintain a credible and reasonable leadership, while Shamir's term witnessed an "increasing militancy of the settlers in Judea and Samaria" which threatened civil war.⁶² When he became Prime Minister between 1984 and 1986, Shimon Peres had three major objectives: "to withdraw Israeli forces from Lebanon as quickly as possible; focus on the unilateral creation of a security zone along the border in southern Lebanon; and the policing of the zone by an Israel-created and-supported militia, the 'South Lebanese Army'."⁶³

Shamir's term witnessed the birth of a different kind of resistance in the occupied territories. In 1987, the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip began the Intifada that spread to the West Bank. Israel's first response to the Intifada was ineffective as the rebellion gained international attention. The Intifada became a major issue in Israel's domestic politics and it affected the policies of political parties and leadership. The Intifada surprised Israel and divided it into two camps: (1) Labor who believed in resolving the Palestinian problems

through territorial compromise and saw the Intifada as a proof for the Likud's folly in keeping territories; (2) the Likud camp who believed that Israel could still have peace and keep the territories. Likud believed that Intifada was a proof of the dangers that "Israel would face if it relinquished control over territories."⁶⁴ The Intifada played a major role in the beginning of peace talks in 1988.

The Intifada and the ineffective response of the government affected the agenda of Likud and Labor in the 1988 elections. The main issue of the 1988 campaign was the Arab-Israeli conflict and the special circumstances that the Intifada had brought about. There were two major blocs in this election, the hawkish bloc led by Likud and the dovish bloc led by Labor. After Camp David, Likud opposed any further territorial concessions. In 1988, headed by Prime Minister Shamir, Likud insisted only on direct talks with any Arab partner interested in forming a peace agreement with Israel. The party went on record as refusing to negotiate with the PLO.

On the other hand, Labor, led by Peres, offered its readiness to direct talks with Arabs "under the umbrella of international conference."⁶⁵ Unlike Likud, labor was willing to make some territorial concessions. Such territorial concessions, thought the Labor party, would encourage Arabs to engage in peace talks and would reduce the danger of a growing Arab minority to the Jewish identity of Israel. Although labor showed no willingness to talk with the PLO or accept any Arab army presence in the West Bank, Likud accused them of supporting these two issues.⁶⁶ In fact, Peres was the one who had gone on record in 1988 indicating that there "will be no return to the pre-1967 borders, that there will be no independent Palestinian state, that the Jordan River will be Israel's eastern security border, that the Jewish settlements on the West Bank will stay, and that Jerusalem will remain united under Israeli sovereignty."⁶⁷

The Arab supported parties witnessed a relative defeat in the 1988 election although there was a 75% increase in the turnout among Arab voters. Moreover, the 1988 election also revealed a change in ethnic votes between Sephardis and Ashkenazis. The support that the Likud received from Sephardis decreased while the support given to it by Ashkenazi increased. The reason was that many Sephardis defected from Likud to vote in favor of Shas, which was established in 1984 by dissatisfied Sephardi Jews. Shas was an ultra-orthodox ethnic Jewish party. On the other hand, Ashkenazi who “floated between the two parties” tended to favor Likud.⁶⁸ The outcome of the 1988 election resulted in another unity government between Labor and Likud leading the country into the 1990s.

During the 1990's, a new Israel was emerging. Its population was more consumer-oriented. As the economy became more important, the age of ideology seemed to be passing away; people appeared more concerned with having someone who could solve their practical problems.⁶⁹ These changes affected the policies of Labor and Likud. Many factors brought about the changes in Israel. The Gulf war, the events in Europe, and the fall of the Soviet Union raised the hope among Israelis that a new era of domestic and foreign affairs was starting.

The immigration of 200,000 Jews to Israel “threatened to alter the dimensions of Israel's internal politics.”⁷⁰ The Soviet Jewry immigration raised many problems. First, the influx raised problems of housing, employment, and training. The political parties in Israel were not prepared to deal with the issue. The sheer size of the arrivals had unforeseen political ramifications. The large number of potential voters played a major role in deciding who would be in power in the 1992 elections. The mass immigration also affected the Palestinians' economic status. To protect its new Russian job seekers, Israel shut the

borders to the occupied territories thus preventing many Palestinians from gaining access to their economic resources. In addition to that, the war created many job opportunities for the new immigrants. However, although more jobs were available to Israelis with the shutdown of the green line, unemployment in Israel rose to 10% by the summer, because of the uncontrolled immigration from the Soviet Union and the refusal of Israelis to hold the types of jobs that the Palestinians used to handle. Accelerated development and urbanization increased water usage. By 1990 water shortage reached crisis level in Israel. By 1991, Israel's agricultural production was cut by 30%. Israel had become even more dependent on the West Bank water and the minister of agriculture, Rafael Eitan, announced that Israel could not give up the West Bank without destroying its agricultural sector. Consequently, scarcity of water supply elevated the problem of authority over "Judea and Samaria."⁷¹ Moreover, the Palestinian support for Saddam Hussein led to the disruption of the peace movement that started in 1989. The Palestinian stand eroded the small gains in Israeli public attitude that they had made during the 1980's.^e

In 1990, Labor withdrew from the National Unity Government. In the first weeks after the fall of the government, Shimon Peres tried forming a coalition with the religious parties. Peres realized that religious parties were growing in the country; they had won 18 seats in 1988 election. In addition, there was a fruitful cooperation between Labor and the religious party with regard to settling Israeli's conflict with the Palestinians. Thus, Peres couldn't form a coalition because Labor also differed with religious parties on the issue concerning religion-state and Jewish culture.⁷² In fact it was Peres's rejection of the religious parties' perception of the Jewish state that led him to lose the rabbis' votes. For

^e It is worth noting that the peace movement has always been fragile due to factions within the Labor party and the Likud as well.

example, when Labor focused on the secularism and territoriality of Israel, Rabbi Schach announced to his followers that the important issue was the “holiness of the Torah and the religious traditionalism, which he considered as being the essence of the Jewish people's existence.”⁷³

Upon Labor's withdrawal from the government, Shamir formed a right-wing government. It was then that Shamir started showing a different approach to the Palestinian issue and the peace process. He went to the Madrid Conference because he believed that conditions were going to be better after the Gulf war. He believed protracted negotiations would allow fewer concessions and ultimately preserve the lands of Eretz Israel.⁷⁴ Shamir's intentions were not known to the far right bloc who saw the Madrid Conference as “a first step down the slippery slope to a Palestinian state.”⁷⁵ Shamir proposed the election of a Palestinian council that would be in charge of the internal governmental affairs of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. He even stated that Israel would not examine whether the members of the council had any PLO connections. Shamir also suggested a joint Israeli-Jordanian confederation that would administer the territories. However, when he saw “Israel rushing to embrace PLO and to grant the Palestinians an independent state,”⁷⁶ he reaffirmed that Israel was not ready to give away any of the territories especially the ones on the west of Jordan river. His position was strengthened when the PLO resumed its terrorist attacks against Israel by the end of May 1990.

When Shamir proposed the confederation, the Israeli government coalition started to break up a few weeks after the Madrid Conference. Likud began receiving attacks from the members of the coalition, Tehiya, Moledet, and Tsomet. Backed by leaders of Moledet and Tsomet, Yuval Ne'eman, leader of Tehiya denounced the 1989 peace plan that called for autonomy of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. He claimed that the plan was

adopted by Labor when they were in the coalition; thus since Labor left the government, the plan should no longer exist. He maintained that the Gulf war proved the Palestinians would cause danger to Israel's presence. This position was also supported by Ariel Sharon who in 1989 nearly split the party into pro and opposition peace factions. Sharon's solution to the problems in the Middle East was to demilitarize the Arab world as a necessary condition to any peace negotiation. He also claimed that "Jordan is Palestine" and that Arafat could replace King Hussein. Sharon accused the Israeli government of becoming "victimized by PLO brainwashing."⁷⁷

Moledet and Tehiya withdrew because they saw the negotiations "opening the way to territorial concessions and abandonment of the settlers,"⁷⁸ and because Shamir agreed to discuss an interim agreement on Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As a result the Likud and Labor agreed to schedule national elections on June 23, 1992.⁷⁹

Friction between the political parties was now rife within the Likud itself. Ariel Sharon represented the extreme hawks in Likud; David Levy, Shamir's foreign minister, represented the doves within the party. When Shamir formed the 1990 government, Levy developed friendly relations with Egypt. It was David Levy who put an alternative 'reasonable' peace plan, but it was rejected by Shamir and the Likud. Levy did not abandon Likud's tough stand on territorial issues; however, he believed in a more diplomatic foreign policy. Like any Likud leader, he refused the principle of "land for peace", rejected recognition of negotiations with PLO. However, unlike Sharon, he announced that the only alternative was to negotiate with the Palestinians in the occupied territories that supported Saddam Hussein. Sharon, on the other hand, refused the principle of negotiating with the Palestinians and called for the expulsion from the territories.⁸⁰

Similar divisions appeared within the Labor Alignment. There were those who officially prohibited any talks with PLO, while others called for territorial concessions except for East Jerusalem. This latter faction was led by Yossi Beilin who declared security was more important than territories. A third faction agreed with Shamir's position. None however supported Sharon's suggestions. Shimon Peres presented yet another dramatic peace proposal. He called for negotiations under the auspices of an international conference that might lead to a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation or federation.⁸¹

In 1991, the Palestinian Intifada entered its fourth year stronger than ever before. In the period of four years, the Israeli Defense Forces killed approximately 880 Palestinians, while Palestinians killed about 70 Israelis. The Intifada raised serious problems within Israel because its soldiers had to fight civilians who were often children under the age of 17. This unequal conflict became a public relations conflict between the government and the military. The excessive use of military force became a major issue. In fact, the Intifada led to the politicization of the army. On one hand, the right wing parties supported the military action against the Intifada; on the other hand, the left wing parties believed that the army had claimed brutal actions. Moreover, since the emergence of the Intifada in 1987 more than 30% of the Jewish public supported the idea of a Palestinian state; more than 50% supported the idea of territorial compromises. On the other hand, only about 20% of the population endorsed the idea of forcible expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories.⁸²

In the meantime, the Left wing parties saw the continuing struggle with the Intifada as a powerful example of the urgency for negotiation with the Palestinians. However, this time they were against the coexistence principle. Now they called for two separate states. On the side, the right-wing parties ruled out any possibility of negotiating an independent

Palestinian State. Rather they called for solving their problems with Syria as a priority and for forcible suppression of the Intifada.⁸³

The Period of 1992-Present

The main concern of Israeli foreign policy is reaching peace with Arab neighbors. After the 1967 war, Israel decided that it would not withdraw from any territories until the Arabs agreed to reach a peace settlement with Israel based upon a recognition of Israel's existence and its permanent borders. The quest for peace increased after the 1973 War especially after the power of the oil cartel that led most European countries to decline from helping Israel economically.⁸⁴ In the late eighties, Rabin noted a change in the Arab position and decided to seize the opportunity to arrange peace with the Arabs.

In the meantime, Likud remained extreme hard-liners. Likud's ideology has always focused on the preservation of "Greater Israel", thus the denial of any Palestinian self-determination in the areas of Judea and Samaria.⁸⁵ The Likud's policy toward Palestinians can be summed up in three nos: "no to negotiations with the PLO, no to a Palestinian state, and no to swapping land for peace."⁸⁶ While the Labor party agreed with the principle of partition as a trade for peace, the Likud rejected this principle.

However, it was a Likud leader, Shamir, who participated in the Madrid meeting, an event followed by bilateral peace talks between Israel and the Arabs. The focus of these talks was on the "continuation of the process rather than on achievements."⁸⁷ The most difficult negotiations were between Israel and Palestinians, on one hand, and Israel and Syria, on the other hand. The multilateral talks focused on the issues of refugees, economic development, water resources, environment, and arms control.⁸⁸

While Likud was busy with its internal problems, Labor party had already elected Rabin to head the list for the election. Rabin was known for his tough stand on security.

Rabin's stand on policy emphasized the necessity to soon reach an autonomy plan for the Palestinians. He didn't reject any settlements that were built for security purposes in Golan Height, Jordan River, or greater Jerusalem. In addition to focusing on peace, Labor also focused on economy. Labor targeted the new immigrants who were struggling to find jobs and the young working class that was affected by the Likud government's policies.⁸⁹ Furthermore, Labor's return to power was aided by the new voters from the Soviet Union who were deeply disillusioned by Likud's performance. Moreover, Labor's platform promised their commitment to preserve equal rights for all Israeli citizens.⁹⁰

When Labor formed the government, Rabin outlined the agenda of his administration in a speech to the Knesset in June 1992. He emphasized the peace process, national priorities, and Israel's position in the world. Instead of spending money on building more settlements, he pledged to spend it on immigration absorption, unemployment, education, and social and economic reforms. Rabin also maintained that he would give priorities to peace talking with the Palestinians. This announcement revealed the major differences between Meir's Labor and Rabin's Labor. Under Golda Meir, Labor had been a party of "nationalism and territorial maximalism."⁹¹ Under Rabin, the party emphasized political moderation, liberal Zionism, and reconciliation. Rabin also worked on halting settlement buildings in the occupied territories, which satisfied the United States.⁹²

As the Labor party focused on the necessity of making peace with the Arabs, it was carrying secret negotiations with the PLO in Norway under the auspices of the Norwegian government. These secret negotiations culminated in the Oslo Accord. The Accord was signed in Washington on September 13, 1993. According to "Oslo", the peace process takes place in two stages over a period of five years: The interim stage, during which the

PLO would terminate its charter that calls for Israel's destruction and would “foster peaceful relations toward Israelis among their people.”⁹³ In return, Israel would withdraw from parts of the occupied territories, mainly Gaza and West Bank where Palestinians would have autonomy. In the second stage, negotiations would culminate in a final Palestinian independence and long-standing peace between the two States.

From 1993 to 1995, the right wing hard-liners became more aggressive toward the peace process. Israeli public opinion was divided between supporters and opponents to the peace process.

Even as Labor was losing its popular support, a new aggressive personality emerged in the Likud. During the Reagan Administration, Bibi Netanyahu emerged as a promising figure in Israeli politics. He believed there was a need to encounter the sophisticated Palestinian propaganda, and castigated the Likud government's ineffective use of the media. He thought that the Likud's failure to produce persuasive messages that explained Israel's position in the world had led to consecutive defeats. Netanyahu knew the extent to which the media shape foreign policy especially in the United States. Netanyahu considered the Madrid conference merely a mechanism to return Israel to its 1967 borders. He wanted to wage a propaganda war against the Bush Administration's tactics. In addition to Likud, several Labor Alignment MKs had their reservation about the Madrid Conference. The parties announced that Israel should retain Golan Heights to protect its security.⁹⁴

Netanyahu's approach to peace was hard-line and its roots were nakedly ideological. He argued that the only realists and guardians of truth were the Likud. Netanyahu knew that he had to accept the PLO as the Palestinian representative, yet he considered the Oslo Agreement invalid and asked for a 'national referendum'. He also

hinted that if the Likud came to power, it might not honor the peace process. Despite the Likud position, Rabin was able to win the Oslo Agreement debate in the Knesset⁹⁵ and to dominate the political scene until his assassination in 1995. To supporters of peace, he was considered a hero. However, to the non-supporters he was a villain who was willing to sell out Israel to Syria and the Palestinians.

The 1996 elections deeply divided Israel over the peace issue. The election was perhaps the most crucial one in the history of Israel. For the first time, there were two simultaneous but independent ballots: one for the Knesset and one for the Prime Minister. This change in the electoral system weakened both Labor and Likud because it left more space for other parties to resist pressure from the two major parties.

In 1996, the Israeli society was equally divided over the negotiations with Syria and the Palestinians. There were those who agreed with the “land for peace” principle, while others opposed any territorial compromise because it undermined Israel's security. Thus, the crux of the debate in the 1996 election focused on the 1993 Oslo Agreement. Those who supported Oslo supported Rabin; those who regarded the peace process as flawed supported Netanyahu. After Rabin's death, Netanyahu was cautious in his criticism of Labor's peace policy and instead shifted his rhetoric to the economy and governmental administration. By early 1996, however, after Hamas 's suicide bombings in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Ashkelon, Netanyahu returned to his attacks on Labor and public safety. Thus, the public started questioning Labor's ability to maintain security in the country. Recognizing the side effects of Hamas's bombings, Peres changed the slogan of his campaign from “Vote for Peres, vote for peace” to “Israel is strong with Peres.” Labor understood that only one third of the voters held Labor's moderate or extreme left views and knew its appeal resonated with a majority of citizens. After the bombings, Peres

adopted Rabin's concept of "separation." He decided to fence off Israel from contact with Palestinians in the occupied territories. In addition to that, to prove his ability to maintain security, he ordered operation "Grapes of Wrath" against Hezbollah in April 1996. However, the operation was costly materially and politically. Likud accused Peres of not finishing the job of extricating Hezbollah.⁹⁶

In general, Labor's platform emphasized both national security and recommitment to peace. Labor promised to end the Arab-Israeli conflict by the year 2000. Peres reiterated his vision of "a new Middle East based on a common market with regional irrigation, tourism, transport, and communication systems in the fields of culture and science."⁹⁷ The Platform emphasized a united Jerusalem under Israel's rule. Labor's agenda also included the principle of establishing no new Jewish settlements in the occupied territories while still maintaining jurisdiction over the Israeli settlers remaining there.⁹⁸

On the other hand, Likud's platform restated the traditional Revisionist's claim of "the right of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, an eternal right, not subject to dispute."⁹⁹ Their agenda also focused on strengthening the settlements in the territories, and upon a pledge that security would be the first condition in the peace negotiation. Likud declared their willingness to continue negotiations with the PA on condition that PA annul the charter that called for the destruction of Israel and that they hinder all terrorists acts against Israel.¹⁰⁰

The outcome of the election uncovered a new political reality in Israel, the increased power of coalitions. Netanyahu may have won the premiership, but Likud and Labor were weakened in the Knesset. The religious parties showed more strength. Three major religious parties, Shas, National Religious Party and United Torah Jerusalem increased their seats in the Knesset. These parties were ultra-orthodox with a strong

emphasis upon Jewish spiritual values, identity and education. Their success meant that they could make strict demands on Netanyahu regarding their goal of preserving the Jewish character of the State.¹⁰¹

Two factors helped Netanyahu come to power: "First, there was a reticence to 'accept' Arafat after years of Palestinian terrorism, PLO double-speak and Likud demonization. The support for Oslo agreement was cooling down. Second, this coolness towards the Oslo agreement was exploited by Islamic militants, who contrived to wreck any Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement through well publicized atrocities and suicide missions."¹⁰²

Ever since his election, the major problem that challenged Netanyahu was the peace process. He refused to talk with the PLO for 19 months after his election. He increased settlements in the occupied territories. He never ceased to attack the Oslo agreement. However, after 19 months of stagnation, Netanyahu agreed to meet with Arafat in Wye Plantation, Maryland. After nine days of meetings and talks, an agreement was signed. Under the terms of the Wye agreement, the Israelis would free a substantial number of Arab political prisoners and withdraw from 13.1 percent of the West Bank. In return, the Palestinians would abolish anti-Israeli language from their charter and provide more security guarantees.¹⁰³ Thus, the Likud leader shifted from the extreme ideology of the right wing. Netanyahu moderated his image, actions and rhetoric as earlier leaders had done before him.

This agreement endangered Netanyahu's position in Israel. Right-wing hard-liners protested against the agreement, accusing Netanyahu of betraying their trust and voters.¹⁰⁴ The main opposition Labor Party said it would back Netanyahu and shield him from a no

confidence vote in the Knesset. However, they would call for early elections because such an agreement could have been reached two years earlier.¹⁰⁵

On May 17, 1999, Ehud Barak, the Labor leader, won the election as the new Israeli Prime Minister. His campaign focused on maintaining peace with the Arabs. His victory brought some optimistic feelings among some Arab states after a long pessimistic atmosphere during Netanyahu's reign. However, two years later, this optimism waned and a new Intifada rose in the occupied territories. The increase in violence between Palestinians and Israelis led to Barak's resignation and Sharon's victory as the new PM, in an early elections. As of this writing, violence and fighting between the Palestinians and Israelis is a daily routine.

Notes

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CHAPTER THREE

MEDIA FRAMING AND AGENDA SETTING

Most of our information about politics does not come to us from direct experience or even from local sources. It is gathered, selected and interpreted by a vast communication industry. Thus, any study of political discourse must deal with mass media. The print media is traditionally the most information heavy medium. Its coverage is detailed and it has functioned as a conduit, adversary and interpreter of political discourse. Accordingly, this chapter examines the agenda-setting functions of the press in society. In addition, it will outline the procedure of framing analysis that will be used in chapters five and six. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief estimate of the significance of this research for the present study.

Research related to media function, roles and effects has occupied a relatively important place in the field of communication. Scholars from different fields have, one way or another, been concerned about the effects of media upon the society they purport to serve. Conventional wisdom calls mass media a Fourth Estate. Its obvious influence in so many arenas has prompted the Hutchins Commission to outline the social responsibility and functions of the press. According to the Commission, the press should:

First, provide “a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning”; second, serve as a “forum for the exchange of comment and criticism”; third, project “a representative picture of the constituent groups in society”; fourth, be responsible for “the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society” in which it operates; finally, provide “full access to the day’s intelligence.”¹

These responsibilities imply four basic functions of the press: providing information and news²; selection, interpretation and evaluation of the information;³ learning of basic values that help the individual fit in his cultural environment⁴, and promotion of national

interests especially during national crisis.⁵ This last function Graber calls manipulation. She argues that the media have an active role in which they shape the news by making one issue more salient than the other. This issue weighting constitutes the agenda setting function of the media.⁶

Agenda setting informs Bernard Cohen's claim that the press is "stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."⁷ The relevance of this selective weighting to the present study is obvious. Rival presses feature different agendas in reporting issues of war, peace negotiation, and national interest. Cohen's statement of the power of the press has been affirmed by other scholars. Gilberg et al. maintained that the press also has the power to set the government's agenda.⁸ Thus the media shapes what the public observes as political reality and also "how political elites understand what voters and opinion leaders are thinking about."⁹ Thus agenda setting implies that "the media set the public priorities just by paying attention to some issues while ignoring others. They determine what issues are important and in this way play an important role in structuring our social reality."¹⁰

Agenda setting function of the media relates to the level of abstraction at which an issue is covered. It seems that a decision to cover an issue in vivid concrete details will affect the public's perception of the issue's importance. Yagade and Dozier developed a study to examine the validity of the above statement.¹¹ They concluded that the power of the news media agenda setting in influencing the perceived salience of an issue increases when the issue is concrete and decreases when the issue is abstract.

Noelle-Neumann examined the role of media in forming public opinion. She suggested the media choose what is newsworthy and creates accordingly the background and meaning of public discourse.¹²

Iyengar and Simon define agenda setting as “the ability of the news media to define significant issues of the day.”¹³ Cook, et. al. states that agenda setting refers to the media’s ability to shape the public’s priorities “by leading them to view certain issues as more important.”¹⁴ McCombs and Shaw assert that agenda setting tells the audience not only what to think about but also how to think about it.¹⁵ Communication researchers have revealed great concern about the impact of news coverage on public concern. Research in the area of agenda setting emerged from the scholars’ concern regarding the direction of agenda setting impact. Did the news coverage direct the public concern or did journalists cover news that appeals to the audience?¹⁶

However, the media not only tell us which issues to think about; it also tells us how to think about issues. The press not only selects issues, it defines them. This contextualization process is called media framing. Media framing is the second concern of the present study. An issue can be framed in several ways by descriptive images, by association with another issue, by narrative form, or even by the choice of emotion-laden language.

Iyengar and Simon examined the function of agenda setting and framing in the news coverage of Gulf crisis.¹⁷ They concluded that the news coverage of the crisis affected the political concerns of the American public and their evaluation of President Bush. Prior to the crisis, the public’s main concern was economic. Accordingly, economic performance served as the main criterion for their evaluation of Bush. After the crisis, the public concern shifted to foreign policy and so did the evaluation of Bush. Moreover, the researcher found that episodic framing “increased viewers support for a military resolution of the conflict.”¹⁸ Framing may have unintended effects as well. The heroic World War II type of reportage raised Bush’s stature and solidified his mandate. It may also have raised

expectations. When Bush did not show the same energy and focus in fighting recession, many supporters became disillusioned with his leadership.

Framing Analysis

Before narrating the literature on media framing and agenda setting, it is important to define certain terms. Framing has been defined in different ways by communication scholars; however, all the definitions share a common core. Entman defines framing as “select[ing] aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.”¹⁹ In other words, frames identify problems, detect causes, formulate moral judgments and recommend solutions. Cognitively, individuals use frames to interpret, organize, and make sense of the world around them.²⁰ Framing “involves the relationship between qualitative aspects of news coverage contextual cues and how the public interprets the news.”²¹ Thus the media try to persuade the public to accept their interpretation as the truth.²²

Usually in the framing process, information is associated with cultural symbols. Framing is effective in the sense that it decides how audiences understand, remember, and evaluate a particular problem. Most important, framing directs the attention toward particular aspects and away from others; as a result, audiences have different reactions. Framing is most effective when the audience is not well informed about the main problem. Moreover, audiences have different reactions to issues because news frames draw attention to some aspects of reality while suppressing other aspects.²³

Framing is a process employed by the media that promotes “elite social discourse as the public discourse or the common sense of society.”²⁴ This statement reflects a belief

among scholars that elite discourse is often unquestioned and is processed as fact rather than as opinion or judgment. Media framing is a process whereby certain interpretations and judgments are promoted through the use of keywords, phrases, images, metaphors, symbols, rhetorical devices, and themes emphasized in news narratives.²⁵ Capella & Jamieson state that “news frames are those rhetorical and stylistic choices, reliably identified in the news, that alter the interpretations of the topics treated and are a consistent part of the news environment.”²⁶ Although Gamson asserts that there are conditions that alleviate the impact of media framing on the audience,²⁷ Zaller maintains that because people are not well informed on social and political issues, framing tends to heavily influence the audiences’ responses to the covered issues.²⁸ Thus, the interpretation derived from the news frame is a function of both the message and the knowledge of the audience.²⁹ In processing local news, people may have alternative sources of data. In national news, they seldom process personal data and quite often lack an alternative frame of reference.

The importance of frames is that they organize the “facts” of newspaper stories in a way that leads to the formation of one perception rather than another. For example, poverty may be framed in a way that social and political forces are to be blamed. Alternatively, poverty can be framed so that the poor alone appear to be responsible for their situation.³⁰ Or, as Gamson and Lasch suggested, a social policy such as welfare may be depicted as responsible for the cycle of poverty in the society. In this case, the solution is redefined as the problem.³¹ However, it is worth noting that journalists themselves may not be consciously aware of the framing process. It has been suggested that their reliance on elite sources means that the media serve as mere conduits for the beliefs of the powerful.³² Nevertheless, news organizations, journalists and editors may themselves reconstruct the

quotes of the elite to summarize the core of the story, thus playing a major role in the framing process.³³ Framing molds individual perception and opinion by “stressing specific elements or features of the broader controversy, reducing a usually complex issue down to one or two central aspects.”³⁴ Nelson et. al. tested their assumption by examining the media coverage of the Ku Klux Klan rally. They ran two experiments where the rally was framed in different ways to examine the impact of media frames on tolerance and the role of “value weighting in mediating frames effects.”³⁵ The researchers concluded that the words, images, and phrases the journalists use to cover a particular issue frame the event in a coherent picture and consequently, this picture exerts a recognizable influence on the audience.

Research on framing has focused on how the public attributes responsibility for issues and events. Kuyper’s work studied the impact of media upon attribution of responsibility for events among congress, the president, and foreign leaders.³⁶

Iyengar and Simon state that framing of issues can be either episodic or thematic. Episodic frames focus on concrete and specific events.³⁷ Thematic frames depict issues in an abstract and general context. TV political news relies heavily on episodic framing. Iyengar studied the impact of episodic and thematic news frames. Episodic frames focus “on specific episodes, individual perpetrators, victims, or other actors at the expense of more general, thematic information”³⁸ and “depict concrete events that illustrate issues while thematic framing presents collective or general evidence.”³⁹ Iyengar states that episodic framing attributes responsibility for the problem and its solution to individuals rather than to societies; thus making particular traits and acts of individuals more accessible, while thematic reporting frames the event in terms of social and political outcomes.

Consequently, in addition to influencing the public opinion regarding the political event, the media also help the public conceptualize the event. Thus, Noelle-Neumann concludes, media defines reality for many people. A coherent story is more powerful than a bricolage.

Allen, et.al, in an effort to explain the media framing process in a historical context, examined the media priming and framing effects on public opinion during the early stages of the Gulf War. The researchers state that framing “describes the use of symbolic language or imagery that characterizes and shapes the meaning of a political event or proposal.”⁴⁰ They found the media coverage of the event offered a negative attitude toward dissent and a positive attitude toward war effort. Consequently, the media “affected Americans’ interpretations and support of the Gulf War.”⁴¹ The media offered the public redundant, repetitious and ubiquitous messages of support for the Gulf War. Individual “tales” were made prototypical. The media framed the news of patriotism and dissent to construct a reality that influenced the public’s perception of military intervention. It contrasted the President’s commitment with the tardy lukewarm support of many members of Congress that made formerly reluctant senators scramble aboard and voice their patriotic support. The framing of U.S. technological superiority and the use of technological language and jargon contributed to the support of the public. A nearly totalized and integrated view of the war emerged; what scholars have called exegetical bonding resulted among viewers who “discussed” the war in the tutelary perspective of media.

In a dramatic example of the power of the media framing, Entman examined the news narratives used by the U.S. media coverage of the KAL_ Soviet fighter shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007_ and Iran Air_ American Navy Ship shot down Iran Air Flight 655. Entman documented how the media portrayed similar events in two contrasting

frames. In their coverage of the Iran Air incident, the media defined the incident as a technical problem; KAL, on the other hand, “was portrayed as a moral outrage.”⁴² In the KAL incident accounts include moral evaluation. In the second incident, Iran Air, moral evaluation is absent.

The moral evaluation is reinforced by the “sizing” of the event; Entman maintains that the core of framing is sizing; that is, shrinking or amplifying elements of reality to make them more or less important. The moral judgment frame is also emphasized in KAL coverage but not in Iran Air “by the degree of generalization from the attacks to the nature of the two political systems.”⁴³ The idea of “sizing” is called “expanding the circumference” by Burkean critics. In this way local problems can be given national significance. Reagan’s struggle in Grenada was spoken of as part of a much larger struggle. The war on the tiny island was placed in the expanded context of the Cold War. In a sense, the liberation of medical students in Grenada was a synecdoche for the liberation of subject peoples in the Soviet Union.

Davis explored the effect of message framing on responses to environmental communications. He explored the influence of the three major components of framing, problem definition, target definition, and types of behavioral actions, on the public attitudinal and behavioral changes. Davis reviewed how each component functions.

1) Framing the problem: situation framing can emphasize positive/negative consequences. Consequently, framing can affect how a problem is perceived and “how alternative decisions are evaluated.”⁴⁴ For example, Meyerowitz and Chaiken concluded that negatively framed messages wield more judgmental affect than positively or objectively stated messages.⁴⁵ This may be because negatively framed messages are seen as threats to the social order. We criticize situations that seem wrong and are in need of corrective

actions. 2) Framing the Target: Individuals are more persuaded when the message emphasizes how they will personally be negatively influenced by the outcome of their inaction in comparison to positive effects of their actions. Appeal to immediate self-interest has been the conventional advice of manuals of rhetoric since Aristotle. 3) Framing Actions: Individuals tend to be more supportive of actions that maintain the “taking less” frame than of messages that maintain the “doing more” frames. In a 1993 study, Davis found that individuals are more likely to participate in an environmentally responsible action when “communications present simple, clear, and understandable actions in a context which stresses how the target will be personally, negatively affected if they continue to be inactive.”⁴⁶

Many studies have been conducted to examine the role of news media in building communities. Eaton found that the salience of the issues of crime, fear, unemployment, inflation and poverty on the public agenda was positively associated with the issues’ salience in the news media.⁴⁷ Likewise, McCombs examined how the agenda setting of the news media helps achieve community consensus about important issues in society. McCombs asserts that there is “evidence that the news media can reduce individual differences among people within the community.”⁴⁸ Shaw and Martin confirm McCombs’s assertion in their study where they found that the media agenda brought groups within the community smaller together.⁴⁹ Their North Carolina Survey revealed that subgroups that are exposed to the news develop a consensus about the public agenda among themselves. McCombs states that there are two ways in which community agendas are set. One is bottom-up and focuses on the public agenda; the other is top-down and focuses on the media agenda. Both ways work and make three contributions to achieving community

consensus. First, they make an issue salient; second, they bring the community together; and third, the news creates a picture of the public issues.

Cook, et. al. examined the impact of television news on members of the public, on interest groups, policy makers and policy.⁵⁰ They studied the extent to which media news is capable of changing the audience's attitudes about the importance of a particular issue. The researchers state that the media agenda setting capacity indicates that there is a causal relation between sequential events. First, media report the event; second, the reporting of the event influences the perception of the saliency of the event. The researcher concluded once media reports are researched, written and produced, their impact on the public, policy makers and interest groups who view the news report becomes definitive. Subsequent events form a "text" that becomes a kind of collective memory place. The issue becomes the symbolic property of the readership as a whole. Once policy makers understand the public opinion through the media, they act to make policies.

Gilberg et.al. reported that U.S. presidents try to influence the agenda setting of news through their press conferences and televised addresses to the nation, and most importantly through the annual State of the Union address.⁵¹ Later, Gilberg et.al studied the limits of presidential influence, and his subsequent study argued that the mass media agenda tend to affect the president's priorities and not the other way around.⁵²

Tucker analyzed the framing process of media discourse regarding the August 1995 CK Jeans advertising campaign.⁵³ His studies examined the impact of kiddie-porn frame in producing and reproducing beliefs about youth sexuality and cultural as well as economic power. Tucker identified the components of the frame and analyzed the sociopolitical context in which the frame occurred. He concluded that had it not been for the substantial media coverage of the campaign, the Klein ad would not have been recognized by most of

the public. Consequently, the media coverage led the media elite to place the blame on CK as the real problem. Thus, Tucker speculated that the “frame of Kiddie porn masks the interests of the cultural industry that created him.”⁵⁴ Perhaps the media disciplined a voice that violated the master narratives of the culture and threatened its stock of symbolic capital.

Framing as a Rhetorical Process

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Entman states that frames “promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretations, moral evaluation, and/ or treatment recommendation for the item described.”⁵⁵ Framing becomes especially important and effective when dealing with an issue over which public opinion is divided. In controversial situations, press coverage of a particular incident tends to encourage certain voices and marginalize others.⁵⁶ For example, Daley and O’Neill examined the press coverage of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.⁵⁷ They compared the news narratives of the mainstream press and the minority press. They found more than one narrative employed in the news. A disaster narrative naturalized the spill and represented the event as the product of forces outside human control. Such narrative, through the use of available cultural metaphors, transformed a historical and social event into a technological and natural inevitability. A crime narrative individualized the event and put the blame on the legal officials. In other words, it allocated failure to people rather than natural forces. An environmental narrative depicted the voices of environmentalists contesting the statements and practices of the industrial spokespersons and the Bush Administration. These three narratives were used by the mainstream media. The minority media used the subsistence narrative where the voices of the marginalized come to the front pages. Although some views become dominant, a

seamless web of discourse is seldom created and often the mainstream media in America cannot discover a single cosmogony, but feature alternative discourses about events.

Pan and Kosick employed a thematic mode of frame analysis.⁵⁸ They stated that every news story contains a theme that operates as the Kernel of the story. Such themes help the public encapsulate the story in a specific manner, a kind of indirect suggestion. The news story is further framed through lexical and syntactical codes that help readers construct a particular news discourse. Pan and Kosicki examined a news story about pro-life rally in Wichita, Kansas in which they found four frames.⁵⁹ First, the syntactical frame yielded constant patterns of words and phrases arranged into sentences mainly in headlines and head sentences. Second, script frame used the guide of the five W's and the H of journalism. Third, thematic frame unearthed patterns of causality usually found in the headline, lead and conclusion of the news story. Fourth, the rhetorical level was a search for repetitive metaphors, catchphrases, images, and exemplars. To summarize, in framing analysis one looks at the vocabulary used by journalists in order to "reveal the way the reporter categorizes that which he is reporting upon."⁶⁰ In this sense, there is a kind of Platonic soul above each news story, an embedded truth that harmonizes its disparate parts.

Implications of Framing for the Present Study

This chapter has briefly covered the literature on agenda setting and framing analysis of the news media. The literature fully supports Cohen's and McComb's statement that the media has the power to tell the public what to think about and how to think about it. The studies cited provide a rationale for the use of rhetorical framing. They further indicate that the rhetorical devices used by the press from conflicting countries may affect the manner in which the public perceives a particular event. The following chapters will deal with an

application of these theories and research to rival national presses during the Arab/Israeli peace process.

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CHAPTER FOUR

METAPHORS AND DISCOURSE FRAMES: REVIEW AND APPLICATIONS

In the classical era, audience was not such a problematic entity as it has become today. In the Classical perspective, public discourse is very much like a formal speech in that it is a planned performance in front of a specific group of persons, all of whom are physically present at a particular place and at a particular time. But today's audiences are dispersed. In the public sphere, messages are dispensed to a variety of groups via several different media. There are those who receive the message in a printed copy, those who see it on television or view it through the Internet. Further, messages are received fully, partly, or in edited forms. Finally, it would be impossible to identify every member of an audience even for a single discrete message.

Given this situation, it is obvious that much communication between rhetor and audience will not be face to face. Instead most people see and hear messages in mediated form at different times and in different places. Rhetoric invites or discourages people who are engaged in a variety of activities to become members of an audience. People frequently scan news headlines and decide whether a message is salient to them. Such judgments may be made in the blink of an eye. Since messages compete for attention, audiences must be motivated to attend to their content. Once an audience has been invited to become a constituency, discourse will not end when a message is given. It will be carried on by editors, subscribers, columnists, and other readers. They will amplify, critique, update, and build upon the original discourse. They will extract, misquote, and reinterpret it.

The newspapers under study are characterized by consensus making. They provide perspectives or ways of understanding the world for their readers. They are engaged in

supplying collective meaning. Thus, in essence, this study is about identification of rival symbolic perspectives and an assessment of their divisive and assimilative potential for their readership communities. The power of the symbolic perspectives articulated in the mainstream press is considerable; regularly recycled ways of seeing and thinking tend to become part of a nation's cultural discourse; that is, they become part of the unconscious and seldom questioned belief system of the people. The constant reiteration of a unified set of themes, issues, and recommended actions come to seem “natural” instead of merely strategic. In turn, this discourse frame provides a horizon of interpretation for readers that extends beyond any immediate issue or event, predisposes them to mobilize around certain issues, to neglect or downplay others and to doubt or dismiss data that do not correspond to the ethos of the dominant perspective. For example, a certain Southern daily celebrates its “community stars” on full page spreads. These are exclusively male businessmen. Educators, artists, politicians are absent. Thus, the paper contributes to the feeling that the only important members of the community are powerful businessmen. These leaders become the symbolic capital of the community and their decisions are sought as the legitimate voices of authority at times of communal crisis.

Frames of discourse provide both stumbling blocks and opportunities for people in conflict. Of course, in order to discover these potentials for conflict or reconciliation, it is necessary to examine these frames closely, to make explicit their implicit persuasive content. One important way of rendering perspective explicit is through metaphoric analysis.

The remainder of this chapter will attempt to 1) review the relevant literature on metaphor analysis, 2) discuss the relationship between metaphor and frame analysis and 3) briefly preview the way in which metaphoric analysis will be employed in this study.

Review of Relevant Literature

It is a truism that framing depends on the use of particular language patterns. These patterns are revealed through metaphor. Dominant metaphors highlight certain aspects of an issue and hide others. For example, framing a business transaction in war imagery (struggle, conflict, combatants, etc.) may prevent us from seeing opportunities for cooperation, negotiation, and peaceful resolution. Metaphor also keynotes particular attitudes and feelings. Edwards states that metaphors are not only mere similarities. Rather they have “the power to transform the real and make it seem to be something other than what it had always seemed before ... The potency of metaphors derives from the possibility that a resemblance recognized on the surface of language will cause a fundamental transformation in the way we perceive, organize, and express our experience of the world.”¹ A constant characterization of the world as “a jungle” may affect our feelings about daily life. The same world might be called “a garden” suggesting a very different relationship between humans and their environment.

Of course metaphor goes beyond transforming traditional concepts. It may also act as a policeman, narrowly restricting the range of meanings we apply to a message. Thus, Whorf states that the individual’s ability to interact with his environment is restricted by his language.² Likewise, Wittgenstein (cited in Edwards, 1992) asserts “that the world is my world shows itself in the fact that the limits of my language (of the only language I can understand) means the limits of my world.”³

Lakoff and Johnson state that metaphors are prevalent in everyday life, in language, action and thought. Metaphorical concepts structure what people perceive, how they relate to each other and how they act. In other words, metaphorical concepts play a functional role in defining everyday realities. Through the use of metaphorical concepts, we are able

to comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another. However, as mentioned before, even as metaphor highlights one aspect of a concept, it may hide another aspect of the concept for the same person. That is, “a metaphorical concept can keep us from focusing on other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that metaphor.”⁴ If we view a company as a machine, we will emphasize its efficiency and productivity, but we may not value its nurturing dimensions. In addition, a pattern of metaphor sets the context by which particular sentences and words are interpreted.

Lakoff and Johnson continue to claim that “people in power get to impose their metaphors” upon others.⁵ Metaphors have the power to construct and define reality and those with higher spoken status have greater access to media. Consequently, Lakoff and Johnson believe that reality is seen and understood through the eyes of the dominant class. National leaders “define” the nation’s enemies. Until recently the U.S. Department of Interior defined who was or was not an “Indian.” The Farm Bureau defines who is or is not a farmer in terms that seem arbitrary to so-called hobby farmers. From a purely strategic point of view, it is not the truth or falsity of a metaphor that counts. Rather, what counts is the “perception and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it.”⁶

For Lakoff, metaphors are inherent in the person’s experience and fundamental.⁷ Metaphors are placed between subjective experience and objective reality. Our understanding of things in terms of others help us find coherence and resemblance and order by using different types of metaphors. Lakoff and Johnston claim that people tend to understand one thing in terms of another, be it prototypes or categories.⁸

Lakoff and Turner made several claims that form the basis of their approach to metaphor:

1. Metaphor is a conceptual organization from the source domain to the target domain. The target domain may or may not be obvious yet it is what the metaphor is “all about.”
2. Metaphors are predominant in language and they reflect cognitive and cultural formulation of the world.
3. Poetic metaphor enriches everyday metaphor.⁹

Metaphors vary according to two parameters. First, a metaphor is ‘conventionalized’ “to the extent that it is automatic, effortless, and generally established as a mode of thought among members of a linguistic community.”¹⁰ Second, a metaphor is ‘conceptually indispensable or basic’ in the sense that it is virtually utterly changing the way we think. In the early part of the 20th century the idea of an organization as a “machine” seemed as natural as the force of gravity or breathing air. The Taylorites acted upon the idea to form scientific management, a perspective that broke factories into interchangeable parts, treated workers as productivity units, and managers as efficiency experts.

Julian Jaynes (cited in Mulaik, 1995) argued that metaphor is crucial to cognition. He states that when a person encounters an unfamiliar situation/experience that is difficult to comprehend, he turns to metaphor for help to assist him in understanding the new experience with known schemas.¹¹ In other words, according to Jaynes, metaphor helps the person comprehend the unfamiliar. Lakoff argued that cognition is both preconceptual and conceptual.¹² The preconceptual implicates perception and embodied action. It consists of two levels: basic level structure and kinesthetic image schemas. The conceptual is abstract and representational. Lakoff argues that our understanding of the world is embedded in image schemas. These, applied to smaller or larger levels of magnitude, become the bases

of metaphor. Johnson and Lakoff explored many metaphoric preconceptual image schemas such as forces, personifications, conduits, birth, and causation.¹³ These form the perceptual heart of our core metaphors, and their effect is omnipresent in language.

Burke and Perelman also assert that metaphor requires special attention. Burke states that metaphor is one of the four master figures of speech, an idea he borrowed from Vico without apparent acknowledgment.¹⁴ Like irony, metonymy, and synecdoche, Burke regards metaphor as a means of bridging metaphysical and material domains. For Perelman, metaphors are very essential in human cultures and world-views. They facilitate the development of thoughts and constitute an important tool of proof because they connect separate spheres: the lucid and disputable; the ordinary and the spiritual.¹⁵ Metaphors have the power to create order, meaning, and new realities in our lives.

Both Burke and Perelman agree with Lakoff that metaphors are more than linguistic decorations and that metaphors negotiate different orders of experience. These scholars also agree that metaphors are selective and thus limit as well as expand meaning. Similarly, Lakoff and Johnston assert that metaphors emphasize certain aspects of an event and suppress other aspects that do not fall within its logic of the chosen association.¹⁶ Further, Burke affirms that bringing out “the thisness of a that and the thatness of a this” using the “perspective process”¹⁷ is a heuristic approach to the countless aspects of reality. It is a composing process, producing an edited version of the external world. An old truism states that the act of invention involves abstraction and therefore selection. Similarly, Perelman states that metaphors highlight certain themes and leave out others.¹⁸ For example, in the case of naming foreign policy conflicts, “metaphors form a special class of explanations by referring to the events not simply as some type of violent confrontation but by borrowing the logic and terms of the definition from a radically different area of human

action, such as games, sports, dreams.”¹⁹ The British characterized their 19th century rivalry with the Russians in Asia as “The Great Game,” WWI was named “Serum” (Rugby), and the cold war was called “duel.” Kuusisto wrote: “wars are fought not only with arms, but also with words. Official definitions of conflict situations, publicly declared motives, names given to the warring parties, and explanations concerning decisions made in the course of the hostilities, the rhetoric and discourses of war, play as important a role in the progression of events as do the physical acts of belligerency that accompany them.”²⁰ Facts are not mere facts and cannot speak for themselves. They need to be named and given meanings through words in order to be understood. Therefore, events, actors, and objects exist after they “have been constructed and ordered in human language and speech, placed into a textual context of purposes and roles.”²¹ Thus, events, objects and subjects don’t just exist because they are there but because of the actors who define and interpret them and because of the linguistic practices which mold them.²² Foreign policy rhetoric has a potent ability to shape people’s perception of events and objects. Such rhetoric can make people believe that a particular actor, such as Saddam Hussein, is a crazy enemy or other actors such as Serbs are savage tribes bent on destroying the world. And, of course, characterizations of “savagery” or “craziness” leave residues of ill feeling that remain long after the events and the actors who inspired them have passed from the scene.

However, Kuusisto maintains that such power is not random but follows a particular pattern.²³ For example, Alker (cited in Kuusisto, 1998) studied the repetitive elements of historical and societal texts.²⁴ He argued that all stories follow a particular pattern. Stories feature repetitive poetic and mythic factors, such as dragons and heroes, kidnapping and rescuing. These familiar patterns help people give meaning and identity to

their community providing celebratory niches for the heroes and canonizing victorious moments of their past.

In times of crisis, a dominant metaphor may determine the range of possibilities for problem solving.²⁵ Thus, for example, the three Western leaders, United States, Great Britain, and France, in the Gulf War used the charismatic metaphor of rescue mission to justify their acts and operation to an international audience. Their discourse shaped the destinies of thousands of people. So, by January 1991, the discourse of the three Western leaders depicted Saddam's invasion of Kuwait as "a threat to the freedom and security of each individual nation and as a menace to international law."²⁶ This appeared to legitimize action in the Gulf. However, in Bosnia, the three Western leaders found the situation too complicated for tidy metaphorical framing and they ruled out any military action in the Balkan. To justify their inaction, they depicted Bosnia as a "tragedy, a muddled, cruel, and meaningless slaughter that outside forces could do very little about."²⁷ The image of chaos is not one that mobilizes nations.

The relationship between metaphor and frames can be expressed as:

1. What goes with what? (Clusters or Patterns)
2. What goes against what? (Agons)
3. What follows what? (Order and Hierarchy)
4. What is transformed into what? (Transcendence)

If a frame may be thought of as the dominant perspective of a text, then metaphor is the building block of the frame. The coherence, conflict, and resolution of the metaphor patterns that make up the text determine the moral ethos of the frame. Kenneth Burke spent years studying these patterns of discourse. He believed that strategic discourse was not random in its imagery, but strongly patterned (clustered) and that it bristled with binary

patterns (agons). It was explicitly value laden (hierarchical) and constantly rising to invoke sacred sanctions (Transcendence).

Blankenship and Kang examined how ten major newspapers in the United States 'constructed' the 1984 presidential debate by analyzing the verbal and visual metaphors used by the press. They found that the most pervasive metaphoric patterns were those of war and aggression, followed closely by sports, and metaphors taken from the world of show business. For example, according to the press, the debaters 'smashed, attacked, and assaulted each other.' Moreover, "the debates were seen as a best of five series."²⁸ The researchers concluded that although they didn't claim that the press is the sole constructor of reality, yet they assert that the media "are among those who have both the initial power to characterize and the power to diffuse those characterization."²⁹ The researchers drew two conclusions: First, that political reality is constructed. Second, that reality is reflexive because the way people talk about reality shapes their attitudes toward that reality. This means that text and practice interpenetrate. The codes and tropes developed by the press form a kind of doxa as political campaign coverage matures.

Coles examined how the dominant and oppositional discourses of the Gulf War are supported and compelled by identifying and incorporating the "active framing strategies of dominant actors."³⁰ Coles asserts that in political discourse language plays a major role in constituting the status upon which people "base their claim to exercise power."³¹ Accordingly, the predominant discourse defines and delimits the things that should and should not be said.

This means that leaders can test the analogical possibilities of their metaphor. Coles noted that George Bush linked the Iraqi invasion to Adolf Hitler and WWII. The purpose of the extreme analogy was to make people perceive the Gulf War as a just cause and a

“good war.” The acceptance of the analogy allowed Bush to overwhelm the discourse of oppositional peace movements. His story became the mono-narrative, and finally approximated a closed view of the war.

Hay explored the power of the crisis metaphor in the fall of British Labor at the close of the 1970's.³² The electoral pendulum was hastened by the media's announcement of a “winter of discontent” and a call for political renewal of transportation. Those who have the power to define crisis also have the power to define the strategies of solving it. The British media discourses constituted the moment of transformation as a crisis. The ‘discursive selectivity’ that was imposed by the media narratives constructed reality and created a sense of crisis. The media characterized the British as sleep walking into decline: “IT IS TIME TO WAKE UP BEFORE THE NIGHTMARE OF BRITAIN BECOMES A REALITY.”³³ When Margaret Thatcher rose to power, she exploited the obverse face of the sleep metaphor through her constant theme of Britain’s awakening.

Stein examined the framing process used by the U.S. social movements by looking at the Holocaust rhetoric and the symbolic appropriation forms of two opposing movements: The Lesbian/Gay movement and the Christian Right.³⁴ Snow and Benford (cited in Stein 1998) stated that after WWII, the Holocaust metaphor has become an association by which U.S. social movements are able to “claim moral authority.”³⁵ Gay activists, for example, have used the Holocaust as a simile to emphasize their victimhood “comparing the plight of homosexuals today to the plight of victimized minorities during the German Reich.”³⁶ Through the use of the Holocaust frame, gays and lesbians present themselves as victims and their opponents as oppressors. Moreover, when the AIDS epidemic spread among the gays and lesbians, the Holocaust metaphor helped frame their charges against conservative activists and apathetic health professionals. Likewise, the

Christian Right used the Holocaust frame to dispute the gay activists' rhetoric of victimhood, asserting a reversal of roles.

Edwards analyzed the structured metaphors in imperial discourse to discover their touchstone images and role in rhetorical framing. Accordingly, he chose the imperial discourse of Churchill, then a young officer and journalist, during the 1897 uprisings in Chakdara and Malakand. He also studied the discourse of Mad Fakir who wanted to claim the Mughal throne of India. Edwards recognized that both Churchill and Fakir used miracles as metaphorical tools to promote their causes. Churchill, for example, used miracles to explain the causes of the uprisings and as an "evidence of the fanatical nature of the local people."³⁷ Miracles have the same effects as metaphors and both have the capacity to make people perceive the world in a particular way and also to involve people in the resolution of their own problems. Edwards realized that "lifting the veil" was a metaphor central to both discourses yet it meant different things according to who was using it. For the British, it "expressed the dominance of reason over superstition and civilization over barbarism."³⁸ For the followers of Fakir, it symbolized the "hidden nature of divine power in the world and the inevitable failure of all political dominion, save that of God."³⁹ This opposite use of the same metaphors demonstrates, Edwards concluded, their power to create meaning or to legitimize an action.

In the same study, Edwards examined how one can predict presidential decision-making from the presidential language and media coverage. Using a concept developed by Kenneth Burke, he states that the definitions the president uses in his discourse are a 'terministic screen' through which the public views the event. Reagan used significant symbols in his discourse, symbols that maintain "singular meaning over a long period of time and are usually attached to basic cultural attitudes toward objects whether these

objects are people, institutions or settings.”⁴⁰ When these symbols reified in political action and in individual practice, the text gains a pragmatic sanction, even a higher truth status. Thus Reagan’s ’64 Goldwater address now enjoys prophetic power and is a source of symbolic capital for conservatives.

Moreover, metaphor has epistemic properties. Rhetoric as the “art of manipulating meaning”⁴¹ is the tool that helps people perceive or apprehend something. Moreover, since the world is plural because of the way people apprehend it, then there are truths about the world that are contradictory and provisional.⁴² Brummett argues that there is no absolute meaning for any event; rather meaning is attributed to experience and is negotiated through rhetoric.⁴³ For example, the old classical metaphor of the balance beam suggests our apparently contradictory needs for both stability and change can be resolved in daily life. Brummett also argues with James Andrews that a choice of metaphor is a choice of worlds.⁴⁴ For example, categorizing a particular discourse as mythic reflects a friendlier move than describing it as a farce. The term, “euphemism” (a soft name for a harsh reality) suggests the ubiquity of this practice.

Studies Related to the Arab-Israeli Conflict and the Media.

Studies conducted about the Arab Israeli conflict from a rhetorical perspective are rare. There are also few studies conducted about the role of the media in the conflict. Among these studies, Vallone et.al. examined how pro-Arab and pro-Israeli viewers perceive the coverage of the Beirut Massacre.⁴⁵ The researchers concluded that each party tends to perceive the coverage as biased in favor of the opposing party. Wolfsfeld examined how the ability of the government to promote the policies through the news media changes through time and circumstances. He argued that the leaders are in constant struggle to control the political environment and, consequently, monitor the flow of news from the media.⁴⁶

Wolfsfeld studied the Rabin government's attempt to promote the peace process to the Israeli public. He found that the first few months of the peace process, which were successful, led to media dependency on the government. However, in the second phase of Oslo, the negotiations became difficult and consequently the media took an independent and adversarial role since the government wasn't able to control terrorism and political dissent. Similarly, the media became dependent on Rabin Government during the peace process with Jordan, because it occurred at a moment when Rabin's government dominated the political environment.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the overview of theory and the nature of an appropriate method. The next chapter will begin the application of my method and the analysis of discourse.

Notes

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² Benjamin Lee, Whorf, Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1956): 32.

³ Edwards, Mad, 46

⁴ George Lakoff and Mark Johnston, Metaphors We Live By (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980): 10.

⁵ Lakoff and Johnston 157.

⁶ Lakoff and Johnston 158.

⁷ George Lakoff and Mark Turner, More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

⁸ Lakoff and Johnston

⁹ Lakoff and Turner

- ¹⁰ Lakoff and Turner 55.
- ¹¹ Stanley Mulaik, "The Metaphoric Origins of Objectivity, Subjectivity, and Consciousness in the Direct Perception of Reality," Philosophy of Science. 62 (1995).
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- ¹⁶ Lakoff and Johnston.
- ¹⁷ Burke 503-504.
- ¹⁸ Chaim Perelman, The Realm of Rhetoric (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982).
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- ²⁰ Kuusisto 603-604.
- ²¹ Kuusisto 604.
- ²² James Der Deraian and Michael Shapiro, International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics (New York: Lexington Books, 1989).
- ²³ Kuusisto.
- ²⁴ Kuusisto.
- ²⁵ Kuusisto.
- ²⁶ Kuusisto 607.
- ²⁷ Kuusisto 610.
- ²⁸ Jane Blankenship and Jong Guen Kang, "The Presidential and Vice Presidential Debates: The Printed Press and 'Construction' by Metaphor," Presidential Studies Quarterly (1987): 309.

- ²⁹ Blankenship and Kang 313.
- ³⁰ Roberta Coles, "Peaceniks and Warmongers' Framing Fracas on the Home Front: Dominant and Opposition Discourse Interaction during the Persian Gulf Crisis," The Sociological Quarterly 39.3 (1998): 369.
- ³¹ Coles 372.
- ³² Hay 261.
- ³³ Hay 263.
- ³⁴ Arlene Stein, "Whose Memories? Whose Victimhood? Contests For the Holocaust Frame in Recent Social Movements Discourse," Sociological Perspectives 41.3 (1998).
- ³⁵ Stein 520.
- ³⁶ Stein 523.
- ³⁷ Stein 655.
- ³⁸ Stein 670.
- ³⁹ Stein 670.
- ⁴⁰ Clark D. Edwards, "Predicting Presidential Decision-Making from Presidential Language and Mass Media Reportage," Presidential Studies Quarterly (1992): 48.
- ⁴¹ Barry Brummett, "Consensus Criticism," The Southern Speech Communication Journal 49 (1984): 113.
- ⁴² Brummett, "Consensus" 115.
- ⁴³ Barry Brummett, "How to Propose a Discourse--A Reply to Rowland," Communication Studies 41:2 (1990):223.
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CHAPTER FIVE

THE FRAMING OF PEACE PROCESS IN ASSAFIR

Assafir, a leading Lebanese newspaper, has been in circulation for 35 years. While it is considered the second most read newspaper in Lebanon, its readership spans the region. It is on the web and it is distributed in most Arab countries. This chapter will examine the framing of the peace process in Assafir. The analysis will focus first on news stories. The latter part of the chapter will deal with the editorials and opinions.

News Stories

The Mood of the News Stories

The peace process made headlines on the front pages in nearly every issue of Assafir in 1993 and in 1996. 1993 was selected because it was the year the peace accord was signed between the Palestinians and Labor party. 1996 was chosen because it was a fateful year for peace. Likud came to power in that year dashing hopes for achieving any realistic peace agreements between the Arabs and the Israelis. 1996 was the axial year when the mood of hope was replaced by a mood of angry fatalism.

In 1993, a general mood of pessimism dominated the news stories. At the beginning of the year, a mood of guarded hope was interrupted by dark headlines that dealt with the issue of the 400 Hamas members who were deported from Palestine. Positive headlines such as "Rabin reiterates previously spoken words: Partial withdrawal from Golan in return for comprehensive peace,"¹ and "Baker: Negotiations are useful for all. Israel prepares to withdraw from Golan"² were dominant in January, but even these headlines were clouded by dark headlines about the Palestinian deportees. Peace gradually became linked to the fate of the deportees. Thus headlines such as "Mubarak warns of the dangers of deporting Palestinians on Peace"³ dominated the pages of Assafir until May of

1993. Moreover, the headlines focused on the key player in the peace process, the United States represented by Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. A February 6 headline stated "Huge doubts surround the possibility of Christopher's success in his mission (to rescue peace talks)."⁴ The lead of the news story assured that "Christopher will not succeed in deciding a new round of negotiations in April."⁵ Moreover, a February 4 headline read, "Washington rushes resuming negotiations despite Arabs' objections."⁶ On April 29, pessimism was reflected in America's tone as "Washington warns of the consequences of delay[ing] peace talks."⁷

In fact, most of the headlines in the first half of 1993 concentrated not on achieving a peace treaty alone but also on the difficulty of the process of setting a date to start a new round of talks. For example, on April 20, the headline stated "the ninth round of talks postponed ...and peace agreement is being tested."⁸ A June 4 headline read, "Possibility to resume the tenth round on June 14."⁹ In addition, in most of the news stories peace seemed to be 'mission impossible'. A February 10 headline stated that "the peace process faces a dilemma,"¹⁰ followed by a February 25 headline stating that "Christopher returns to the Israeli starting point: The negotiations are full of obstacles and geography complicates things."¹¹ This pessimistic mood continued through April and was sustained by headlines such as "Arab parties prepare themselves for a failing negotiation."¹² and "Washington prepares cloudy proposals for the negotiations."¹³

After June, the headlines concentrated on the deal reached between Arafat and Rabin. Although the settlement reached might seem something positive at the surface, however, the underlying tone reflected a negative mood. For example, on the first of September, the headline stated, "Gaza-Jericho agreement paves the way for a Palestinian Israeli accord; Palestinian strikes ... Syrian-Jordanian concern..."¹⁴ followed by a

September 6 headline assuring that "PLO: Arafat and Rabin will declare mutual recognition; Palestinian-Israeli caution toward September 13."¹⁵ The negative mood in these headlines was reinforced by the subheadings that accompanied them. The pessimism is obvious in a headline such as "Signing the accord is delayed: Jericho municipality ... and the police a symbol."¹⁶ Even after the accord was signed, the headlines sustained their negative mood by focusing on the differences between the parties. For example, on September 15, the headline stated, "First day after signature: Palestinian-Israeli differences regarding execution."¹⁷ Such headlines were further amplified by others such as "Washington talks of 'deep disagreement' between Syria and Israel and its intention to close the gap."¹⁸ The nadir was reached in a November 15 headline that announced: "Israel builds 'security zone' around Jerusalem and asks PLO to control opposition."¹⁹ The year ended with gloomy assessments of progress toward peace.

Following the same pattern, 1996 news stories reflected a negative mood, a mood especially heightened after Netanyahu came to power in May. While the attitude shuttled between optimism and pessimism in the first five months of the year, it became more pessimistic when Netanyahu came to power and unleashed an anti-Oslo rhetoric. The mood expressed in the headlines was reflected in the leads of the news stories as well. For example, on January 22, 1996, the headline read, "Tel Aviv rejects commitment to overt withdrawal" and continued to ask "Has Peres's preference of peace over election changed?"²⁰ On January 24, a reporter titled his news as if a burst of hope had been undermined by deep division between parties. He wrote, "A decisive round of negotiations after a wave of pessimism; Syria focuses on withdrawal and Israel's security concern 'jumps' to issues of water and economy."²¹ The focus on the differences cast temporary progress as a false dawn of peace. For example on January 30, a reporter wrote, "PLO

confirms and Israel denies the beginning of unofficial talks regarding Jerusalem.”²² In general, the mood of the news stories depended on who was the focus of the headline. In other words, the mood was pessimistic/negative when Israel or the Arabs were the main actors in the headline, while the mood became relatively optimistic when the main characters of the headline were Americans. A kind of American innocence was juxtaposed against Middle East cynicism. A headline on January 25 read, “Maryland’s Peace talk resumes to a reality of Israeli stubbornness.”²³ On February 5, a news story headline read, “Election atmosphere welcomes Christopher in Israel and Damascus does not see any reason for the American optimism.”²⁴ On February 26, the headline runs, “Maryland’s negotiation resumes on Wednesday; Damascus expects stagnation.”²⁵ The negative mood of the news stories was reflected in key words such as “impede” as in “Damascus: New Settlements set impedes peace,”²⁶ “terrorism”, “irrelevant circumstances,” “revenge,” “stagnated talks,”

The Americans were quoted most of the time in the headlines as having some optimism toward the peace negotiations until May; afterward a sense of pessimism became the dominant American style note as well. They were quoted in headlines, “Christopher: The situation between Washington and Damascus is very complicated.”²⁷ Or “Washington expresses its concerns regarding the tension between Syria and Israel.”²⁸ In May, the mood became more pessimistic as Likud came to power with a different agenda with respect to the peace with Arabs. Headlines such as “Netanyahu will not commit to Elkhilil deal,”²⁹ “Netanyahu specifies his condition for ‘Lebanon First’”³⁰ or “Netanyahu threatens to stop the American aid to the Palestinians: No negotiations unless activities are ceased in Jerusalem,”³¹ or “Netanyahu rules out any deal regarding Jerusalem.”³² These headlines along with others of similar mood dominated the news stories for the rest of the year. All

these headlines sabotaged the earlier notes of optimism regarding the peace process. More negative vocabularies started to pop out in the headlines: “absent,” “threatens,” “accuses,” “entangles,” “complicates,” ... These negative verbs expressed a pessimistic mood with respect to the peace process.

Patterns of Imagery

In most of the news stories analyzed in Assafir, the terms “peace” and “the peace process” cluster with terms that formed a dominant pattern in a large number of articles. These clusters are often geographical and rhetorical, but sometimes they are dialectical and relational. Often, “peace” was referred to as a geometric figure. Peace is “a circle that has to be closed” and the “key” to that is to achieve a breakthrough in the negotiations.³³ In addition, Warren Christopher asserted that “there is still a chance to complete the full circle of peace.”³⁴ In some articles peace talks are treated as a ‘boxing race’ that needs to go through several “rounds.”³⁵ In other articles, peace was treated as a ‘tempting prize’ that Israel would gain in return “for her withdrawal from the Golan Heights.”³⁶ Moreover, there was a trend in the news stories that shows the peace process was clustered with “borders” whenever the Arab perception of peace was covered, and with “water and economy”³⁷ when the Israeli perception was mentioned. In addition, peace is associated with “normalization” when Israeli sources were quoted. And it was not any peace that the negotiating parties were trying to achieve. It is a “comprehensive and fair peace” that is based on “international legislative decisions and on the principle of land for peace.”³⁸ Arab/Israeli relations were parsed by adding emotive terms. Metaphors from nature are also used to refer to different types of peace. There is “cold” peace like the one with Egypt, and there is “warm” peace like the one with Jordan and then there is an “ambitious peace” that Barak thinks Syria is seeking.³⁹

Assafir tends to use not only its own concepts and metaphors when it covers peace but excerpts the perspectival metaphors of its neighbors. For example, the peace process is like a 'door' whose "key is Israel's agreement to withdrawal"⁴⁰; this is paraphrased from what Damascus has to say. Moreover, the news article continues covering how Syria thinks of peace as a 'battle' where the enemy puts it in the category of "maneuvering"⁴¹ or what Christopher describes the talks as "preliminary maneuvering."⁴² Moreover, peace is treated as a business deal. So "Christopher does not believe that the negotiators are going to achieve any deals in this round."⁴³

These "imported" peace clusters or agons within Assafir suggest a perspectival stability among the players in the peace process. For example, when Syria is quoted, peace is always associated with fairness. Syria is ready to make peace "when peace is fair,"⁴⁴ Assafir quoted Assad; and the Baath party assures Syria's desire to achieve a "fair and comprehensive peace in the region,"⁴⁵ [unlike Israel] whom Khaddam accused of desiring "a peace of force."⁴⁶ Moreover, the Lebanese foreign minister was quoted saying that [Lebanon] does not want violence but rather a "real and fair peace."⁴⁷ Egypt's Foreign Minister is also quoted saying that Egypt aims at a "balanced peace between the Arabs and Israel."⁴⁸ There are not only different types of peace, but peace is also treated as a "deal" that cannot be ratified unless certain conditions are met. Peace is also a selling merchandize that needs to be marketed. For example, Assafir spoke of Gaza-Jericho accord as a deal that "is being marketed for billions of dollars."⁴⁹ Similar metaphors are used to refer to the peace process. Peace accords are not ultimate goals any longer but rather a means to an ultimate end. For example, Assafir stated "Israel harvest the economic fruits of the agreement before signing it"⁵⁰ thus peace becomes a 'crop'. And thus for the Arabs, the "land" becomes a concept that clusters with peace without which peace is impossible.

“Syria leaves the door open for talks, but insists on Israeli guarantee of a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.”⁵¹ In another headline, Assafir wrote, “France and Syria agree on the principle: ‘Land for peace’.”⁵² In addition, in another news story, Assafir quoted a Syrian official assuring that Syria “wants to achieve a peace that ends the full occupation, and that returns the land to its owners and that guarantees the Arabs’ rights and the principle of land for peace.”⁵³ As we can see, peace is no longer an abstract term. It is transformed into a tangible material object that can be measured and even weighed. How much settlement there is decides how much peace there can be. How much land is given decides how much peace can be given in return. At times, peace seems to be the prize that is paid for particular merchandise. When peace is defined in so many different ways, the goals and means seem not only complex, but perhaps contradictory as well. With so many different motives, only a spacious “cluster” can accommodate these differences.

Further, one group’s clusters are another group’s agons. For Arabs, land and resources are clustered with peace while settlement and unemployment are agons of conflict. For example, Assafir quoted a Palestinian source saying that the peace process would be in real danger if the problem of “unemployment” was not solved. Thus the association of unemployment with peace is an agonistic or negative coupling in contrast to the positive cluster terms of stability and prosperity.⁵⁴ “Settlements” is one of these terms that are treated as a danger to the peace process. On July 10, Assafir wrote: “Talks are postponed as Netanyahu insists on settlements.”⁵⁵ The Egyptian Foreign Minister was quoted saying, “the politics of ‘settlements’ is very dangerous to peace.”⁵⁶ “Settlement” and “peace” had become opposed terms for many Arabs as well for frontier minded Israelis.

On the other hand, if the source is from the Israeli or Israel's supporters' side, different concepts and terms act as agons or clusters to peace and the peace process. "Terrorism" is a recurring agon in the Israeli and American rhetoric. Assafir quoted Clinton saying that Netanyahu believes that "terrorism is an obstacle in improving relations with Syria."⁵⁷ In another news story, Netanyahu insisted that "the only way for Syria to prove to the Israelis that Syria wants peace is by stopping terrorism in South Lebanon."⁵⁸

Furthermore, Assafir detailed the Israelis' constant association of peace and security. Assafir quoted Ducharet, 'France totally understands Israel's need for security'⁵⁹ in return for peace.

Peace is also treated as a person whose welfare is organically related to events. Peace is also treated as a pregnant woman and Peres wants to fight those "who desire to abort peace."⁶⁰ The peace process is like any person who "faces real dilemmas"⁶¹ and who Washington treats as "an illegal baby."⁶² Moreover, peace is also a student that is being 'tested' to see if it can pass the exam.⁶³ Finally, if the situation in the region remains having "a dark gray color" then the peace is like an individual going into "isolation and retreat."⁶⁴

Many other images are used to portray the peace process. As usual, these images are usually used by the sources of Assafir, but Assafir tended to emphasize on them. For example, Assafir quoted Peres saying that "we are on the seventh day of our Torah trip" as he referred to the peace process. Thus peace is a trip that some journalist wondered if it was a "trip in a diplomatic desert" and Peres responded, "I believe it is half arid, but I don't think it is a desert."⁶⁵ Peace is also treated as water that can be "frozen". The peace talks

that took place “assures Israel’s politics to ‘freeze’ the peace process,”⁶⁶ wrote Assafir quoting a Palestinian source.

Peace is also spoken of in terms of war concepts. Peace is a fragile being that Israel is ready “to blast” at any time.⁶⁷ On August 8, Assafir headline read: “The Oslo peace agreement explodes between Israel and the Palestinian Authority”⁶⁸ and with reference to Jerusalem as a condition for peace, Assafir quoted Arafat insinuating that “Jerusalem is our most important battle,”⁶⁹ and that he would not give up on diplomacy although “the bells of warning are tolling.”⁷⁰ Moreover, in another headline, Assafir wrote, “The occupation turns Jerusalem into a military base.”⁷¹ While there are many images and concepts that are associated with peace, the nature and variety of metaphor suggest the emotional response to peace is connected strongly to national identity and aspiration. Land, security, war, fairness, recognition, homeland, and work are powerful associations and their connections with the peace process suggest the passion and complexity of the project.

Extended Action and Characterization of Actors

Part of the framing process that Assafir adopted in its coverage of the news story is a special characterization of actors involved in the peace process as well as the events related to the peace process itself. It is worth noting that in the news stories, most of the characterizations are not directly Assafir’s but those of its sources that are adopted by Assafir. In addition to the metaphors and key concepts that are used to cover peace and the peace process, Assafir tended to portray characters and events in a particular way by either talking about them directly or quoting sources.

For example, on January 22, Assafir indirectly questioned Peres’s credibility in the headline: “Has Peres’s preference of ‘peace over elections’ changed?”⁷² On April 30, Assafir portrayed Peres as a fragile leader whose “image is shaken more than ever before

on both the political and media arenas.”⁷³ However, in the same news story, it portrayed Peres as an assertive leader who assures “that peace will defeat terrorism.”⁷⁴ On January 25, Assafir also described Barak as a snobbish and condescending man who speaks with “a patronizing tone to the Arabs.”⁷⁵ Assafir’s negative characterization of the Israeli actors especially targeted Netanyahu . The latter was portrayed as a strict leader who insisted that they “will not submit to the Arabs’ demands.”⁷⁶ Moreover, Netanyahu is a ‘troublemaker’ even with his own people who has “overstepped the red line and insulted David Levy,”⁷⁷ as Assafir quoted from an Israeli TV channel. He is a ‘hostile and antagonistic’ who keeps threatening to stop the American aids to the Palestinians if they do not stop their activities in Jerusalem.”⁷⁸ Or he “threatens with an extremely painful retaliation against Hizbollah and even Syria.”⁷⁹ Arafat was quoted calling Netanyahu “an idiot because he started the battle over Jerusalem,”⁸⁰ and “accused him of declaring war on the Palestinians.”⁸¹ Thus Netanyahu was routinely characterized as brutal, cunning, manipulative and hostile. This is not a ‘trustworthy’ partner for negotiation of any sort. Rabin was also treated as an ‘indifferent’ character who “disregarded the objections of the settlers.”⁸²

In the same article, Assafir indirectly underwrote Arafat’s accusations by mentioning at the end of the news story that “the Israeli military destroyed five Palestinian homes in the west Bank alleging that they were not licensed.”⁸³ Every time Assafir talks about the Israelis, it refers to them as the “occupation” thus contesting or disputing their legitimacy as an Independent State. Assafir also portrayed Israel as an actor that loves revenge. A March 7 headline read, “Israel most prominent choice is revenge,”⁸⁴ which, Assafir continued in the body of the news story, “reflects Israel’s powerlessness towards a cessation of the negotiation process with Syria.”⁸⁵

Israel's later modification of war talk was seen as a ruse. A headline of September 23 said, "Netanyahu retrieves the atmosphere of Yom Kippur war in Golan Heights and Israel reinforces its military bases and threatens that it is ready for any emergency."⁸⁶ As quoted by the paper, Syria continued to accuse Netanyahu of "pursuing a biased aggressive policy and that Israel wants a peace of force rather than a peace of international legitimacy";⁸⁷ the accusation continued to describe Netanyahu as a "stubborn" man who "has returned the peace process to point zero and who has deepened the hatred against the Arab nations."⁸⁸

Assad, on the other hand, was portrayed as a confident and strict person who assures that "no one can submit Syria or scare her with the accusation of terrorism."⁸⁹ Moreover, Assad is a man of peace who insists that the Syrians "are peace callers and work for peace for the sake of the Syrian people and the people of the world to live in peace."⁹⁰ The Syrian Vice President was quoted saying that "Syria and Lebanon cannot fall in any Israeli trap that may guarantee Israel great benefits at the expense of Arabs and their legitimate rights."⁹¹

In addition to its own characterization, Assafir quoted major sources that appear to support its own characterization of the actors. It quoted a Syrian source portraying Israel as an aggressive war lover who is "discussing the issue of peace with a war mentality"⁹² and who is stubborn to an extent that it keeps setting "impossible conditions that may kill the peace process."⁹³

In addition, Israel was portrayed as a "cruel" actor who should "be punished until it takes away the hunger siege that it imposes on the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank" and who had deported 400 Palestinians to the middle of nowhere in 1993.⁹⁴ Moreover Israel was described as always "threatening" the other parties to either accept its

terms or it will escalate the tension.⁹⁵ Also Israel was portrayed as a “greedy” actor who always “refuses to withdraw from South Lebanon alleging that it needs security guarantees”⁹⁶ and who “harvests the economic benefits of the accord.”⁹⁷ Israel is also depicted as a player who always throws the responsibility of its own deeds on others. For example, on January 5, 1993 Assafir wrote, “Israel maneuvers to make Lebanon responsible for the safety of the deportees.”⁹⁸ Israel was also shown as an “arrogant” player who “challenges the United Nations.”⁹⁹ Israel was also exposed as an obstructor to justice who has sent the “first blow to the peace accord”¹⁰⁰ and who keeps “putting impediments in way of peace.”¹⁰¹

On the other hand, Assafir quoted Warren Christopher portraying Assad as a skeptical man who had his own “doubts and fears toward Israel which shows the inability of Assad to continue in the peace process.”¹⁰² In addition, Christopher’s doubts about the success of the peace process were also affected by his views of Syria as a man “supportive of terrorism and drug dealing.”¹⁰³ Christopher, on more than one occasion, was reported to have expressed this attitude. On August 2, he insisted that there are “big differences between Syria and America since Syria is on the list of terrorism.”¹⁰⁴ However, he believed that Syria is a “crucial player in the peace process that one cannot ignore.”¹⁰⁵ Thus Christopher seemed to say that Syria is a ‘necessary evil’ that one cannot disregard. The image of Syria as a terrorism supporter was also found in Dor Gold, Netanyahu’s Arab affairs advisor’s claim that Israel cannot negotiate with Syria as long as the latter “employs terrorists as their agents.”¹⁰⁶ Rabinovitch also “assures that the Syrians are in disarray and they are in a definite state of tension.”¹⁰⁷ This negative image of Syria does not contribute to an atmosphere of trust necessary for building peace.

The news stories not only included strong characterizations of actors but also of events. For example, Assafir quoted Damascus condemning the growth of the settlements as an obstacle to peace. Their expansion threatened to end the peace process. It wrote on March 22, 1996 "Damascus: New settlements obstruct to peace."¹⁰⁸ On January 18, 1993 Assafir wrote, "Mubarak warns of the dangers of deporting Palestinians on Peace."¹⁰⁹

In addition, Assafir quoted the Egyptian Prime Minister declaring that the Israeli blockade/siege of the Palestinians will damage the peace process and call for a reconsideration of the whole process at large.¹¹⁰ Ducharet was quoted saying that the journey to the peace process was "long and difficult."¹¹¹ Washington, on the other hand, was reported to be neutral on the deportees issue and neglected its importance.¹¹² Therefore, Washington seems to treat peace as "an illegal child who does not want to adopt."¹¹³ Occasionally, Washington was reported to be working for the Palestinian cause although "with unclear promises."¹¹⁴ The usual suspicions of the broker or third party appear in the press when the United States was spoken of as ambiguous, mysterious, and uncommitted.

Unique Frames Used in the Coverage of the Peace Process

After examining the mood, images and characterization of actors and events, it is important to examine what frames these elements form to create a unique shape that Assafir reflects in its coverage of the peace process. It is important to note that the frames used by Assafir in the news stories depend not only on Assafir's vision but also on their selection and placement of sources. However, the mood of the frame changes to reflect Assafir's attitude toward particular events, new situations, or unexpected opportunities. Contradictions, surprises, and changes must be assimilated by the frame. This will be discussed in the last part of this chapter.

In 1993 a major circumstantial “bad faith” frame surrounded peace in the first four months of the year. The issue of the 400 deportees became a condition for resuming peace talks. Arab parties refused to talk peace with Israel until the deportees were returned to their homes. Assafir’s news stories framed peace accordingly. For example, a January 6 headline stated “Egypt relates the peace talks with the issue of the deportees,”¹¹⁵ and “Mubarak warns from the dangerous impact of deporting Palestinians on Peace.”¹¹⁶

However, in both 1993 and 1996, there are four major perspectives in which the peace process was framed. Peace was framed in terms of security, normalization, and natural resources when Israel’s motives were discussed. It was framed in terms of geographical areas and natural resources when the Arab parties were involved as these were assumed to be the motives for negotiations. When Assafir cites an Israeli or an American source, their expressed aims are presented as security and normalization with the Arabs. Peace becomes conditioned by these two elements and the peace process is limited to these two frames.

For example, on January 19, 1996, Christopher stated that one of Israeli’s major interest in peace was to “avoid any strategic danger against it....and thus normalization will guarantee that Israel will be in a safe place.”¹¹⁷ Assafir outlined normalization as a contingent action. As Syria demanded a withdrawal from the Golan Heights as a precondition for peace, Israel insisted that if Syria agrees to have “normalization with Israel,” then Israel will withdraw from Golan and consequently peace will be achieved.¹¹⁸ For Israel, normalization was also conditioned by the “problem of water, terrorism and security arrangements,”¹¹⁹ and thus peace was discussed within these frames as well. Israel’s discourse about peace was ‘framed’ as a consequence of security. Thus, the head of the Israeli negotiating team was quoted as saying, “Israel will accept any peace that

guarantees and reinforces its security.”¹²⁰ President Clinton was also cited as framing the peace in security terms. Assafir quoted Clinton, “it is unfair for Israel to give up security in return to peace.”¹²¹ On another occasion, Clinton insisted that security and normalization with the entire Arab world are the way for ending the Arab Israeli conflict and achieving peace in the region.¹²² On several occasions, Assafir cited Clinton promising Israel “security guarantees in Golan”¹²³ as a return for peace. Further, Netanyahu was quoted as insisting that peace negotiations cannot be resumed unless “the military operations against Israel from South Lebanon are ceased.”¹²⁴ Assafir quoted Barak maintaining that the main obstacles to peace are related to security, water, and normalization issues and that the “extent of withdrawal depends on the depth of normalization,”¹²⁵ which consequently meant that Israel saw the “amount” of peace as a matter of how far they can have normalization with Syria.

The reports of Israel’s demand for warning stations warning stations on the Golan Heights further illustrates the pervasive extent of the security frame. Syria (with its different geographic frame) states that this demand for stations signals the “failure of the negotiations.”¹²⁶ Israel’s “peace” is viewed through economic and natural resources frames. In yet another round of negotiations, Assafir cited the Israeli Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, as declaring that the talks would only deal “with the issues of water and economy.”¹²⁷ Although settlements were seen as a major obstacle to peace on the Arab side, the Israelis pointedly called them “important for Israel’s security.”¹²⁸ The impasse was highlighted by the Egyptian Foreign Minister’s belief that “the policy of settlements is a dangerous act that has its dangerous consequences on the peace process.”¹²⁹

Assafir consistently reported Syria’s expressions of peace within the geographical frame. Syria was said to be willing to have peace with Israel if “there is a full withdrawal

from the Golan Heights.”¹³⁰ Even Rabin reiterated Syria’s concerns by promising a “partial withdrawal from Golan in return for a comprehensive peace.”¹³¹ The Syrian Vice President maintained that “peace negotiations cannot be resumed unless the Israelis agree to the principle of withdrawal from the Arab occupied lands,” “a principle that Netanyahu rejects” commented Assafir.¹³² The geographical framing of peace was repeated by almost all Syrian officials cited by Assafir. Assafir characteristically and repeatedly referred to Syria’s insistence on “a total withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for a ‘partial peace’.”¹³³ The Syrian Defense Minister stated that the “Syrians aim at peace that puts an end to the Israeli occupation and that returns the lands to their owners.”¹³⁴

In addition, the Palestinians insisted on negotiating the issue of Jerusalem as a precondition for any successful peace process. Faisal Husseini, who was in charge of Jerusalem file, was cited as declaring that “if Israel wants to live in peace they have to achieve an agreement regarding Jerusalem with the Palestinians.”¹³⁵ The Israelis, on the other hand, insisted that “A united Jerusalem is Israel’s Capital”¹³⁶ and readers were reminded that Israel saw “no change in the status of Jerusalem as its Capital.”¹³⁷ The paper noted Peres’s statement that “Jerusalem will remain united under Israel’s sovereignty.”¹³⁸ Thus Israel considers Jerusalem as its “eternal capital” while the Palestinians see “East Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in 1967, as the future Capital of the Palestinian State.”¹³⁹ The issue of Jerusalem became a string that each party wanted to pull to its side. Assafir blazoned Israel’s supposed intransigence: “Tel Aviv: No medium solutions regarding Jerusalem”¹⁴⁰ while the Palestinians were said to be ready to deal with the issue in “the next phase of negotiations.”¹⁴¹

As we can see from the above examination, peace is framed by normalization, natural resources, and security perspectives. It is reduced to tangible and earthly

conditions. It is no longer a moral ideal, but rather a prize that is given/earned in return for concrete compromises by both parties.

Framing Context

Framing is more than a mechanistic act of disposition and arrangement. It is a perspective act that affects human understanding of a particular event. Framing occurs within a human context; it reflects and imposes the motives of the frame. Thus two newspapers may frame the same event differently; or they may use a similar frame for different events. This section will examine the context in which Assafir framed the peace process. Most of the news stories seemed to cover the peace process in an objective manner relying on diverse sources of information. However, the selection of particular frames reflects Assafir's agenda and perspective. In a cursory reading of Assafir's reports, we seem to be dealing with objective exposition. A closer reading reveals a particular perspective on peace, a perspective that is indirectly conveyed to readers. This seemingly objective news may well affect their subjective attitude toward peace. For example, while Assafir reported about Rabin's claim to a partial withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the report was preceded by a bigger headline stating "Israeli siege of the Deportees enters its third week,"¹⁴² thus insinuating that peace was conditioned by the case of the deportees. Moreover, just after Assafir reported about the possibility of a resumption of the peace negotiations, it concluded with a quote by Peres complaining "it is difficult to keep a chain of normal negotiations,"¹⁴³ thus indirectly hinting that the peace process is not on a healthy track. Moreover, in the lead of another news story, Assafir reported that another round of the peace negotiation had started in Maryland [BUT] in "an Israeli negative mood that expects failure" and while it talks about the round of negotiation, the whole body of the story focused on the negative comments given by Israeli sources which focus on the

“difficulty of achieving peace with Syria; and if Israel did achieve peace with Syria, it will be difficult to convince the Israeli people of any deal with Syria.”¹⁴⁴ And Assafir accused Barak of “emptying the peace negotiations of its content” as he declared that “there are no expectations to achieve a quick breakthrough.”¹⁴⁵ This pessimistic contextualization is reinforced by citing Christopher’s comments “I advise not to expect any major outcomes...”¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, while Assafir reported that “Syria is concerned about the peace process based on the American principles,” it included the sobering comment that “Syria does not see any reason for optimism in what the Israeli team offers,”¹⁴⁷ and that the “previous round of negotiations has caused disappointments because of the over optimism that existed after Rabin’s assassination.”¹⁴⁸

Assafir expressed a sense of Arab pessimism in its assessment of realistic progress. For example, Assafir quoted the Minister of Agriculture saying, “in my opinion, there is not any peace process at all. The Arabs do not want peace and what the [ex -Labor] government did was running for peace without realizing that our case in the region is a matter of resistance/endurance or death.”¹⁴⁹ This negativism was also highlighted by reporting the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Amer Moussa, saying, “There is a sense of pessimism in the region... we will not remain silent if these negotiations proved to be a waste of time.”¹⁵⁰

Moreover, Assafir’s coverage of the peace process was mixed with threats from the peace partner. Thus we are told that “Netanyahu announced that his party is not giving up Israel’s Nuclear capacity even if there is peace with Syria, Iran and Iraq,”¹⁵¹ and that America suggests “the Syrian forces should stay away on an enough distance from the borders which will give Israel three days to move its forces in case of any attacks,”¹⁵² Thus Assafir juxtaposed coverage of peace talks with reports of war rhetoric.

On more than one day, Assafir tended to cover the peace process within the context of threats and violent events in the region. For example, on February 24, Assafir talked about “a strong exchange of fire between Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza.”¹⁵³ In addition Assafir quoted a Lebanese ex Foreign Minister saying, “if terrorism is going to be fought likewise, then the peace process is going into isolation and will be replaced by bloodshed.”¹⁵⁴ “How would Peres Administration respond to the suicidal operations that shocked Israel and threatened the American peace process in the region?”¹⁵⁵ started one news story. Amid the coverage of the peace process, Assafir wrote (in 1993) at great length about the Israeli siege of the deportees and the “Israeli siege of the occupied territories” and the massacres Israel committed in Gaza causing “one death and 60 wounded.”¹⁵⁶ Likewise, in 1996, Assafir wrote extensively about the Qana Massacre that was committed by the Israeli in April 1996 thus questioning the sincerity of peace negotiation while Israel was using “force to create a new political status in South Lebanon that may change the circumstances and political elements that could help resume peace talks between Israel and Syria.”¹⁵⁷ Moreover, as Israel talked about its intention to make peace in the region, Assafir reminded its readers that “America has promised Barak to test Falanks missiles on Israeli land that may confront any missiles attacks from [Israel’s neighbors].”¹⁵⁸

For the most part, the framing of the peace process remained positioned within the general context of aggressive violations in the region. Even when Assafir reported about the Gaza-Jericho agreement that “leads to a Palestinian-Israeli accord,” it followed the headline by a strong sub-headline stating, “Palestinian strikes internally and externally...Israeli and Jordanian worries.”¹⁵⁹ Assafir continued highlighting all the violations, oppositions, and human casualties after the Oslo Accord was signed thus expressing a negative attitude toward the peace agreement. For several weeks before and

after the peace agreement was signed, Assafir's headlines maintained a consistent content that ranged from "Demonstrations of 'opposition' and 'support' continues in the occupied territories: 10 wounded by the occupier's [Israel] bullets"¹⁶⁰ to "The first day after signing: a Palestinian Israeli disagreement on execution."¹⁶¹ Reporting appeared to move on a double track of peace prospects and war news. Such placement of peace prospects argued a state of futility if not of outright cynicism.

This negative contextualization of peace continued in 1996. Even while Likud and Arafat were trying to talk peace, "Israel intends to keep its troops in Elkhalil pretending to protect around 400 settlers" wrote Assafir on June 6 and continued, "the Palestinians threatened that the Intifada is going to resume if Israeli doesn't re-deploy its troops."¹⁶² Reports of confrontation were interlarded throughout Assafir's coverage of the peace process. For example, on August 29 Assafir quoted Arafat saying to his Administration, "the Israeli crimes and continuous violations/infringements means that the Israeli are declaring war on the Palestinians... Jerusalem is our biggest war and there will be no Palestinian State without Jerusalem."¹⁶³ On another occasion, as Assafir covered Christopher's trip to the Middle East to boost the peace process, the story was followed by a report stating that "the [Israeli] occupation have committed another massacre in Gaza [causing] five deaths and 21 wounded."¹⁶⁴ These stories were in dialogue with yet another headline stating, "the negotiations are approaching ... and the number of Palestinians martyrs has become ten."¹⁶⁵ In other words, Assafir's framing of peace process appears amid a war of words that is exchanged between the two conflicting parties each accusing the other of jeopardizing the peace process and violating agreed pacts.

Peace is contextualized in an atmosphere of suspicion and recrimination. For example, on June 6, Arafat responded to Netanyahu's objection to the existence of a

Palestinian state, “sooner or later we are going to declare an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem its Capital and no one can stop us from doing that.”¹⁶⁶ In addition to that, Assafir reported that the Minister of Justice declared that “he expects a new wave of violence in the region if Netanyahu keeps ignoring the already signed peace agreements,”¹⁶⁷ while Netanyahu assured that “the negotiation with the Palestinians is a matter of how far the Palestinians can respect their commitments and responsibilities.”¹⁶⁸ On another occasion, Netanyahu asserted that he sought peace but he believed “it is not fair for Israeli to give one hundred percent and the Arabs give zero percent.”¹⁶⁹

Assafir’s reports about the American mediation in the peace process suggest an American lack of fairness in the region. So while “Clinton assured the Arab leaders that Washington is committed to the peace process based on Madrid’s principles..., Israel’s friends in the Congress made sure to blame Syria for not having any progress in the negotiation process,”¹⁷⁰ and that Clinton believes “it is unfair for Israel to give up security in return to peace.”¹⁷¹ Moreover, as Syria and Israel were supposed to be negotiating peace for land and security, Assafir reported that Netanyahu maintained that “there is no withdrawal from Golan Heights.”¹⁷² Thus Assafir insinuated that the peace talks were a sham and that Israel did not want peace in the region. Assafir seemed to be warning its readers not to put much faith in Israel’s peace intention. In the same article, Assafir noted with grim resignation, “Sixteen Palestinians died since February because of the Israeli embargo.”¹⁷³ Assafir reminded its readers of the legacy of bitterness as “Palestinians expressed their anger toward the settlement policy,”¹⁷⁴ and that a Palestinian minister “threatened that violence is going to emerge again if this policy is implemented.”¹⁷⁵ Assafir ended the story with a quote from the French foreign ministry spokesman on the

risk of the settlement policy, “we hope that there won’t be any deed that may threaten the peace process.”¹⁷⁶

In addition to showcasing Israel’s violations, Assafir cited Israeli beliefs about the Syrian connections with Hizbollah. While asserting that Syria was willing to talk peace, Assafir noted that an Israeli source reported that the Israeli Defense Minister “asked the United States to interfere with Hafez Assad and ask him to prevent the passage of weapons and immunity to Hizbullah,”¹⁷⁷ and that Assad “still supports the terrorist”¹⁷⁸ Assafir expressed the fragility of the situation by quoting an Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, reporting that the Israeli government decided to increase the number of its forces on the Golan Heights in retaliation to any Syrian moves in Lebanon”¹⁷⁹ and later quoting the Syrian Minister of Communication to the effect that “Syria has the right to increase and reinforce its military in a defensive position because Israel’s aggressive politics is forcing such an atmosphere in the region.”¹⁸⁰ This pessimistic frame (peace in a context of war) continued throughout the year. Even as Assafir reported on October 7 that the “last opportunity” round of negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis “resulted in both sides agreeing to stop the violence and to exchange”¹⁸¹; it immediately followed the story with reports about “Israel increasing the settlement budgets” which led the Palestinian negotiator, Hassan Asfour, to announce “it is very difficult to negotiate with the Israeli as Israel keeps on supporting the settlements and that things are reaching a political disaster and both parties are going to lose.”¹⁸² Deep into the Fall, news stories continued to reflect this dark mood. In a November 26 news report, an Assafir headline read, “Netanyahu suggests a summit with Arafat; Israel and the PA exchange warnings.”¹⁸³

In brief, Assafir’s news stories reflect a negative attitude towards peace. The framing context, images, and symbols which Assafir highlights in these stories show a

deeply pessimistic perspective on peace. It is clear that Assafir, by highlighting difficulties and under cutting positive developments, presents a dim picture of the prospects of peace. Obstacles are shown to be overwhelming and leaders are reported in such a way that they sound insincere, duplicitous or cynical. Good news is followed by bad news. Anger and suspicion are featured as the dominant style notes of talks. The effect is one of sullen weariness.

Columns and Editorials

The columns and editorials reflect a more 'subjective and personal' opinion of Assafir than the headlines and news stories. In other words, Assafir's official subjective framing of the peace process appears in the editorials. Because opinions and editorials reflect the readers' and editors' or the newspaper's position toward certain events, the press makes no pretence of objectivity. It is expected to express opinions and exercise judgment.

The opinions and editorials that appeared in Assafir during 1993 and 1996 convey a deeply negative mood toward the peace process. Heavy sarcasm expressed through images of failure and betrayal dominated the headlines and the editorials. For example, on January 1, 1996, an editorial title read, "On the road: Lebanon and the Israeli Santa Claus", in which the editor commented, "Santa Claus had ignored the Lebanese people this year and didn't get them their wishful gift which is peace."¹⁸⁴ Thus peace was portrayed as a gift that can be offered. The editorial ended with the bitter remark "peace is waiting for other unspecified holidays."¹⁸⁵ A personified peace may show up whimsically, but remained unscheduled because the timetable is out of our hands.

Moreover, as peace is characterized in the op-eds in a negative way as are the Israelis, who are portrayed as 'cautious,' 'hesitant,' and 'hypocritical' actors whose "exaggerated outer enthusiasm to achieve peace is still controlled by hesitant and anxious

steps”¹⁸⁶ and who commit atrocities against Palestinians and then claim that each outrage “was just an error.”¹⁸⁷ Moreover, Israel is sarcastically and bitterly portrayed as the “decision maker of all the conditions and shape of the peace process” while the Arabs are “helpless” who are unable to “reject “what Israel imposes on them.”¹⁸⁸

The negative portrayal does not only affect Peres but also touches Arafat who was portrayed as a ‘traitor’ who fights all the Palestinians who are against Oslo. The editor judged “the Israeli reaction to this “Arafatee Generosity’ as “lack of commitment to agreements.”¹⁸⁹ In fact the writer asked, “Aren’t deadlines unsacred to the Labor party especially when it comes to implementing decisions for the Palestinians?”¹⁹⁰ The writer declared the peace process a sham. He attacked the credibility of both Arafat and Peres thus wondering “with this Laborite program and with the Palestinian apparent pathetic position, is there anything remained to be negotiated?”¹⁹¹

The peace process is also referred to as a “long road that is full of bumps and mines and explosive historical complexes.”¹⁹² This battlefield imagery makes peace sound like ‘war by other means.’ The negative mood toward peace was given a cynical twist in a January 29 editorial; the process is compared to a musical instrument that is being “tuned” by the “ghost of Rabin” whose assassination “destroyed the Arab illusion” and that “it is ok if the Arabs got dizzy within the Israeli musical chairs.”¹⁹³ In this editorial, the editor not only attacks Israel but also the Arabs who had rushed to have agreements with Israel thus saying that there is no real peace process or at least not one of a kind the editor endorses. After all, in his opinion, the type of peace that is going on remains an “illusion.” Peace is also referred to as a very sick patient who can only be “treated through [electric] shocks.”¹⁹⁴

In another column, the author wrote, "Syria is not honestly happy to drink the cup of poison which is signing the agreement with Israel"¹⁹⁵, because in the writer's opinion, "Peres is the worst choice because he is a hypocrite political leader who plays the role of the prophet of the Middle East Project."¹⁹⁶ Naturally, Syria does not want this poisonous agreement and, therefore, having Likud in power is a better option because that keeps the image of Israel as a "traditional extremist."¹⁹⁷ In other words, the writer thought that the peace process was a poisonous act that Syria does not really want to pursue. This extremely negative perspective on peace was also present in a February 9, 1993 editorial, which referred to peace as an "unpardonable sin" toward which "Arabs are throwing themselves."¹⁹⁸

Coverage of the election featured duplicity as a major frame. Peres was negatively portrayed as a man cunningly contradictory in his positions. "Although he expresses his intention to have peace and to be called "a hero of peace" he raises three no's in the face of the Arab negotiators: No dismantlement of the Settlements, No division of Jerusalem, and No withdrawal from the Golan water."¹⁹⁹ Peres was said to exploit the "Oslo Agreement for his own election benefit and his Zionist project to destroy the Palestinian case politically."²⁰⁰ Of course, "total Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab occupied territories"²⁰¹ remained an axiomatic condition in most editorials.

In an editorial, entitled, "the Likudization of Oslo" the writer warned the readers of the intention of the new Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, to "re-design Oslo Accord which will lead to the destruction of the whole peace process."²⁰² The writer characterized the new Likud PM as "refusing to negotiate with the weapon pointed to his head" and noted the strategic use of time as "deadlines are also not sacred on the Likud agenda."²⁰³

In an August 2, 1996 column, a writer attacked the Palestinian Authority's credibility in the peace process. He wondered out loud if the PA agreed to a demilitarized state allowing Israel to deploy its troops along its borders with Jordan, and if the PA had also agreed to prevent the return of the 1948 refugees to Palestine. If this was the case, "what could the PA expect to get from Netanyahu's government who was asking to reconsider Oslo's agreements?"²⁰⁴ Thus if the PA's credibility was so weak, "how long will the Palestinians remain silent toward the game that is gambling with their rights?"²⁰⁵ The writer continued attacking the PA in other op-eds predicting that "although the PA keeps talking about having the east side of Jerusalem as its capital, yet its actions will lead in the end to facilitating the process of judiazing the city and consecrating it as a reality."²⁰⁶ This attack on Arafat is part of Assafir's disappointment in the Arabs, in general, who are left with "no other choice but to participate in the peace talks" and thus they "creep to the negotiation tables"²⁰⁷ in a passive manner. This condemnation of the Arab submission to the Israelis' demands was very strongly asserted in the June 7, 1993 editorial in which the writers stated, "The Arabs are competing to join the Israeli race to an extent that seems there is no need for peace talks or peace accords..."²⁰⁸ In a September 7, 1993, the editor harshly wrote that "the [Arab] generation of failure is not capable of producing more than the Palestinian-Israeli agreement"²⁰⁹

Moreover, on September 18, 1996, the editor condemned Netanyahu's aggressive language and his "no's who kept screaming in the open sky of this confiscated region". The writer continued to criticize Netanyahu's approach to peace, which seems "as if he wants to negotiate through missiles, war planes and cannon, and who wants to impose an embargo of fire over Syria after he imposed an embargo of hunger over the Palestinians."

In an oracular tone, the writer ended,” if this is peace, then how what will war look like?²¹⁰

In general, the columns and editorials reflect a deeply pessimistic position toward the peace process. The editorials, which in effect convey the opinion of the newspaper, strongly question the legitimacy of the peace process. This negative peace is a peace of oppression and domination. It sees the type of peace that is taking place in the region as an unfair peace that results in more ‘concessions’ from the Arabs and more ‘arrogance’ on the Israeli side.

Finally, the pattern of metaphors used in Assafir reflects a story of invasion and replacement of people. It is a story about people whose land had been invaded and occupied by a “viscous” outsider, and who have been scattered all over the world without a home to belong to. Now these people are trying to return home but are not being able to get there. Peace becomes a means to get home but many obstacles seem to be in the way of peace and consequently the way home seems very long and full of bumps and traps. In other words, the pattern of images and metaphors employed by Assafir speaks the story of the downtrodden people who seem to have no hope of returning home in the foreseen future.

Notes

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² “Baker: The Negotiation Serves Everyone: Israel Prepares to Withdraw from Golan,” Assafir 5 Jan. 1993: A1.

³ “Mubarak Warns of the Dangers of Deportation on Peace,” Assafir 18 Jan. 1993: A1.

⁴ “Great Doubts Surrounds the Possibility of Christopher’s Success in his Mission,” Assafir 6 Feb. 1993: A1.

⁵ “Mubarak Warns” A1.

⁶ “Washington Rushes the Peace Talks Despite the Arab Objection,” Assafir 4 Feb. 1993: A1.

⁷ “Washington Warns of the Dangers of Postponing,” Assafir 29 Apr. 1993: A1.

⁸ “The Third Round Postponed and Peace Settlement is Being Tested,” Assafir 20 Apr. 1993: A1.

⁹ “Washington Refuses to Answer Palestinians’ ‘Questions’; Possibility to Call for a Tenth Round on June 14,” Assafir 4 June 1993: A1.

¹⁰ “The Israeli Decision Regarding Deportees Embarrasses and Weakens the American Diplomacy; Peace Process Faces a Dilemma,” Assafir 10 Feb. 1993: A1.

¹¹ “Christopher Back to the Israeli Starting Point: Negotiations Face Obstacles and Geography Complicates the Matters,” Assafir 25 Feb. 1993: A1.

¹² “Arab Parties Prepare Themselves for a Failing Negotiation; Washington Treats Peace as an Illegal Parentless Child,” Assafir 5 Apr. 1993: A1.

¹³ “Washington Prepares Cloudy Proposals for Talks,” Assafir 13 Apr. 1993: A1.

¹⁴ “Gaza-Jericho Agreement Paves the Way for a Palestinian-Israeli Accord,” Assafir 1 Sept. 1993: A1.

¹⁵ “PLO: Arafat and Rabin Will Declare Mutual Recognition; Israeli-Palestinian Caution Regarding September 13,” Assafir 6 Sept. 1993: A1.

¹⁶ “Signing the Accord is Delayed: Jericho Municipality ...and the Police a Symbol,” Assafir 7 Sept. 1993: A1

¹⁷ “First Day After Signature: Israeli Palestinian Differences Regarding Implementation,” Assafir 15 Sept. 1993: A1.

¹⁸ “Assad: We Want Negotiation within the Frames of Madrid Conference; Washington Talks of ‘Deep Disagreement’ between Syria and Israel,” Assafir 24 Sept. 1993: A1.

¹⁹ “Israel Builds a ‘Security Zone’ around Jerusalem and Demands PLO to Control the Opposition,” Assafir 15 Nov. 1993: A1

²⁰ Amin Ibrahim, “Tel Aviv Rejects Commitment to Withdrawal; Damascus Rejects Prior Talks about the Future of Syrian Israeli Relationship. Has Peres’s Preference of ‘Peace over Elections’ Changed?” Assafir 22 Jan. 1996: A2.

²¹ "A Decisive Round of Talks after a Retreat in the Wave of Optimism. Syria Focuses on Withdrawal and Israel on Security," Assafir 24 Jan. 1996: A1.

²² "PLO Confirms and Israel Denies the Beginning of Unofficial Talks Regarding Jerusalem," Assafir 30 Jan. 1996: A1.

²³ Hisham Melhem, "Maryland Talks Resume to a Reality of Israeli Stubbornness," Assafir 25 Jan. 1996: A1.

²⁴ "Elections Atmosphere Welcomes Christopher in Israel; Damascus Does Not See Any Reason for the America Optimism," Assafir 5 Feb. 1996: A1

²⁵ "Maryland Talks Resume on Wednesday; Damascus Expects Stagnation," Assafir 26 Feb. 1996: A1.

²⁶ "Damascus; New Settlements Impedes Peace; Tel Aviv: Talks May Resume after Election," Assafir 22 Mar. 1996: A1.

²⁷ "Christopher: The Situation between Syria and Washington is Very Complicated," Assafir 16 May 1996: A1

²⁸ "Washington Expresses Concerns and Levy Sends a Negotiating Letter to Syria; Israel Pacifies the Language of War but Does Not Give up Threats," Assafir 22 Aug. 1996: A1.

²⁹ "Netanyahu Will Not Commit to the Elkhail Deal," Assafir 5 June 1996: A13

³⁰ "Netanyahu Specifies his Condition for 'Lebanon First' and his Advisor Discusses the Issue with Christopher," Assafir 3 Aug. 1996: A1.

³¹ "Netanyahu Threatens to Stop American Aids to Palestinians: No Negotiations before Stopping the Activities in Jerusalem," Assafir 10 Aug. 1996: A12.

³² "Netanyahu Ruled out Any Agreement Regarding Jerusalem," Assafir 12 Aug. 1996: A13.

³³ "Christopher: The Circle of Peace Must Be Closed," Assafir 19 Jan. 1996: A17.

³⁴ "Christopher: The Situation" A1.

³⁵ "Washington Refuses" A1.

³⁶ Ibrahim A2.

³⁷ "A Decisive" A1.

³⁸ "A Decisive" A1.

³⁹ Melhem, "Maryland Talks" A1.

⁴⁰ Amin Ibrahim, "Damascus: The Price of Withdrawal is Security, and Normalization is Left to Time," Assafir 25 Jan. 1996: A1.

⁴¹ Ibrahim, "Damascus" A1.

⁴² "U.S. State Department: Important Things Are Happening in Wye Plantation ... Barak: We Do Not Want Syria to Put Its Feet in Tabaraya," Assafir 26 Jan. 1996: A1.

⁴³ "U.S. State" A1.

⁴⁴ Ali Jamalou, "Assad: The Peace Process Has Not Progressed So Far; 'They Do Not Scare Us When Accusing Us of Being Terrorists,'" Assafir 17 Feb. 1996: A1.

⁴⁵ "Damascus" A1.

⁴⁶ "Khaddam Accuses Netanyahu of Aggressiveness: Israel Wants a Peace of Force," Assafir 17 Oct. 1996: A1.

⁴⁷ "Boueiz Draws the Attention to the Israeli Terrorism in the South and Hopes That Violence Will Not Destroy the Peace Process," Assafir 6 Mar. 1996: A2.

⁴⁸ Sami Klayb, "Moussa: Peace Will Not Be Israeli; Assad Badly Wants a Solution," Assafir 9 Apr. 1996: A1.

⁴⁹ "Gaza-Jericho First: Marketing the Deal for Billions of Dollars," Assafir 3 Sept. 1993: A1.

⁵⁰ "Israel Harvest the Economic Fruits of the Agreement before Signing It," Assafir 8 Sept. 1993: A1.

⁵¹ "Netanyahu Talks to Ross about 'Lebanon First' Proposal: We Negotiate with Syria the Conditions for Withdrawal," Assafir 26 July 1996: A1.

⁵² "France and Syria Agree on the Principle of 'Land for Peace'," Assafir 1 Aug. 1996: A1.

⁵³ "Khaddam" A1.

⁵⁴ "Peres Renews his Rejection to a Palestinian State: We Prefer a Confederation with Jordan," Assafir 24 Feb. 1996: A12.

⁵⁵ "Hisham Melhem, 'Netanyahu Insists on his Position and Wins Clinton's Understanding,'" Assafir 10 July 1996: A1.

⁵⁶ "Netanyahu Threatens" A12.

⁵⁷ Melhem, "Netanyahu" A1.

⁵⁸ “Ducharet Ends his Trip Meeting with Mubarak: The Road of Peace Will Be Long and Difficult,” Assafir 25 July 1996: A1.

⁵⁹ “Ducharet” A1.

⁶⁰ “Christopher Suspects the Success of the Peace Talks with Syria; I Am Not Sure That Assad Wants Peace,” Assafir 4 May 1996: A1.

⁶¹ “The Israeli Decision” A1.

⁶² “Arab” A1.

⁶³ “The Third” A1.

⁶⁴ “Boutrous: Peace Is Not Any Close; Peres’s and his Party’s Success Is Not Guaranteed,” Assafir 6 Mar. 1996: A3.

⁶⁵ Hisham Melhem, “Military Atmosphere on the Borders Diminishes Any Optimism That Peace Is Close,” Assafir 23 May 1996: A1.

⁶⁶ “The Language of War Crowns the Israeli Escalation: News about Syrians Moves and Netanyahu Denies his Intention to Attack,” 21 Aug. 1996: A1.

⁶⁷ “Oslo’s Dilemma Explodes between Israel and the Palestinian Authority: Arafat Calls Netanyahu ‘Dumb’ and Accuses Him of Declaring War,” Assafir 29 Aug. 1996: A1.

⁶⁸ “The Oslo Peace Agreement Explodes between Israel and the Palestinian Authority,” Assafir 8 Aug. 1996: A1.

⁶⁹ “The Oslo” A1.

⁷⁰ “The Occupation Turns Jerusalem into a Military Base and Prevents Prayers from Praying in the Holy Mosque,” Assafir 31 Aug. 1996: A1.

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⁷⁷ “Amman Welcomes Netanyahu Saluting ‘Lebanon First’; Israel: We Will Push Hard for Negotiations with Syria,” Assafir 5 Aug. 1996: A1.

⁷⁸ “Netanyahu Threatens” A12.

⁷⁹ “The Language” A1.

⁸⁰ “Oslo’s” A1.

⁸¹ “Oslo’s” A1.

⁸² “Clinton Promises Security Guarantees in Golan and Rabin Ignores Settlers’ Objections,” Assafir 8 June 1993: A1.

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⁸⁴ Amin Ibrahim, “The Most Prominent Choice for Israel Is Revenge,” Assafir 7 Mar. 1996: A2

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⁸⁸ “Khaddam” A1.

⁸⁹ Jamalou, “Assad” A1.

⁹⁰ Jamalou, “Assad” A1.

⁹¹ “France” A1.

⁹² “Elections” A1.

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⁹⁵ “Assad Talks to Ross about New Negative Events,” Assafir 25 July 1996: A1.

⁹⁶ “Netanyahu Talks” A1.

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- ⁹⁹ "Lebanon Refuses Changing the Mission of the UNIFEL and Israel Renews Its Challenges to the UN," Assafir 11 Jan. 1993: A1.
- ¹⁰⁰ "First Israeli Blow to the Self-Rule Agreement," Assafir 20 Oct. 1993: A1.
- ¹⁰¹ "Assad: Israel Puts Obstacles in the Face of Peace Process," Assafir 4 Nov. 1993: A1.
- ¹⁰² "Christopher Suspects" A1.
- ¹⁰³ "Christopher: The Situation" A1.
- ¹⁰⁴ "Netanyahu Sends his Advisor to Washington to Push Forward the Negotiation with Syria," Assafir 2 Aug. 1996: A1
- ¹⁰⁵ "Netanyahu Specifies" A1.
- ¹⁰⁶ "Likud Reveals Its Vision of Talks with Syria: Limited Accords with No Official Treaty," Assafir 5 June 1996: A1
- ¹⁰⁷ "Israel Reduces the Possibilities of War: Tension with Syria Is a Thunder in the Cup," Assafir 23 Aug. 1996: A1.
- ¹⁰⁸ "Damascus" A1.
- ¹⁰⁹ "Mubarak Warns Of Dangers" A1.
- ¹¹⁰ Klayb A1.
- ¹¹¹ "Ducharet" A1.
- ¹¹² "Washington Refuses" A1.
- ¹¹³ "Arab" A1.
- ¹¹⁴ "Washington Prepares" A1.
- ¹¹⁵ "Egypt Connects Peace Talks with the Issues of the Deportees," Assafir 6 Jan. 1993: A1
- ¹¹⁶ "Mubarak Warns of Dangers" A1.
- ¹¹⁷ "Christopher: The Circle" A1.
- ¹¹⁸ Ibrahim, "Tel Aviv" A1.
- ¹¹⁹ Hisham Melhem, "Syria Sees Positive Steps and Israel Demands Reinforcing Israel's Security," Assafir 23 Jan. 1996: A1.

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- ¹²¹ Nassif Amro, "Peres Demands That Syria Condemns Peace before Talks Can Be Resumed; Clinton: It is Unjust to Ask Israel to Give up on Security for the Sake of Peace," Assafir 19 Mar. 1996: A1.
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- ¹²³ "Clinton" A1.
- ¹²⁴ Melhem, "Netanyahu" A1.
- ¹²⁵ Melhem, "Maryland" A1.
- ¹²⁶ "A Decisive" A1.
- ¹²⁷ "A Decisive Round" A1.
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- ¹³⁰ Melhem, "Syria" A1.
- ¹³¹ "The Israeli Siege of the Deportees Enters Its Third Week," Assafir 1 Jan. 1993: A1.
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- ¹³³ "Baker" A1.
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- ¹³⁵ "PLO Confirms" A1.
- ¹³⁶ "Netanyahu Will Not" A13.
- ¹³⁷ "Israel Promotes Hussein Presiding the Palestinian Delegation and Does Not See Any Change in Jerusalem Being Israel's Capital," Assafir 10 Apr. 1993: A1.
- ¹³⁸ "Israel Promotes" A1.
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- ¹⁴⁰ "Tel Aviv: No Medium Solutions Regarding Jerusalem or the Right to Return," Assafir 28 Sept. 1993: A1
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- ¹⁴⁴ Melhem, “Maryland Talks” A1.
- ¹⁴⁵ “Maryland Talks End Today and Christopher’s Mission Gets More Complicated,” Assafir 31 Jan. 1996: A1.
- ¹⁴⁶ “U.S. Sate” A1.
- ¹⁴⁷ “Elections” A1.
- ¹⁴⁸ “Maryland Talks Resume” A1.
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- ¹⁵³ “First Israeli” A1.
- ¹⁵⁴ “Boutrous: Peace” A3.
- ¹⁵⁵ Ibrahim, “The Most Prominent” A1.
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- ¹⁵⁷ Randa Haydan, “The Political Goals of the Israeli Military Operation,” Assafir 23 Apr. 1996: A15.
- ¹⁵⁸ “Christopher Suspects” A1.
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- ¹⁶⁰ “‘Objection’ and ‘Support’ Demonstrations Continue in the Occupied Territories,” Assafir 11 Sept. 1993: A1.
- ¹⁶¹ “First Day” A1.
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- ¹⁶⁴ “Great” A1.

¹⁶⁵ “Negotiations Are Approaching ... Palestinians Martyrs Become Ten,” Assafir 9 Feb. 1993: A1.

¹⁶⁶ “The Akaba Summit Eliminates Palestinian Fears,” Assafir 6 June 1996: A1

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¹⁷⁴ “Netanyahu’s Administration Will Appoint One of the Settlers’ Leaders a Coordinator for Settlement Plans,” Assafir 14 Aug. 1996: A13.

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- ¹⁸⁹ Mohammed Shareeda, "Peres Stubbornness against Palestinians," Assafir 3 May 1996: A19.
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CHAPTER SIX

THE FRAMING OF PEACE PROCESS IN THE JERUSALEM POST

The Jerusalem Post, a leading English language Israeli newspaper, has a large international circulation. It has been a respected source of news for five decades. In addition to distribution centers in five continents, the publication is available on the World Wide Web. Using the same categories as the last chapter, this chapter will analyze the framing of the peace process The Jerusalem Post. The protocols of the former chapter will also be followed. First the news stories, then the editorials will be examined.

News Stories

The Mood of the News Stories

In common with most Middle Eastern newspapers, the 1993 and 1996 front pages of The Jerusalem Post dedicated a great part to the coverage of the peace process. Headlines in nearly every issue of 1993 and 1996 focused on the peace process, its implications, advantages and drawbacks. As mentioned in the previous chapter, 1993 was a year of special significance since it was the time when the peace accord was signed between the Palestinians and Labor party. 1996 was another fateful year for the peace process. Likud came to power in that year and brought with it a deeply pessimistic attitude toward the prospect for meaningful peace..

In general, as in Assafir, the 1993 and 1996 The Jerusalem Post news stories reflected a negative mood, a mood especially heightened in the early months before the peace treaty was signed in 1993 and after Netanyahu came to power in May 1996. In 1993 the mood was less pessimistic than that in 1996 since in 1993 negotiations appeared to be leading to a real treaty between the Palestinians and Israel. Despite its greater overall

optimism, the mood in the early months of the year was pessimistic. For example, on March 23, 1993 The Jerusalem Post chose as its headline: "Arafat: Burn the earth under the feet of the occupiers,"¹ a genuinely non-negotiable sentiment. The mood was especially negative because, in the early months, Israel deported around 400 Palestinians from Hamas who were left homeless in the cold weather on the Lebanese/Palestinian borders. While this issue was not given extensive coverage (as it was in Assafir), it did evoke angry rhetoric from Arab leaders, whose 'hostility' indirectly affected the mood of the headlines in The Jerusalem Post making them darker and less hopeful. For example, on March 26, 1993, the lead of the story read, "Everybody expects Israel to make greater efforts to solve the problem of the Palestinians deported to Lebanon, which has cast a shadow over the Middle East negotiating process."² The issue of the deportees remained salient throughout April creating a feeling of intractability and gloom. On April 18, the headline read, "deportees stage 'death march' to protest peace talks."³ This expressed the nadir of blasted hopes. However, by September a guarded optimism was growing. For example, on June 17, the headline states, "Israel, Syria to consider US security guarantees,"⁴ followed on June 28 by a headline stating, "Rabin takes blame for peace delay."⁵ On July 2, the news story started "Rabin, Palestinians slam new US bridging Proposal."⁶ On September 3, the headline read, "Syria hopes to reach separate accord with Israel next week"⁷ only to be followed by an article starting, "Hussein warns against leaving Jordan out of pact."⁸ On September 5, the writer wrote, "Hussein backs agreement; Syria praises Israel 'seriousness' in talks."⁹ However, on September 6, the news story headline stated, "peace now' does not mean 'boom now',"¹⁰ thus disappointing those who were hoping that peace might bring them economic prosperity. On September 14, the headline positively covered the signing of the peace treaty between the PLO and Israel: "'Time for peace has come.'

Israel, PLO sign accords; Rabin and Arafat shake hands. Peres: Yesterday a dream, today a commitment.”¹¹ As Fall progressed to winter, headlines regarding peace talks took on a tone of gathering momentum. For example, on October 28, the headline read, “Progress in multilateral water talks reported.”¹² On December 23, the headline read, “Peres: All Palestinians could move to territories or Jordan in Final status.”¹³

Contrary to the expectations, after the PLO and Israel signed the accord, the mood darkened again; pessimism became the dominant mood as Syria became the focus of the headlines as an obstructor to peace. For example, on September 27, the headline read, “Syria urges tighter Arab boycott.”¹⁴ On October 17, the headline read, “Syria threatens to boycott peace talks”¹⁵ with “nobody expect[ing] early progress with Syria”¹⁶ on October 19. On December 6, the headline read, “Christopher trying to ‘energize’ peace talks with Syria.”¹⁷

For the first five months of 1996, the mood oscillated between optimism and pessimism, a mood more appropriate to the stock exchange than foreign policy. The nervous mixture of hope and fear expressed in the headlines was also reflected in the leads of the news stories as well. For example, on January 1, 1996, the headline read, “Barak plays down progress in Syria Talks” with the lead stating that Foreign minister Ehud Barak “last night put a damper on the optimistic tone about the negotiations with Syria.”¹⁸ While the January first headline conveyed a negative mood, an optimistic one followed immediately on January 3 with the headline stating that “Syria: 96 should be the year of peace with Israel.”¹⁹ Another headline read “Peres: New reality has been created. PM praises Palestinians and settlers.”²⁰ However, a return to the pessimistic mood is revealed in the January fifth headline: “Better atmospherics, lack of substance.”²¹ Then the positive mood returned on January 19 with Peres asserting, “Israeli going for broke in talks with Syria.”²² An air of uncertainty, perhaps of

panic beneath the surface of the prose, appears to characterize the reporting of those times. A feeling that the surface hides the dangerous depths seems to be paramount.

Many stories focused on the differences between the two parties' concerns, contrasting the optimism of general agreement with the pessimism of quarrels over particular details. For example, on January 16, a reporter wrote, "Barak: Kinneret, Jordan River waters must stay in our hands"²³ and on January 24, Peres confirmed that there would be "no talk about borders with Syria" since "Israel will not agree to take any big steps if the Syrians take only small ones."²⁴ On January 28, Peres continued to state that "Jerusalem not up for negotiations."²⁵ As proposals moved from broad outlines toward concrete concessions and tangible compromises, the mood of the headlines abruptly darkened. A new flowering of hope was evident in the February headline reading "Syrians agree to broad definition of normalization. Israel okays donors to aid Damascus."²⁶ Throughout this period, headlines recorded the volatile fluctuation of attitudes toward Syria.

These mood swings were not associated with all the actors in the drama; some were awarded a consistent persona. While the mood shuttled between optimism and pessimism when Israel or the Arabs were the main actors in the headline, it remained relatively optimistic when the main characters of the headline were Americans. A headline on January 16 read, "Gore envisions peace and security," with the lead story reading "US Vice President Al Gore arrived from Egypt yesterday evening with a message of hope for peace and a promise of security for Israel."²⁷ Thus the identity of the actor appeared to determine the range of emotional swing.

After May 1996, when Netanyahu came to power, the mood generally inclined more toward pessimism. For example, on July 5, the headline read "Orient House: Closing

us down would deal a major blow to peace.”²⁸ The negative feeling continued with “Mubarak [stating]: No war, but terrorism if peace stalls.”²⁹ Depression deepened in further headlines throughout the rest of 1996. On September 11, the headline “Levy rejects Assad demand to renew talks where left off”³⁰ sounded the keynote of hopeless anger and frustration. Accusations against Palestinians and Arabs appeared frequently in headlines and leads. For example, on September 26, the lead story read, “A senior Israeli official yesterday accused elements within Palestinian Authority of organizing the confrontation between Palestinians and the forces in the West Bank.”³¹ Typical of a theme of subversion and mendacity was the October 17 headline: “Arafat’s stalling on Hebron talks irks government.”³² The story lead suggested an ignoble motive. It asserted that such action “is upsetting the government and may be aimed at stirring up Palestinian discontent, which could trigger violence.”³³ On October 29, the headline announced deep divisions between Israelis and Palestinians. The headline read, “Erakat: Four points divide Israelis and Palestinians.”³⁴ The lead stated, “Negotiations over Hebron are expected to slow down, as the sides failed in an all-night session Sunday to resolve four security-related differences ...”³⁵ In another headline the reporter lamented that “Hebron [is] a missed chance to test Palestinian goodwill.”³⁶ Throughout October and November, the issue of Hebron made front pages headline emphasizing its dark power to destroy the drafting of any agreement between the two parties. On November 10, for example, a blazoned warning appeared, “Clinton: Clear Hebron Hurdle.”³⁷ On December 19, another headline read, “Lack of trust, not details, block Hebron deal.”³⁸ Characteristically, both headlines and stories emphasized the depth of the problem by placing it in a context of historical and cultural ethos.

On November 24, the exchange of accusations between Palestinians and Israelis continued to make headlines. The headline read, “Hassan criticizes Israeli construction in

territories”³⁹ with the lead asserting that Jordan’s Crown Prince Hassan said that “Israel’s expansion of Jewish settlements on occupied Arab land is unacceptable and that Israel has an ‘obsessive inflexibility’ about security.”⁴⁰ On December 2, a headline read, “PM rejects Arab verbal attacks. Mordechai tells Bassiouny: Belligerent talk doesn’t help anybody.”⁴¹ In retrospect, it seems that Netanyahu’s rise to power flattened the mood swings of the press. A settled and gradually deepening pessimism characterized his tenure.

Patterns of Imagery

In most of the news stories analyzed in The Jerusalem Post, the terms “peace” and “the peace process” cluster with a small number of thematic terms. The cluster is not idealistic, but concrete, in fact narrowly material. Often “peace” is treated as merchandise that is exchanged with a particular amount of “land” or resources. For example, Peres stated, “the extent of peace would directly influence the extent of withdrawal on the Golan Heights.”⁴² In another article, the reporter wrote “negotiations have now reached the point where the two sides can see trade-offs necessary for settlement.”⁴³ Again, peace is treated as a business deal.

Natural terms are used to describe peace. Peres for example, considered peace without economic agreements as “cold peace.”⁴⁴ The peace process has been in a six-month “freeze”⁴⁵ and the talks have been in “deep freeze.”⁴⁶ On December 12, Mordechai was quoted saying that “Peace between Israel and Jordan has strategic importance and everything must be done in order for this peace to be warm.”⁴⁷ Netanyahu urged for an early election before “they [Labor] rush to finalize a hasty half-baked deal with Syria.”⁴⁸ Other articles highlighted Israel’s demand for a “warmer peace.”⁴⁹ Peace is also treated as a piece of cheese, which will be the center of discussion to decide on “the aspect of

‘dividends,’ what each side will give to the other.”⁵⁰ These archetypal terms (land, heat, cold, and food) reflect the visceral feelings that had become invested in the term.

Peace is parsed into abstract varieties as well. There is “political peace” and “strategic peace.”⁵¹ Moreover, a “comprehensive peace”⁵² is a peace that involves Syria as well. On another occasion, Israel’s PM said, “Syria was keen on the achievement of an honorable peace.”⁵³ In addition, Israeli officials continued to talk of Syria’s intention to have a “real” peace and that Syria “constituted a key to a just and comprehensive peace in the region.”⁵⁴ On February 6, The Jerusalem Post quoted King Hussein asserting that the Jordanian-Israeli peace is “a real peace, a warm peace. [It] is an example and an inspiration to others.”⁵⁵ Jordan’s Crown Prince Hassan was quoted saying that “only real peace would prevent violence in Hebron.”⁵⁶ On July 7, The Jerusalem Post quoted the Syrian newspaper saying “There is no security and no peace outside the framework of a just peace, stipulating withdrawal from the occupied Arab lands.”⁵⁷ Netanyahu spoke of a “strong and secure peace.”⁵⁸ Likewise, on May 3, 1993, The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli Police Minister, Moshe Shahal claiming that he preferred “full peace with Syria” and that if he had “to choose between a genuine peace and the Golan, [he] would choose peace.”⁵⁹ Syria is also quoted talking about “firm, solid, real, honorable, just and comprehensive peace agreement.”⁶⁰ Clinton was quoted saying, on December 10, 1993, that the [US] will help in building a “comprehensive, just and lasting peace for all the people of the region.”⁶¹ The constant repetition of terms such as “real”, “whole”, “secure”, and “genuine” reflects the deep suspicions of the press and the anxiety the term aroused. These terms are dialectical rather than concrete and are defined relationally. That is, they are defined over and against other terms that emerge during the heat of discourse.

The fearful terms were not the only peace cluster, there were positive peace terms as well. Peace positively clustered with “security,” “water,” “normalization” and “border”⁶² for Israel. On April 22, 1993, The Jerusalem Post quoted Rabin confirming, “... they [Palestinians] know that for us peace without security means nothing.”⁶³ On January 16, Peres assured that Israel “will cautiously begin to discuss matters related to the security and water arrangements.”⁶⁴ The Israeli talks of their type of peace that must supply them with “the basic needs and security and water needs.”⁶⁵

Peace is also treated as a parade, which is “on the march.”⁶⁶ Peace and “inequality”⁶⁷ can not go together for Palestinians. Peace also agons with “redeployment” for Palestinians while it is a cluster for Israeli because redeployment means security guaranteed.⁶⁸ Positive growth of the Palestinian State stands as an agon to Israeli security.

The peace process is personified in the language of the parties involved in the negotiations. For example, The Jerusalem Post quoted Rabin saying that he “wanted peace that would stand on its own two feet.”⁶⁹ For example, Nicholas Burns, the state Department Spokesman treated the negotiations as a human being for which he wanted to “take the temperature.”⁷⁰ On another occasion, Netanyahu was quoted talking about his attitude toward the present peace negotiation that is “foolhardy, hasty, and reckless.”⁷¹ In more than one news story, peace is treated as a living body. On November 6, a reporter quoted a Syrian official saying “Netanyahu struck a new nail in the coffin of the peace process.”⁷² On September 26, Hanan Ashrawi, PA councilwoman was quoted saying that Netanyahu should not be allowed to “continue his deception that the peace process is alive and well.”⁷³ And on other occasion, President Mubarak was quoted saying that the peace process is “really teetering,”⁷⁴ while Clinton is trying hard to “protect the peace process and to help move it forward” treating the peace as a victim that needed help or a person

who is liable to fall at any moment.⁷⁵ Moreover, peace is treated as a pedestrian making it responsible for any delays in reaching an agreement. So the peace talks are “moving slowly”⁷⁶ and the talks are moving in slow “pace.” On December 6, 1993, the peace process is also portrayed as a dead soul that needed to be “energized.”⁷⁷ Personification is an ancient rhetorical device, but the kind of personification is telling the person of peace is sick, weak, corpse-like, and victimized.

At times peace is framed by war vocabulary. For example, on September 14, 1993, The Jerusalem Post quoted Arafat saying, “The battle of peace is the most difficult battle of our lives.”⁷⁸ On October 25, 1993, peace was portrayed as a field in which the EC are “dragging their feet.”⁷⁹

To conclude, peace in The Jerusalem Post’s coverage is a pattern of metaphor that emphasizes the fragility, risk and danger of peace. To pursue it is to risk the loss of land, security, and water.

Extended Action and Characterization of Actors

Part of the framing process that The Jerusalem Post implemented in its coverage of the peace is a special characterization of actors involved in the peace process as well as the events related to the peace process itself. The images of leaders and adversaries tend to be elevated or denigrated according to the events of the day. They are fluid. It is worth noting that in the news stories, most of the characterizations were not authored by The Jerusalem Post’s writers, but were selected or quoted from other sources. In addition to its pattern of metaphor used to describe peace and the peace process, The Jerusalem Post framed characters and events in a particular way either by direct characterization or by a strategic selection of characterization from other sources.

For example, on January 3, The Jerusalem Post portrayed Peres as open minded and optimistic who “praised the Palestinians” for a “smooth redeployment” asserting “the new atmosphere is a pleasant surprise.”⁸⁰ Moreover, Peres was shown as a generous benefactor who has “seen an increase in the number of Arab laborers working in Israel.”⁸¹ The labor party was presented as willing and doing their best to attain peace. On January 5, a Labor party source was quoted saying that “[they] cannot waste any precious time on campaigning instead of making peace.”⁸² Peres was also described as the adventurer who was willing “to take a chance” and declaring, “those who don’t dare are not realists.”⁸³ Throughout the day’s coverage, Peres was lauded as a peace-loving and successful leader who had succeeded in taking the path of peace with Syria.⁸⁴

Rabin was also acclaimed as the kind-hearted leader who was ready to “make sacrifices for peace.”⁸⁵ Peres was also praised as a kind-hearted person who “appealed to Arab countries ‘to come in the open and negotiate peace ...’.”⁸⁶ This praise of Peres indirectly portrays Arab leaders as the ones who are really obstructing peace. Peres was also displayed as a philanthropic leader who envisions in the headline of the news story that “all Palestinians could move to territories or Jordan in final status.”⁸⁷ This rosy invitation is somewhat weakened by conditions that rule out a “right of return”⁸⁸ to Israel. While Peres and Rabin were portrayed as flexible open-minded leaders, Netanyahu was pictured as the “stubborn” and inflexible” leader who was planning to “manage talks responsibly, with utmost concern for Israel’s security.”⁸⁹ In general, Netanyahu’s image was mostly negative. Quoting a Labor official source, The Jerusalem Post wrote that Netanyahu’s “lack of understanding and political savvy had exerted a high price – the lives of 15 soldiers and the wounding of dozen others.”⁹⁰ Netanyahu was also portrayed as a weak and incapable leader who “has made intensive diplomatic efforts to restore Israel’s

international image, which was tarnished by the recent violence in the territories.”⁹¹

Obsession with security was featured as Netanyahu’s leadership style.⁹² The image of Netanyahu as an incapable leader was an enduring theme throughout 1996. On December 13, for example, a typical lead story read, “Netanyahu’s basic policies aren’t really going to produce the secure peace voters were promised.”⁹³ Characteristically, his failure was not seen as one of nuance, strategy or execution, but as a fundamental weakness.

On the other hand, in 1993 and 1996, the Arabs’ image in The Jerusalem Post was uniformly negative. For example, on July 1, 1993 Syria was portrayed as a supporter of terrorism who “Israel should test whether Syria is behind the escalation of violence among radical terrorists groups in Lebanon ...”⁹⁴ This image continued throughout the year. On November 17, The Jerusalem Post wrote, “Syria could curb the fundamentalist organizations if it so desired.”⁹⁵ On December 21, the headline read, “New evidence links Syria, Iran to Lockerbie disaster”⁹⁶ portraying Syria again as a terrorist country.

Syria was also portrayed as a hypocritical player and a deceiver. In fact The Jerusalem Post had learned that “Syrian officials are privately telling US counterparts that they perfectly understand that Prime Minister Rabin was preoccupied in the aftermath of the PLO accord, and had absolutely no expectation of an early breakthrough in talks on the Golan.”⁹⁷ In fact, Syria dominated the news stories in 1993, a period during which it was negatively portrayed as an obstructor who was ‘refusing to talk peace.’⁹⁸ Even when Syria was positively portrayed, it was in a context in which Israel was the primary actor. For example, on September 5, the author stated, “Syria praised Israeli seriousness in the Middle East peace talks and held out the prospect of a firm... peace agreement.”⁹⁹ Syria’s praiseworthy attitude was spoken of as a mere reflection of Israel’s steadfastness. Contrariwise, Syria’s ‘steadfastness’ was most often expressed as uncompromising

stubbornness. The Jerusalem Post quoted the Syrian daily Al-Baath stating, “anyone who thinks Syria could accept anything else is wrong.”¹⁰⁰ As Kenneth Burke has often noted, the virtues of one set of combatants are the vices of their opponents. Thus Jewish ‘steadfastness’ becomes Arab ‘stubbornness’ and visa versa.

Moreover, The Jerusalem Post quoted a GSS head portraying Palestinians as greedy people who “continue to try to nibble at Israeli Jurisdiction in Jerusalem.”¹⁰¹ On January 3, 1996, The Jerusalem Post ran a news story about Israeli settlers who were thinking of “installing an alarm system in their houses” because they were afraid of “Palestinian violence” and “terrorism”¹⁰² thus portraying Palestinians as the oppressors and terrorists. Quoting Israeli sources, The Jerusalem Post tended to cast the Arabs in the role of obstructers of the peace process. For example, on January 5, an Israeli source was quoted as questioning whether Assad “feels the intolerable pressure to conclude peace with Israel.”¹⁰³ Minister Yossi Beilin was also cited as stating doubts about “whether Syrian President Hafez Assad had really decided to make peace.”¹⁰⁴ On January 11, the headline wondered about Syria’s “readiness for ‘continuous’ peace talks,”¹⁰⁵ thus questioning Syria’s sincerity in actually following through on its promises. On January 7, The Jerusalem Post quoted Netanyahu lamenting Israeli’s concession and Syria’s firm positions on issues thus portraying Israel as a victim and Syria as the sole beneficiary from the peace talks.¹⁰⁶ Syria was also depicted as a supporter of terrorism thus pushing “Turkey to “urge Syria to take effective measures against terrorism and to move forward in the peace process.”¹⁰⁷ On February 1, an Israeli source was quoted saying that a peace agreement “constitutes Syria’s willingness to define normalization as [Israelis] do – embassies, open borders, tourism, and trade,”¹⁰⁸ portraying Syria as the cynical party and Israel as the idealistic one. On September 11, Netanyahu also delineated Syria as the spoiler, and as a

people even more stubborn than the Palestinians.¹⁰⁹ However, in the same news story, the reporter also quoted a Syrian official accusing Netanyahu of making “peace negotiations impossible” and striking “a new nail in the coffin of peace,”¹¹⁰ thus noting that the Syrians appeared to be responding in the same coin.

The image of Israel as a victim was present in many news stories in 1993 and 1996. For example, on April 22, 1993 The Jerusalem Post quoted Rabin stating that Israel has the right to protect its people¹¹¹ implying that Israel was a lamb living among wolves. Likewise, on October 29, 1996 Netanyahu portrayed Israel as the victim and that “the assumption that the blame will always automatically be placed on Israel for failing to reach an agreement no longer works.”¹¹² However, despite its victim status in some contexts, Israel was also portrayed as active and powerful, the party who rolled the dice in the peace talks. For example, on September 6, 1993 The Jerusalem Post quoted Peres saying that the “PLO faces a take-it-or-leave-it situation regarding the ‘Gaza/Jericho agreement’; they [PLO] may take their time signing it, but they may not change it.”¹¹³ This ‘gentle giant’ syndrome is common in international rhetoric. One nation’s sincerity and strength make it vulnerable to the machinations of its cynical rivals. Ethnocentrism is a powerful blinder that allows nations to pose as victim and conqueror without noticing the apparent contradiction.

On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority was described as the villain in the peace process. They were the ones who organized “confrontations between Palestinians and IDF forces in the West Bank.”¹¹⁴ They were also the ones who were responsible for the “traumatic shoot-out in Ramallah.”¹¹⁵ Arafat was also pictured as an opportunist whose plan to “topple Netanyahu from his post or at least to squeeze him for significant concessions has failed, and Arafat’s only hope to remain in power might be to mobilize

Palestinian unrest.”¹¹⁶ Arafat was also represented as a reckless leader who must “stop traveling from one place to another as if he had all the time in the world.”¹¹⁷ On March 23, 1993, he was called an agitator who “urged the Palestinians to escalate resistance against Israel and ‘burn the earth under the feet of the occupiers’.”¹¹⁸ Moreover, The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli official source condemning Arafat as an obstructionist. He was the person “behind the decision to hold off on giving a formal answer to resuming peace talks on Tuesday in Washington.”¹¹⁹ Even when the peace accord was signed on September 3, 1993, The Jerusalem Post described Arafat’s military garb, casting him as a warrior signing a peace agreement; Rabin’s clothing was not described. The Jerusalem Post wrote on September 14 of that year, “Arafat, wearing an olive green military-style uniform and his trademark black-and-white checkered keffiyeh and speaking in Arabic said....,”¹²⁰ thus suggesting that he and his people had not altered their aggressive posture. On November 30, Arafat was also pictured as an angry leader who “insisted that the agreed December 13 date for Israel to start withdrawing from Gaza Strip and Jericho was sacred and must be respected [refusing] to elaborate on the consequences.”¹²¹ Here The Jerusalem Post excerpted the core of his threatening language. Occasionally, Arafat received more benign coverage in The Jerusalem Post. For example, on November 4, The Jerusalem Post wrote, “Clinton thanked Arafat for his role and affirmed US support for the peace process”¹²² as if willing to bestow praise through a third party.

The Jerusalem Post provided its readers a bleak assessment of Arab opinion about Israel. For example, on November 24, Hassan said, “Israel’s obsession with security is misguided and responsible for stalling the negotiations toward IDF redeployment in Hebron.”¹²³ On November 25, Amr Moussa, the Egyptian FM, was also instanced as saying that Israel was “striving to create fait accompli in the occupied territories, to break

the principle of land for peace.”¹²⁴ This typical cite confirms the enduring Arab position that Israel is an invading power, an occupier, and a mendacious nation that talks peace while pursuing aggression.

Since the majority of The Jerusalem Post sources were Israeli officials, it is not surprising that the Arabs were negatively portrayed. In fact, the Syrians and Palestinians shared a consistently negative image. Israel was shown as heroic, peace loving, and responsible, as well as being victimized and embattled. Finally, there is little coverage of Arab examples of restraint or discussions of how to build mutual patterns of obligations for both parties.

Unique Frames Used in the Coverage of the Peace Process

I have completed the examination of mood, images and characterization of actors and events. These tropes form a constellation or a frame. This frame shapes The Jerusalem Post's coverage of the peace process. A frame provides a consistent perspective for readers and a dramatic resource for journalists. Although frames provide psychological closure, they can expand or evolve. The frame may be aesthetically modified to meet the challenge of unprecedented events, new situations, or unexpected opportunities. Contradictions, surprises, and changes must be assimilated by the frame. Rhetoricians say that they are elastic sources of inventional matter. One speculates that there are limits. At some point, a frame loses its power to assimilate change. As metaphor needs similarities to find its associative parts, frames probably have limits of modifications. At some point they must shatter under accommodation and invention. This will be discussed in the last part of this chapter.

There are four major frames in which the peace process was covered and they are selectively applied. Peace was framed in terms of security, normalization, and natural

resources when Israel's motives were discussed. It was framed in terms of geographical areas and natural resources when the Arab parties were concerned as they are assured to be their dominant motives for negotiations. When The Jerusalem Post cites Arab sources, their expressed aims are presented as land for peace with Israel. For Arabs, peace becomes conditioned by this element along with the element of natural resources and the peace process is limited to these two frames. For example, on January 3, The Jerusalem Post cited the official daily Tishreen reiterating "Syria's demand that Israel commit itself to a complete and early withdrawal from the Golan Heights."¹²⁵ Christopher was also quoted on April 22, 1993 confirming that "the negotiations are based on land-for peace principle and the political rights of the Palestinians should be recognized."¹²⁶ The land-for peace frame was dominant in the Arab perspective. On July 20, 1993, The Jerusalem Post quoted Syria's often repeated trope: "upgrading Middle East peace talks to the ministerial level would be meaningless without an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from occupied Arab territories."¹²⁷ On the other hand, for Israel, discussion of peace is conditioned by frames of security and water, and economy. For example, on January 3, Peres placed peace within the context of the many "problems to be solved, for example, the water problem."¹²⁸ On January 5, Christopher went to the Middle East to discuss when "to move to working groups involving experts on water, security and economic issues."¹²⁹ This language expressed the American tendency to adopt the Israeli perspective and to define peace terms through the same frames. On January 16, Foreign Minister Ehud Barak was quoted in the lead to the news story asserting that "the waters of Lake Kinneret and the Jordan River must stay in Israeli hands under any peace agreement."¹³⁰ In the same article, the reporter asserted, "water is one of the subjects that has been raised during the talks,"¹³¹ also quoting Peres talking about an agreement with other parties "on some economic principles."¹³²

Security remained a very powerful frame in Israel's peace rhetoric. For example, On April 22, 1993, The Jerusalem Post wrote, "PM Rabin welcomed the Arab decision, stressing that Israel is willing to make compromises, but not at the expense of endangering its security or that of its citizens."¹³³ Likewise, on January 24, 1996, The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli source stating that "security arrangements in any peace treaty with Syria would have to achieve three goals: make a surprise attack impossible; reduce the possibility of a comprehensive attack by either side; and establish a method for preventing any localized incidents from turning into full scale war."¹³⁴ While the security frame strongly affects peace discourse in Israel, Arabs generally dismiss this view "an obstruction to the peace process."¹³⁵ Moreover, on May 3, 1993, Police Minister Shahal was quoted saying that before Israel withdraw from the Golan heights, it 'must first hear solid assurances from Damascus that it is committed to normalization of relations between the two countries. He also said that the sides must reach mutually acceptable security arrangements."¹³⁶ This tone was also reiterated on June 28, 1993, when Rabin assured that Israel is "willing to pay a price for peace ... but will make no concessions which could compromise our security."¹³⁷ On June 17, The Jerusalem Post wrote, "The security issue has been at the core of the first two days of discussions between Israel and Syria at the start of this round of peace talks."¹³⁸

The articles in The Jerusalem Post highlighted the conditions to peace as obscuring the peace process. For example, on January 7, a reporter wrote, "such core areas of disagreements as security, water and border issues were not discussed..."¹³⁹ There is a recognition here that associations (clusters) may become so culturally coercive that they deprive a state of its capacity to innovate.

The status of Jerusalem is often seen as a special case, but it is also a distillation of the frame of security and land. Although both parties speak of different conditions with regard to peace, however, Jerusalem is a common obstacle without which peace cannot be achieved. On January 3, for example, The Jerusalem Post highlighted the GSS's worries and fear that "a comprehensive regional reconciliation might not take Jerusalem or the refugees into consideration."¹⁴⁰ Even the Pope declared on January 15 that the hope for peace "could prove ephemeral if a just and adequate solution is not also found to the particular problem of Jerusalem."¹⁴¹ On July 2, 1993, The Jerusalem Post quoted Rabin criticizing "US bridging proposals that reportedly say the future of Jerusalem could eventually become a topic of negotiation in the Middle east peace talks."¹⁴² This position was confirmed on July 7 when "Peres said Egypt should not expect Israel to change its position that the city is its eternal capital."¹⁴³ This is followed by a Palestinian statement saying "Jerusalem and all other occupied land should be under Palestinian interim government which will lead to implementation of Security Council Resolution 242."¹⁴⁴ Thus one can observe two competing perspectives: The Arabs call for land and the Israeli call for security. In this atmosphere, fresh grievances are piled upon old grievances, and it becomes difficult to imagine resolution without vast structured changes.

Throughout 1993 and 1996, the sources of the information were drawn mainly from the Israelis. As expected, The Jerusalem Post highlighted the frames of security, normalization, water, and economy, since these are the conditions that Israel had preset for peace. Thus, the Arab voice in the news stories seemed nearly absent and the competing land and resource frames were overwhelmed by the dominant Israeli frames. Such reporting had the same effects as filtering out conflicting information and providing readers with a monological political narrative of events.

Framing Context

As mentioned in previous chapters, framing is more than a mechanistic act of disposition and arrangement. It is a perspective act that affects human understanding of a particular event. Framing occurs within a human context; it reflects and imposes the motives of the frame. Thus two newspapers may frame the same event differently; or they may use a similar frame for different events. This section will examine the context in which The Jerusalem Post framed the peace process. Although most of the news stories seemed to cover the peace process in an objective manner, however, The Jerusalem Post relies heavily on Israeli sources for its news. This, along with the selection of particular frames, reflects The Jerusalem Post's agenda and perspective. Accordingly, there are times when it seems that little distinction is made between society and state. In a cursory reading of The Jerusalem Post's reports we seem to be dealing with objective exposition. However, a closer look uncovers a particular perspective on peace, a perspective that is indirectly conveyed to readers through particular framing contexts and through the papers reliance on particular sources of information. This seemingly objective news may well affect the public's attitude toward peace. For example, just after The Jerusalem Post reported about Peres's optimism of creating a new reality with the Palestinians¹⁴⁵ another report in the same issue followed that reveals the GSS's demand to "extradite the Popular Front activists allegedly responsible for murdering three Israelis..."¹⁴⁶; the report continued talking about how many suicide attackers have been located in the past few years...

When the news is put in a positive framing context, the Israelis and Americans are the key players. For example, on January 5, the reporter writes "The US and Israel have put a positive spin on these talks" while quoting an Israeli source saying that "the Syrians have of course not desisted from their demands for a full Israeli withdrawal and they

registered their insistence on it as a sine qua non for any settlement..."¹⁴⁷ On January 11, the author wrote that "Turkey urged Syria to take effective measures against terrorism and to move forward in the peace process"¹⁴⁸ portraying the talks in a context where one player was trying to put obstacles while the others were trying to move things forward. In fact, in many articles in which the reporters have a positive framing of the peace process, the framing is surrounded or followed by citing an Israeli source accusing the other party of being negative about the issue. For example, on January 19, The Jerusalem Post quoted Rabinovitch saying that Syria and Israel "have come closer to the issue of the quality of peace" immediately followed by the same source commenting that "[Israel and Syria] do not have that degree of intimacy between [them]."¹⁴⁹ This negative tag attached to a positive assessment appears to be a stock reflex, a kind of historic communal reservation and a suspicion of good news.

Although the early months of 1996 reflected a positive framing of the peace process in general, however, these stories were interrupted by some negative framing contexts that may indirectly reflect The Jerusalem Post's perspective on peace. For example, on January 5, the reporter wrote, "the Likud executive bureau issued an official resolution condemning the government's decision to release hundreds of terrorists with bloodstained hands."¹⁵⁰ Such a report diverted the attention of the audience from the advantages and positive image of the peace process to the negative aspects of any deal.

Later in the year, The Jerusalem Post highlighted many issues that seemed to threaten the peace process. For example, on July 5, the headline read, "Orient House: Closing us down would deal a major blow to peace."¹⁵¹ In this article, The Jerusalem Post quoted representatives from the Orient House threatening that closing the Orient House will "have a negative effect on the peace process,"¹⁵² and this may be seen by the

Palestinians as “a step away from peace.”¹⁵³ Framing the peace process in such contexts makes it seem fragile and easily derailed by events or even minor issues. A generous allocation of space to minor issues such as the closing of the Orient House appears as important as the issue of Jerusalem.

When the Arabs are used as a source of information, the fortunes of the peace process appear even more uncertain. For example, although The Jerusalem Post quoted a Syrian official talking about Syria’s will to achieve peace, the bulk of the article focused on Syrian accusations against Netanyahu and about his obsession with security thus highlighting the misunderstandings between the two parties. The article concluded with a salvo from the Syrian newspaper, Tishreen, asserting that “there will be no peace and no security without withdrawal.”¹⁵⁴

After Netanyahu’s ascent to power, peace process reporting in a pessimistic context seemed to include a generous chorus of Arab threats. For example, on July 7, The Jerusalem Post quoted Mubarak saying that “If Israel does not respect its commitments, the whole Middle East will face an outburst of terrorism.”¹⁵⁵ This was followed by another report in which the reporter stated that Syria’s official media said that Netanyahu was making the resumption of peace negotiations impossible by ignoring the outcome of nearly five years of bilateral talks.”¹⁵⁶ As if in antiphonal reply, Levy was quoted: “if the Syrians insisted on an Israeli declaration committing itself to start the talks where they left off or to accepting the principle of land for peace, then talks would not be resumed.”¹⁵⁷ This chain of accusations highlights the differences between the negotiation parties. Such coverage indirectly gives the reader the impression that it is almost impossible to ever achieve peace because no common core of interests is spoken of. The author feels a kind of gloomy meta-text behind all the reports and stories. It is that the people of the region do not share a

common destiny or a common symbolic capital that can allow them to adjudicate their problem. The highest truth behind the stories is human futility and unending anger.

Thus even minor events become synecdochal of a larger conspiracy. For example, on September 19, Netanyahu said that the “rioting in response to the opening of the Hasmonean Tunnel ‘was not a spontaneous activity’ refusing to directly accuse the Palestinian authority of being behind the violence.”¹⁵⁸ In this same issue, The Jerusalem Post also wrote that “the traumatic shoot-out in Ramallah was a high price to pay for knocking a hole in a wall” and quoted Nabil Shaath asserting that “the crisis is escalating, fueled by Israeli’s meeting [the PA] and not doing anything, not implementing anything.”¹⁵⁹ On October 17, Netanyahu charged Arafat and the PA of trying to stir up further Palestinian discontent, which may trigger violence,” because the PA refused to acknowledge any progress in the Hebron Talks threatening that if this continued, “there will be no Hebron redeployment.”¹⁶⁰ Speaking of the Hebron issue, The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli source, Meretz MK Yossi Sarid, saying that “a ‘disaster’ is imminent in Hebron and that administrative detentions would not help prevent it.”¹⁶¹

Even when hope for the peace process seemed to be regaining momentum, The Jerusalem Post seemed bent on reviving old fears by focusing on the different expectations and objectives of the parties. For example, on October 3, the reporter wrote, “the government claimed victory after the White House summit yesterday saying it has conceded nothing, while Palestinian officials branded the meeting a failure.”¹⁶² Here peace is cast in the metaphor of a contest between two parties, a contest with winners and losers. For example, on October 4, The Jerusalem Post wrote, “by failing to give Arafat any of the concrete ‘gestures’ he had requested, Netanyahu ensured that Arafat did not get everything

he wanted out of last week's violence."¹⁶³ This context positions peace as a contest in which threats, deception and bad faith are in play.

The context of war is used in covering peace and the two appear so mixed that they seem to be almost in dialog. On October 4, a reporter wrote that the PM tried to assess "what the Palestinians might do in the wake of the bloody battles they waged in the territories last week."¹⁶⁴ This was followed by a quote from an Israeli officer threatening that "if there is another flare-up in the territories, we'll cream them [Palestinians]."¹⁶⁵

In conclusion, the framing context in these news stories reveals a deeply negative perspective on peace. One may deduce that perhaps The Jerusalem Post does not really see peace as a valid option, and that the term "peace" has become a journalist's beat like weather or sports in which a variety of topics may be discussed.

Columns and Editorials

The op-eds reflect a more 'subjective and personal' body of opinion of The Jerusalem Post. In other words, The Jerusalem Post's subjective framing of the peace process appears in the editorials and columns. Because editorials reflect the editor's or the newspaper's position toward certain events, the press makes no claim to objective reporting and is free to make an explicit argument or to assert its frame without apology.

Like Assafir, the op-eds that appear in The Jerusalem Post during 1996 and 1993 express a deeply negative mood toward the peace process. Heavy cynicism expressed through images of failure and betrayal dominated the headlines and the editorials. In fact, editorials and opinions in The Jerusalem Post nearly replicate those in Assafir, each appearing almost an obverse reflection of the other. One can see a common attitude toward peace and the peace process. Not surprisingly, the identity of the victim and villain in each newspaper is switched. While in Assafir, Israel is the villain and Arabs are the victims, in

The Jerusalem Post it is the other way around. Occasionally, the op-eds lament Israel's 'concessions' in the peace talks. These are framed as threats to security because one cannot trust the Arabs. For example, on January 1, 1996, Steinberg quoted Shalhevet Frier saying that "without nuclear threat the Arab states would be able to attack Israel at a time of their choosing, with nothing to worry about;"¹⁶⁶ the assumption here is that Arabs are eager to do so and that Israel is a constant victim. The author ended his editorial asserting that if "peace survives beyond its infancy and prospers" there is a possibility for a security arrangement although "this goal is complex"¹⁶⁷ Steinberg resembled peace to an infant thus giving it the attribute of feebleness and perhaps innocence whose destiny is decided by others. Moreover, in another column, Charles Krauthammer believed that "the Israeli public is overwhelmed by the risks and dangers of the PLO agreement just signed,"¹⁶⁸ thus portraying Israelis as afraid victims and Palestinians as dangerous villains. One of the difficulties with this posture is that it tends to associate truth, wise conduct and power in a cluster. The resulting fusion is agonistically positioned against a concession, flexibility and weakness cluster.

In another pessimistic editorial, the author portrayed Arafat as a deceiver who promised to delete the article that calls for the destruction of Israel from the PLO National Covenant but never did. The author continued to highlight the articles in the covenant that "delegitimize the Jewish state" and that calls for "actions that presuppose its destruction."¹⁶⁹ The author sarcastically criticized the Israeli government's call for removing the clause. He wrote, "Remove the anti-Israel clauses? Major surgery is more like it,"¹⁷⁰ thus insinuating that there must be some drastic cut offs on the Palestinian side before a peace process can take place. Again the peace process is threatened by the 'disease' for which a surgery is needed otherwise the 'malady' may return and destroy the

peace. In another editorial, peace is also portrayed as an ill person into which Barak “injected a note of sobriety”¹⁷¹ so that there remains solidarity in the Israeli government since some “are not sanguine about the withdrawal from the Golan.”¹⁷² When the organic metaphor of bodily disease grew stale, a mechanical metaphor was substituted. In a December 11 editorial, peace was portrayed as a vehicle whose engine may be dismantled because of the settlements.¹⁷³ In another editorial, December 16, peace is compared to unconditional love, love that is granted without price. “Peace is supposed to be ideal.”¹⁷⁴ Tsiddon wrote about two types of peace, one that is “based on solid and joint interests”¹⁷⁵ and one that is “signed with an artificial creation, carrying out –for pay- the orders of its masters.”¹⁷⁶ On October 1, 1993, Teddy Preuss wrote that ‘peace is a challenge, not a danger.’¹⁷⁷ But his optimism appeared to be uncharacteristic of the mass of reporters.

The metaphor of a betrayed relationship was common in editorials focusing on attacking Arafat and the Arab parties. For example, on January 11, Eisenberg wrote that there were “several myths blown away during the past week” one of which when Arafat promised to “curb terrorism against Jews; that he will be the savior of Israel”¹⁷⁸ but never did. Similarly, Tsiddon depicted Arafat as a liar and a deceiver. The Arabs were portrayed as ‘anti-peace’ parties whose ‘rearmament to the tune of \$58billion in the past 3 months’¹⁷⁹ was a sign of the Arabs’ reaction to peace.

Peres did not escape the blame either. He was portrayed as a betrayer who “is ready to surrender virtually the entire Golan Heights – a betrayal of past Labor promises.”¹⁸⁰ The driving force behind the trope of betrayal was the larger frame of security. In a world of great insecurity, any concession might be interpreted as a betrayal and a danger. The author asked, “What can be more important than security, water and border areas?”¹⁸¹ The silent

answer is 'Nothing, not even peace.' Thus security becomes bonded to religion, community, national and personal survival.

An official version of history was retailed in order to portray Israel as a victim and Arabs as villains. On January 12, an editorial wrote, "it was not 'colonialism' or 'imperialism' that brought the Gaza strip and the West Bank under Israeli rule in 1967 but self defense against Arab aggression."¹⁸² Accordingly, Israel is a threatened victim that must colonialize other lands for the sake of 'self defense' and it is the Arab's fault. This narrative provides a single cosmology for many aspirations -- military, economic, territorial and political. Even when the Palestinian right to the land is acknowledged, it is accompanied with conditions that portray them as villains and untrustful partners. In the same editorial, the author concludes that Palestinians "have a great historic opportunity" that may help them to "realize a large part of their aspiration" only if they "prevent offenses against Israeli security and avoid wild rhetoric."¹⁸³

In a January 18 editorial, the headline read, "Terrorism as usual" reflecting the author's censure of Israeli army withdrawal from particular "Arab population centers" because a "hasty withdrawal and a stubborn clinging to a flawed deal do not always bode peace."¹⁸⁴ The author also insinuated that Arafat was a manipulator who made Hamas fulfill "the function of the shooting arm while the PA does the talking."¹⁸⁵ On November 29, the author characterized Arafat as a terrorist agitator. The editorial quoted Arafat's avowal of violence, "we only know one word: jihad, jihad, jihad, ..."¹⁸⁶ The author concluded that the PLO leader's idea of peace was a sham, "Arafat wants all the parties to understand that for him, [violence] is really part and parcel of the negotiations."¹⁸⁷ The editorial thus presented two rival definitions of peace. In one Israel was seen as a guardian of order and a state that makes all the concessions. The second definition construed Arab

peace as a mixture of threat, sabotage, and negotiation. This is peace by any means necessary.

Syria was described as backward, greedy and treacherous in the columns and editorials. On February 9, the writer portrayed Syria as a poor country in “which you experience the Third World.” Thus the country “is in no position to refuse the US offer” to “relinquish the \$4billion”¹⁸⁸ if a peace agreement is signed with Israel. Syria’s destination makes it a weak player that may be ready to make concessions for ‘the sake of money.’¹⁸⁹ True to this logic, peace is consequently portrayed as a financial reward that will be granted to Syria if it made peace with Israel. In addition to the image of penury, Syria’s lack of legitimacy and reliability makes it seem an unfit partner for anyone. On December 4, the writer asked, “virtually invited to commit aggression and already exonerate from guilt by the mothers of his future victims, can Assad possibly be persuaded to abandon military operation.”¹⁹⁰ Portraying Assad as the villain implies that no peace with a violent person is possible and therefore Israel is not to blame for not signing any agreement. Besides signing a peace treaty with an oppressor is not justifiable. The image of Syria as a terrorist was also present in Tobby Willig’s opinion, “Syria is still on the list of terrorist nations because it causes and foments terrors.”¹⁹¹

The image of Syria was contrasted with the image of Israel as “the foremost exponent of decency and democracy.”¹⁹² Israel was also portrayed as a victim whom “Bush/Baker tried to extort by brutality and rudeness,”¹⁹³ According to Yohanan Ramati, Israel is not only victimized by the Arabs but also by the American ‘hypocrisy.’ This duplicity is shown by America’s intention “that in the future Israel will not buy arms from America directly but through the Pentagon ... and have to pay an extra commission ...”¹⁹⁴ The image of Israel being victimized by the West was affirmed by Netanyahu, who stated

that the West “pressures Israel to make sweeping concessions while unremittingly seeking to appease its despot neighbors.”¹⁹⁵

In most of the op-eds, peace is discussed within a security frame. Accordingly, terrorism is highlighted in order to justify the strict demand for security as a condition for any peace agreement. On March 1, the author criticized Peres and Arafat for believing that the terrorist acts are ‘killing the peace’ and assured that “it isn’t the peace they [Palestinians] wish to kill, but the Jews, especially the Jews of Eretz Yisrael.”¹⁹⁶ On November 26, the author concluded, “Israel cannot go on sacrificing its land and its security to Western fantasies of peace ...”¹⁹⁷ The theme of American indifference is touched upon again. While America is dreaming its beautiful dreams, Israel is having nightmares.

In a March 10 editorial, the headline read, “A dangerous hypnosis” in which the author discovered a paradox, a type of peace that kills. Denouncing the peace process as “nothing more than a unilateral Israeli withdrawal” and portraying Israel as a dupe who is giving in to the “terrorist Palestinians” who have gotten “Gaza, West Bank autonomy, foreign aids, international recognition, their own police force,...”, the author further lamented that “in return Israel got what? A pat on the shoulder by the US.”¹⁹⁸ The attitude of ambivalence to the United States is compounded of hurt expectation, sarcasm at its ineptitude, and fury over its pragmatism. The writer argued that Israel was a very big loser while Palestinians were constant winners. Again, the peace process was portrayed as a kind of shell game in which cheaters win and honest people lose. The author concluded that peace is an “illusion” and a “deception.” Finally, the editorial reminded readers that “Arafat is the father of Palestinian terrorism”¹⁹⁹ and thus hope for an honorable peace is utterly vain.

It is very obvious in most of the editorials that the peace process is put in a historical context in which security frames dictate the selection and interpretation of events. For example, on June 24, the editorial read “it would be naïve to expect an Arab summit to call for less than a full Israeli withdrawal from the territories captured in the Six Day War-a war ... started by the Arabs and fueled by their determination to wipe Israel off the map....”²⁰⁰ This historical reminder justifies the legitimacy of Israel’s occupation of the land and question the Arabs’ ‘demand’ and ‘obsession’ in land for peace. On November 1, the writer quoted retired field marshal and Egyptian chief of staff, Abdel Ghani Gamassy, saying that the 1973 war ‘would not be the last war between us and the Jews.’²⁰¹

In addition to this historical context, the editorial, as in many others, also criticized the Arab regimes that “remain the last great outpost of depotism in the modern world”²⁰² thus questioning the accountability of their government even if peace were to be attained. Consequently, democracy is assumed to be an apparent precondition to peace. This belief is an important resource for Israel. It gives them a legitimate reason for not signing an Arab treaty in the eyes of the West.

Although Arab leaders were most heavily criticized, domestic leaders also received blame. While Peres was not attacked in op-eds, Binyamin Netanyahu got a fair share of criticism in the editorials. In a September 30 editorial, the writer commented, “the issue of the tunnel exit which touched off the current storm is a revealing indicator of the glib shallowness that has marked Netanyahu’s performance thus far”²⁰³ exhibiting Netanyahu as an inexperienced and unskillful leader who lacks “empathy” and is ignorant of how the Arabs “think and feel.” After Netanyahu came to power, doubts about the possibility of a peace agreement increased, the PM sharing blame with terrorists. On October 4, the editorial observed, “it is as essential as it is depressing to say straight out that there is no

way Binyamin Netanyahu's government and Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority will ever reach agreement."²⁰⁴ On December 4, the writer stated, "And Assad, seeing Netanyahu cave in after Arafat's aggression, recognized this fatal weakness in the prime minister"²⁰⁵ thus depicting even Netanyahu as a weak victim. On December 11, the writer questioned the credibility of Netanyahu, who "was voted in to give more weight to security" but now "must cast off his campaign rhetoric and proceed with the peace process outlined by the previous government."²⁰⁶

In general, the columns and editorials reflect a fearful and suspicious attitude toward peace. The editorials and opinions, which in effect communicate the opinion of the newspaper and its readers, reveal that The Jerusalem Post strongly doubts the authenticity of the peace process. This negative peace is a peace of victimization and domination. The Jerusalem Post and its readers view peace as a process of unilateral concession that threatens the security and existence of Israel and its people. Therefore, it is an 'unwanted' peace because the "exchanges" are judged to weaken Israel without guaranteeing its borders, people or national identity.

Finally, the pattern of metaphors in The Jerusalem Post tells a story of the return home after thousands of years. It is the story of people who were there since time and were made strangers and now they have returned home yet their lives are threatened and there seems no hope to live in their long lost home in peace and security. It is a story about people who seem to be obsessed with security to an extent that their only hope seems to keep tighten security on the borders rather than seeing peace as their only way to leave safely.

Notes

¹ Hillel Kuttler and Jon Immanuel, "Arafat: Burn the Earth under the Feet of the Occupiers," The Jerusalem Post 23 Mar. 1993: A1

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³ David Rudge, "Deportees Stage 'Death March' to Protest Peace Talks," The Jerusalem Post 18 Apr. 1993: A11.

⁴ David Makovsky and Hillel Kuttler, "Israel, Syria to Consider US Security Guarantees," The Jerusalem Post 17 June 1993: A9

⁵ Michal Yudelman, "Rabin Takes Blame for Peace Delay," The Jerusalem Post 28 June 1993:A11

⁷ Michal Yudelman, "Syria Hopes to Reach Separate Accord with Israel Next Week," The Jerusalem Post 3 Sept. 1993: A12.

⁸ Douglas Davis, "Hussein Warns against Leaving Jordan out of Pact," The Jerusalem Post 3 Sept. 1993: A2

⁹ "Hussein Backs Agreement Syria Praises Israeli 'Seriousness' in Talks" The Jerusalem Post 5 Sept. 1993: A3.

¹¹ David Makovsky, "'Time for Peace Has Come'. Israel, PLO Sign Accords; Rabin and Arafat Shake Hands. Peres: Yesterday a Dream, Today a Commitment," The Jerusalem Post 14 Sept. 1993: A1.

¹² "Progress in Multilateral Water Talks Reported," The Jerusalem Post 28 Oct. 1993: A1.

¹³ David Makovsky, "Peres: All Palestinians Could Move to Territories or Jordan in Final Status," The Jerusalem Post 23 Dec. 1993: A2.

¹⁵ "Syria Threatens Boycott of Peace Talks," The Jerusalem Post 17 Oct. 1993: A1

¹⁶ David Makovsky, "Nobody Expects Early Progress with Syria." The Jerusalem Post 19 Oct. 1993: A1

¹⁷ "Christopher Trying to 'Energize' Peace Talks with Syrians," The Jerusalem Post 6 Dec. 1993: A2.

¹⁸ David Rudge, Liat Collins, and Hillel Kuttler. "Barak Plays Down Progress in Syria Talks," The Jerusalem Post 1 Jan. 1996: A12.

¹⁹ Hillel Kuttler, "Syria: '96 Should Be the Year of Peace with Israel," The Jerusalem Post 3 Jan. 1996: A11.

²⁰ Liat Collins, "Peres: New Reality Has Been Created. PM Praises Palestinians, Settlers," The Jerusalem Post 3 Jan. 1996: A10.

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²² "Peres: Israel 'Going for Broke' in Talks with Syria," The Jerusalem Post 19 January 1996: A10.

²³ Liat Collins, "Barak: Kinneret, Jordan River Waters Must Stay in Our Hands," The Jerusalem Post 16 Jan. 1996: A14.

²⁴ Hillel Kuttler, and Liat Collins, "Peres: No Talk about Borders with Syria," The Jerusalem Post 24 Jan. 1996: A11.

²⁵ "Peres: Jerusalem not up for Negotiations," The Jerusalem Post 28 Jan. 1993: A14.

²⁶ "Syrians Agree to Broad Definition of Normalization. Israel Okays Donors to Aid Damascus," The Jerusalem Post 1 Feb. 1996: A11.

²⁷ Betsheva Tsur, "Gore Envisions Peace, Security," The Jerusalem Post 16 Jan. 1996: A7.

²⁸ Bill Hutman, "Orient House: Closing Us Down Would Deal Major Blow to Peace," The Jerusalem Post 5 July 1996: A14.

²⁹ "Mubarak: Not War, But Terrorism if Peace Process Stalls," The Jerusalem Post 7 July 1996: A9.

³⁰ Eldad Beck, and Hillel Kuttler, "PM: Peace With Pa More Likely Than with Syria: Levy Rejects Assad Demand to Renew Talks Where Left Off," The Jerusalem Post 11 Sept. 1996: A12.

³¹ Eldad Beck, Hillel Kuttler, David Makovsky, Arie O'sullivan, and Bill Hutman "PM in Paris: Rioting Was Not Spontaneous," The Jerusalem Post 26 Sept. 1996: A11.

³² David Makovsky, and Liat Collins, "Arafat's Stalling on Hebron Talks Irks Government," The Jerusalem Post 17 Oct. 1996: A11.

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³⁴ David Makovsky, Jon Immanuel, and Batsheva Tsur, "Erekat: Four Points Divide Israelis and Palestinians," The Jerusalem Post 29 Oct. 1996: A10.

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³⁹ "Hussein Criticizes Israeli Construction in Territories," The Jerusalem Post 24 Nov. 1996: A10.

⁴⁰ "Hussein Criticizes" A10.

⁴¹ David Makovsky and Arie O'sullivan, "Pm Rejects Arab Verbal Attack, Mordechai Tells Bassiouny: Belligerent Talk Doesn't Help Anybody," The Jerusalem Post 2 Dec. 1996: A13.

⁴² Rudge, Collins and Kuttler, "Barak" A12.

⁴³ "Syria Announces Readiness for 'Continuous' Peace Talks. Christopher Arrives to Help Speed Negotiations," The Jerusalem Post 11 Jan. 1996: A11.

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⁴⁵ Kuttler, "Better" A10.

⁴⁶ David Makovsky, "Netanyahu, Clinton to Discuss Withdrawal from Lebanon," The Jerusalem Post 5 July 1996: A11.

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⁵³ Kuttler, "Syria" A11.

⁵⁴ Hillel Kuttler, "Ross: 6 Days More Productive Than Last 4 Years of Talks," The Jerusalem Post 7 Jan. 1996: A11.

⁵⁵ Steve Rodan Amman, "Hussein: There Will Be Comprehensive Peace," The Jerusalem Post 6 Feb. 1996: A9.

⁵⁶ "Hussein Criticizes" A10.

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⁵⁸ Liat Collins, "PM, Peres Clash as New Knesset Session Opens," The Jerusalem Post 8 Oct. 1996: A10.

⁵⁹ Makovsky, David, David Rudge and Bill Hutman. "Shahal: I Prefer True Peace to Golan." The Jerusalem Post 3 May 1993: A10.

⁶⁰ "Hussein Backs" A3.

⁶¹ "Clinton to Meet Assad in January," The Jerusalem Post 10 Dec. 1993: A2.

⁶² Kuttler, "Ross" A11.

⁶³ David Makovsky, "Arafat Brinkmanship behind Delay," The Jerusalem Post 22 Apr. 1993: A9.

⁶⁴ Collins, "Barak" A14.

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⁶⁷ Tom Gross, "A Delicate Task Ahead," The Jerusalem Post 22 Nov. 1996: A8.

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⁷⁹ David Makovsky, "Rabin: EC Dragging Feet in Peace Process." The Jerusalem Post 25 Oct. 1993: A2

⁸⁰ Collins, "Peres" A10.

⁸¹ Collins, "Peres" A10.

⁸² Honig, "Netanyahu" A12.

⁸³ "Peres: Israel" A10.

⁸⁴ Honig, "Peres Calls" A11.

⁸⁵ Reuben A1

⁸⁶ "Peres to Arabs: Let's Negotiate Openly," The Jerusalem Post 1 Oct. 1993: A3

⁸⁷ "Peres to Arabs" A3.

⁸⁸ David Makovsky, "Peres: All Palestinians Could Move to Territories or Jordan in Final Status," The Jerusalem Post 23 Dec. 1993: A2

⁸⁹ Honig, "Peres Calls" A11.

⁹⁰ "Israel Claims Summit Victory," The Jerusalem Post 3 Oct. 1996: A11.

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⁹³ Mark Hillel, "It is a Good Plan, But ...," The Jerusalem Post 13 Dec. 1996: A15.

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- ⁹⁶ David Rudge, "A Well-Coordinated" A1.
- ⁹⁷ David Makovsky, "Nobody Expects Early Progress with Syria," The Jerusalem Post 19 Oct. 1993: A2.
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CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION, INTERPRETATION, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Synopsis of the Study

The Arab-Israeli conflict has now entered its fifth decade. Despite a decade of peace negotiation, the conflict still seems far from being resolved. Most of the research involving the Arab-Israeli conflict dealt with the historical and political aspect of the conflict. Although it is the leaders of both parties who are most directly involved in peace negotiations, the role of the Arab-Israeli media as a shaper of opinion has been conspicuous. Few scholars examined the rhetorical strategies of leadership. No one has looked at the role of the Arab-Israeli press in framing the peace process. It has been the aim of my study to explore the nature and type of the media framing during the most intense years of peace negotiations. The discourse of the Arab and Israeli Press regarding the peace negotiations is an important matter because the press plays a major role in shaping the perception of the Arab and Israeli public opinion regarding peace talks.

Discussion

After reviewing the peace discourse of major Arab and Israeli newspapers, this study does not draw optimistic conclusions. Although both leading newspapers speak about peace, land, and security, the words bear different meanings for their audiences. Arab writers view land as a kind of birthright, a return to a lost homeland. Israeli writers see land as a concession, a loss of hard won territory and the end of security. Thus nationhood and legitimacy for one side translates as encirclement and weakness for the other side. Beyond the most rudimentary agreement there is little consensus between the papers. Each seems adept at finding the fault-lines of each issue and exploiting these

divisions. Both papers use the same phrases and discuss the same issues, but they are coded differently. In some cases the meanings are nearly opposite. Concessions are seen by Israelis as a one-sided give away program. For the Arabs they amount to the payment of a longstanding debt and the mere inexorable reconciliation of Israeli's right to exist. Thus the communal narratives of each side point to different values, means, and goals.

What is the end game? For third parties like the United States, the goal has always been a nearly borderless Middle East, organized on principles of free trade, high technology, and movement of goods, services and labor. The United States then sees the world in secular, deracinated and assimilationist terms. This doctrine seems an odd one to part of the world that did not experience the European Enlightenment. As the founding of the Jewish state recedes into the distance, the Israeli vision of the future has become more pluralistic, but the changes have moved into fits and starts. The former PM, Peres had moved over a 15 year period from a hawkish position to something not too far from the secular detribalized state envisioned by the United States. Recent failures of the process and the outbreak of border clashes have put Ariel Sharon, the hero of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, back in power. So far this hardliner seems more interested in fortifying the borders than in changing them and the Peace Process has broken down.

How did the logic of the Peace Process accord with the goals of the leadership and was it supported by either Arab or Israeli newspapers? The basic concept seems to have been one of gradualism. If incremental changes were successful, more difficult changes would follow and finally a tide of change would fundamentally alter the political and cultural climate of the region. For example, the Oslo process of 1993 was structured as a stair-step ascent. The least dramatic and polarizing issues would be dealt with first. It began well enough, moving through easy stages and resolving easy issues. Yassir Arafat

embraced Yitzak Rabin at the White House in 1993 and signed a declaration condemning violence as an apolitical strategy. Shortly afterward, his Palestinian Authority was given control of a large part of the famous Gaza strip. This is, as everyone on both sides knew, a windy desert and one of the least desirable pieces of the land in the region. These were to be followed by a schedule of withdrawals and consolidations. Finally, the really brutal issues could be saved to the close, and that early momentum would aid their resolution.

Probably the most difficult issues were hegemony in Jerusalem (most importantly the disposition of places like the Temple Mount) and the problematic status of Palestinian refugees. Everyone knows the story: the assassination of Rabin and the failure of Barak, the rejection by Arafat of the Jerusalem Plan and the entry of the Temple Mount by Sharon and his cadre smashed the hopes of the peacemakers.

The polarizing rhetoric of the newspapers was in fact a more accurate guide to the course of events than the discourse of the leaders who speak to an international community of Middle Eastern states, Western powers and populations in diasporas all over the globe as well as to their local constituencies. The suspicion, the paranoia, the quick changes of outlook, the expressed lack of faith in negotiation, and the enduring faith in military force are the consistent hallmarks of the newspaper coverage. As we have seen problems were seldom framed in terms of the long-term agenda of the nation, but as strategies between hostile parties. They were seen as small struggles for advantage in an interminable war rather than solutions that would contribute to a final outcome of harmony, order, peace, and prosperity. So called pluralistic discussion dissolves into monistic commonplace.

The results of the study are filled with irony. Villains and heroes are described in the same term. Roles are reversed. Both press use terms such as “hypocrite,” “aggressor”, “incapable”, “betrayor”, and “manipulators” to refer to the opposite party maintaining at

the same time an image of 'good will hunter' with regards to their respective party. In other words, the villain in one press is treated as a victim in the other and vice versa.

There is a striking difference in the frequency in which a particular term is used. In quoting their sources, each press selectively emphasizes one term far more than the other. For example, Assafir would refer most often to 'settlement' as an "agon" to peace, such as citing the Egyptian Foreign minister as saying, "the politics of settlements is very dangerous to peace."¹ The Jerusalem Post, on the other hand, would focus on 'terrorism' and 'peace' as opposite or agonist pairs as in "Mubarak: No war, but Terrorism if peace stalls."²

Furthermore, in their characterization of actors, both papers followed almost the same strategy reflecting a similar agenda setting geared toward supporting two different groups. Through selective citation and direct commentary, each paper tends to portray their leadership as wise, moral, and capable. For example, while The Jerusalem Post portrayed Peres as a generous benefactor and open minded leader, Assafir portrayed him as a fragile leader whose credibility in the Arab world is questioned. On the other hand, while Assafir portrayed Assad as a confident person and a man of peace, The Jerusalem Post portrayed him a supporter of terrorism.

Moreover, the image of victimhood is present in both presses but attached to two different parties. Assafir highlights the image of the Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular, as victims whose land has been taken away from them and who are abused by the atrocities of the occupier. The Jerusalem Post, on the other hand, emphasizes the image of Israel as a victim because of the terrorist danger that it faces from its Arab neighbors. Both papers portray the party they represent as the one who is sacrificing a lot while the opponent does nothing but practices opportunism. Moreover, both papers highlighted the

image of the opponent as an obstructor to “peace.” For example, Assafir depicted Israel as a ‘cruel’ actor who is imposing a hunger siege on the Palestinians that may damage the peace process and who is “discussing the issue of peace with a war mentality.”³ On the contrary, The Jerusalem Post portrays Syria as a stubborn actor who is not willing to talk peace. Occasionally, Assafir would quote sources saying negative things about Syria, but these criticisms were rare and muted.

This mirror image of good and evil leadership is one that defeats trust. If one party builds up its leadership as honorable and wise and its opponent’s leadership as weak, devious and immoral, all support for negotiation is gravely weakened. Any agreements will be seen as suspect and fragile. One’s own leaders will be constantly scrutinized and second-guessed. Has our leader been fooled? Is the leader a victim of guile? Does he really mean what he says about agreements or are his pronouncements merely strategic? On what level is his rhetoric to be seen as a smoke screen and on what level as honest persuasion? Is he speaking in code? And is the code intended for the opponent, for the nation, or for some powerful third party?

And what happens when the leader fails? Is it a betrayal by the enemy or is it a serious miscalculation by the leader? How does a press explain failure when it uses a cycle of dramatic swings between optimism and pessimism? Since both papers tend to promulgate an atmosphere of wild hopes and fears, what is the ultimate effect on the citizenry? Does the constant reprisal of this family romance finally do utter doubt and cynicism? Or has large public mood swung as a kind of discursive ritual? Leaders fail and fall from office regularly to be replaced by new champions and challenges. There is a Biblical expectancy of apocalyptic hope and fear. Thus an intense nationalism is kept alive at a time when it has grown weaker in the old areas of its origin in Europe and North America.

Moreover, as both papers cited their sources of information, they emphasized similar images and metaphors that cluster with peace. Both reported about a 'fair', 'comprehensive', and 'just' peace in the region. Both used natural terms to describe peace. Both talk about 'warm' peace and 'cold' peace. Both treated peace as a business deal or a merchandise that can only be "sold" if a good price is paid. Both papers treated peace as a person with a soul. Failure can stick "a nail in its coffin,"⁴ and send the soul into "isolation and retreat."⁵

Similar terms repeated themselves but were treated differently. Both papers refer to normalization, security, water, and land. However, while The Jerusalem Post employed normalization, security and water as peace clusters, Assafir used them as opposing agons of domination. On the other hand, while Assafir associated land with peace, The Jerusalem Post used it as an agon of insecurity. In other words, what was used as a cluster in one press became an agon in the other. For example, The Jerusalem Post cited an Israeli official source as saying, "[Palestinians] know that for us peace without security means nothing,"⁶ while Assafir cites an Arab source as saying, "Syria wants to achieve a peace that ends the full occupation, and that returns the land to its owners."⁷ Given the tutelary role of the press, the two peoples are being schooled in opposite doxa.

In addition, as each newspaper portrays the other party as the villain, its proponent as the victim, it instills hatred towards the other making it impossible to accept or even to believe in the necessity and possibility to live peacefully with the villain.

The rhetorical framing of the peace process in both papers creates a particular discourse that is specifically related to the Middle East and to peace negotiations between parties involved in similar conflict. The discourse of peace in these presses revealed the power of metaphors, images, symbols and frames in creating a cultural discourse that is

specifically pertinent to the conflicting parties of the Middle East. It is a discourse of peace that is surrounded with discourse of violence, victimhood, and accusations. Such discourse makes it almost impossible to see any opportunity for cooperation and peaceful resolutions. In fact, as peace is defined in many different ways, the goals and means seem not only complex, but perhaps contradictory as well. And it is this form of knowledge that becomes the meta-text of citizen conversation and the conventionalized speech of the leadership in each nation.

An odd ritual dominates stories about peace. Hope and fear, promise and pessimism alternate with dreary regularity. The left hand takes what the right hand gives. Thus, most of the reports about peace are accompanied with news about violence precipitated by both sides and by accusations against the other party. In other words, whenever both presses report optimistic news about the progress of the peace process, it is followed (often in the same news story) by some negative news, which reflects a sort of double-minded attitude toward peace.

However, the content of peace news differs between both papers. Assafir, on one hand, most frequently refers to Israel's violation of UN resolutions and to Israeli settlement in the occupied territories thus reflecting a lack of trust in Israel's intention to achieve peace and as a result affecting the public's confidence in Israel's will for peace. The Jerusalem Post, on the other hand, emphasizes Arab violence in the occupied territories as it reports about peace. Interrupting the positive news about peace with negative news indirectly reflects the papers' deep uneasiness about peace.

Furthermore, contextualization of peace is also present in the reporting of accusations that were exchanged between the negotiating parties. In The Jerusalem Post, most of the reports focus on Israel accusing the Arabs of obstructing peace, threatening the

peace process, refusing compromise and being greedy. Likewise, Assafir focused on Arabs' accusations of Israel and Israeli leaders "emptying the peace negotiations of its content,"⁸ and "choosing revenge as its prominent option in the peace talks."⁹ In other words, the framing of peace in both presses appears in the middle of a war of words that is exchanged between the conflicting parties each accusing the other of obstructing the peace process, jeopardizing any chance for achieving peace, or of using peace to exploit and hoodwink others.

Rhetorical Implications

Although the two papers frame the issues differently, and privilege different clusters of words, they seem oddly similar. Both papers engage in a rhetoric of stasis. It is as if opposing newspapers have decided to cooperate. In effect the two papers operate in tandem. For both papers each proposal of the peace process is viewed with suspicion and every motive of the leadership is questioned. The result is a kind of stasis.

Thus both papers seem to cooperate in producing a deadlock. One might draw an analogy with social movements in the United States. The Movement to Ban Weapons and the National Rifle Association seem to be mirror images of each other. The God terms of one may be the devil terms of another. While guns represent security to many members of the NRA, they represent danger to members of the Gun Control Movement. Right to life and Freedom of Choice organizations in the abortion debates show vocabularies that privilege opposite words or redefine the meaning of each other's most cherished terms. While such groups show rhetorical movement and change over decades, they often seem to interlock with each other in a rhetoric of inaction.

Such rhetoric becomes predictable and ritualized. It tends to eliminate the middle ground. In a highly charged situation, the middle position is often ridiculed by both sides as weak.

Finally, the rhetoric of the two papers has become so ritualized, so repetitious and so clichéd that it seems to sabotage creativity. Readers look in vain for novelty, for fresh approaches, for fresh frames, and dynamic new metaphors. A kind of negative peace, a low level of angry stability may be the result of a steady diet of this sort of reporting.

No doubt new events will change the rhetorical situation and create new opportunities for negotiation. At present writing, the only change that is happening is rather bleak. Recent struggles over the status of holy places in Jerusalem suggests an Islamization or Judicization of the sacred city has become a political objective. Struggle over land and resources is very difficult but struggle over symbolic resources (religion and historical identity) is much more fierce. This reframing of the issue of control of Jerusalem makes progress toward peace immensely more difficult. Given the track record of the rival newspapers, one has little faith that they will rise to the occasion with careful, objective, and imaginative coverage of the incredibly difficult task of nation building and land sharing.

Major Contribution of the Study

This dissertation revealed one unexpected finding. That is the idea that rival perspectives can be collaborative as well as competitive. In the first chapter, the work of frame theorists such as Entman of North Carolina and Kuypers at Dartmouth was cited. Entman is the founder of frame theory and Kuypers one of its major practitioners. Both scholars assume that political discourse is a struggle between agents with rival perspectives. Kuypers has studied the struggle between the press and the executive branch

over the framing and control of foreign policy. Entman typically studies rival campaigns in which one candidate triumphs over another by imposing his or her perspective upon the voting public.

My study demonstrates that rival perspectives cooperate. Each advocated a different set of goals. Yet both cooperated in spreading an atmosphere of fear, passivity and pessimism. This unexpected finding suggests greater complexity and irony in the study of rhetorical framing. Long ago, Kenneth Burke suggested that competition on one level might generate cooperation on another level, but gave only anecdotal examples. This study is an extended example of the ironic rhetorical event in which an apparent struggle over small issues operated as a cooperative venture in stasis (blockage) on another.

Suggestions for Future Study

While this study examines the construction of political perspectives in major newspapers serving rival communities, it might be extended in the following ways for future research. One might look at televised news in the two communities to determine whether the language and graphics of this other medium reinforces, modifies, or contradicts these printed sources. One might also attempt to discover the actual effects of the press on its readers and the relationship between the press and the government. Further, one might execute a content analysis of governmental speeches to determine if the same patterns of framing and imagery are dominant in the discourse of politicians. One might also note that the predictability of the press might make it an easy target for manipulation by all sorts of political constituencies in the region. This could be done by a study of citations in underground presses of splinter groups. Finally, it would be worth knowing if the press covered those political figures that “framed” their discourse in a similar way or ignored those who articulated rival frames.

It seems apparent that the use of framing patterns contributed less to the understanding of the dilemma than the patterns of imagery. In a future study, one might look at the role of image in the creation and maintenance of political stasis.

Perhaps another way of looking at the articles will be through Burke's Pentad. Throughout the analysis, there seems to be a trend where peace was sometimes referred to as an agent, and other times as the agency. A reading of the articles through the Pentad may uncover common grounds for negotiations that framing and metaphorical analysis failed to unveil.

It is worth noting that the author of this study is Lebanese and thus belongs to one side of the conflict. Although the author tried to maintain a good level of scientific objectivity in data analysis and interpretation, however, ideally, it would have been better if a second individual who belongs to neither sides of the conflict coded the data and assured a reliable and valid analysis.

In the future I hope to look at more creative and hopeful uses of metaphor. I should like to study how imagery opens rather than limits options and creates fresh ways of seeing solutions.

Notes

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⁷ “Khaddam Accuses Netanyahu of Aggressiveness: Israel Wants a Peace of Force,” Assafir 17 Oct. 1996: A1.

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VITA

The Ph.D. candidate was born in Monrovia, Liberia on February 13, 1969. In 1992, she graduated with a ^bBachelor of ^aArts in English Literature and Language from the University of Balamand, Lebanon. In 1993, the University of Balamand granted her a scholarship to pursue her ^mMasters at Boston University. In December 1995, she graduated with a ^mMasters of Science in ^sMass ^{um}Communication and flew back to Lebanon where she taught ^mMass communication courses at Notre Dame University. She was an instructor ^{until}till August 1997 when she entered the Department of Speech Communication at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge as a Ph.D. candidate.

Upon completion of the course work and the general exam in May 1999, she flew to the United Arab Emirates where she taught communication courses at the American University of Sharjah. She served as the coordinator of the Communication Committee that developed the ^mCommunication Major. Her responsibilities were to supervise the curriculum development and to ensure that the major meets the criteria for accreditation.

In January 2001, she was appointed Research and Training consultant at Starcom MediaVest Group, a leading media agency worldwide. In June 2001, she left the American University of Sharjah to become the Regional Head of Research and Training at Starcom MediaVest Group for the Middle East and North Africa.

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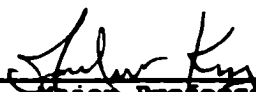
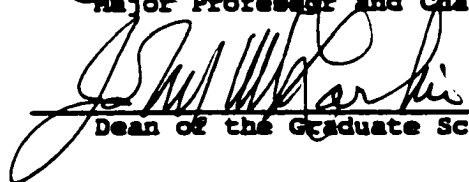
Major Field:

Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation:

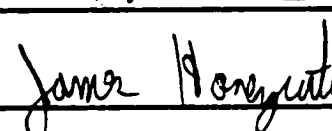
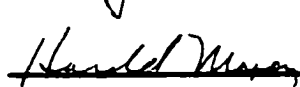
Framing and Counterframing of the Middle East Peace Process in the Arab-Israeli Press: A Comparative Analysis of Assafir and The Jerusalem Post

Approved:


Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:




Date of Examination:

October 26, 2001