

**Harvard Conference Speech at the  
Minda de Gunzberg Center for  
European Studies**

*The Transformation of Intractable  
Conflicts III – Challenges and  
Perspectives for Interactive Problem  
Solving and Conflict Resolution*

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*The Comprehensive Approach to  
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Resolution*

Thank you Dr. Roy, Professor Kelman. Distinguished guests, it is good to be back.

First off, I consider it only appropriate to mark some quite striking anniversaries in our field, some in celebration, and others conflictual.

90 years after Professor Kelman's birth, we salute you, Herb, for your pioneering work on the social psychology of conflicts. Over the past few years here at Harvard, drawing on our respective efforts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the 1970s – when we first met – it has been a great pleasure contributing to and collaborating with the Kelman Institute with a view to leaving a legacy.

March 18<sup>th</sup>, the last day of this conference and Herb's birthday, is also the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of the great and successful risks for peace of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which led, ultimately, to the end of apartheid in South Africa.

Hanging in the balance was the fate of millions, and this true statesman of a leader – shoulder to shoulder with Nelson Mandela – had the extraordinary courage and resolve to forge a new vision for his country and see it through.

Here, a forum on the resolution of intractable conflicts, we were so fortunate to have Nobel Laureate and former South African President FW de Klerk share with us his wisdom on what it takes to achieve the impossible and resolve an intractable conflict. We could indeed use a de Klerk and a Mandela on the inside of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

By March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1992, through referendum, President de Klerk's vision for ending apartheid had, by a large majority, gained the backing of White South Africans. This was his trigger for comprehensive and successful negotiations with the ANC.

It happens that March 18<sup>th</sup> is also President de Klerk's birthday, and that President de Klerk and I were born the same year and only three days apart. I note the auspicious timing of this event! And I extend my most sincere birthday wishes to President de Klerk as well!

While we have cause to celebrate, we are here to consider conflict.

Rather than bring hope, Oslo served as a choke to the Palestinian people.

Formally, Oslo never even put a two-state solution on the table in the first place. Having gone the wrong way, the two-state solution has so far proved to be a mirage rather than a realistic prospect.

Instead of moving in the direction of statehood and security, the forces of domination and inequality were given a free rein. We should know by now that Israeli security is *dependent* upon Palestinian statehood, and that Israel's domination of the Palestinians only reflects and fuels Israel's insecurity. As land over which the future Palestinian state is meant to take shape continues to be eroded, the argument that Israel can somehow get by without peace erodes with it.

None the wiser, we look ahead at a series of conflictual milestones this year. They speak for themselves.

August marks the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Herzl's First Zionist Congress in Basel.

In November it will be both the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balfour Declaration and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the original proposal for a two-state solution.

In June it will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the occupation.

And at the end of this month it will be the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arab Peace Initiative.

It is as though realities on the ground were not enough for us to embrace core values – values of peace, security, self-determination, democracy, justice, and equality – and to act upon them! Given these anniversaries, the volatility of the subject matter, and the facts on the ground, it should not be a stretch of the imagination to consider that 2017 could be a threshold year on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We have to think about which selection we make, putting the gear in drive or reverse – because we know that there is no park option.

I do believe that the regional geopolitical constellation is supportive of a negotiated agreement being reached. And I believe that following its failure in its first incarnation since

the peace process began in the 1990s, the intellectual framework is now there to get the two-state solution right the second time round. Though the current Israeli-Palestinian political predicament paints a gloomy picture, I am optimistic. I am optimistic because – as Abba Eban once said, tongue in cheek – men and nations behave wisely once they have exhausted all other alternatives.

Thus, we, gathered here today, should aim to have, by the end of this conference, some thoughts as to how we take these anniversaries – which press so hard on raw nerves – and, with time, respectfully confine them to the history books.

Herb, drawing on your insights into psychology, you have understood that the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be rooted in the uncomfortable but inescapable reality that both sides have a deep attachment to all of the land. We have these insights in common.

These insights have informed my, at times, unpopular positions and efforts from the early 1970s onward. While I understood that the overlapping attachment to all of the land needs to be built into the solution, it was – and still is – also

clear to me that nothing short of full sovereignty and national identity on both sides will do. If you will, two states means two states.

Back in 1973 – before the PLO was declared the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab League – I was already looking beyond the basic two states for two peoples formula.

What are we talking about here? Calls for confederative models may become relevant at a later stage, particularly if we broaden the idea to encompass a more balanced Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian formulation.

And, quite rightly, President Abbas has recently made it clear that one-state, interim, or regional initiatives – the latter looking at the conflict from the outside in, as opposed to the inside-out – will not help achieve peace.

So let us not get ahead of ourselves. We must first be clear on how we get to two states. And, as we embark on this journey, let us not distract ourselves.

And this is the point. Back in 1973, I was looking *beyond* the formulation that decades later we would become accustomed to of “*two states coexisting side by side in peace and security*”. And I started to consider the *imperative of implementation*: how do we get there?

To refer to my 1974 Stanley Foundation paper, using the Hebron settlers as a stand-out example, I could not see how the evacuation of settlers *alone* could ever be feasible. We needed to think about settlers in a different way. On the one hand, we were – indeed we still are today – dealing with the forces of strong emotional attachment to land backed up by might. On the other hand, there appeared to be a *reconciliatory and democratic necessity* of having some coexistence between two peoples within not just one state but two states. This is still the case, and Israel’s state of continuous anxiety reminds us of this. Thus the following was clear to me then as it is now over 40 years later: the need to consider the respective minority presence in each of the states as a “*vehicle for acceptance*” throughout the two-state solution.

It was upon these intellectual foundations that, in 1975, the year after PLO recognition by the Arab world, I testified

alongside an Israeli counterpart in support of a two-state solution before subcommittees of both Houses of the U.S. Congress. Criticized by both Israelis and Palestinians, the joint testimony was a first in the history of the conflict.

And it was thus that, 10 years ago, after a parallel career in physics and then international development, I realized that these ideas had not lost any of their relevance. Quite the contrary, the startling facts on the ground since Oslo had made the argument much more compelling. My meetings in subsequent years on both sides of the conflict as well as in the international community confirmed this. My discussions with Hilik have been one good example.

At the first of this series of Harvard conferences on intractable conflicts in March 2014, I tried to introduce fresh language to Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution.

If we do not accept the reality of each side having an *irredenta* on the other side – if we do not build these overlapping attachments to the other side's land into the two-state solution – then we will only encourage *irredentism*.

In other words, wholesale denial of realities on the ground only serves to feed the conflict. And – if we are to see peace, security, and self-determination – it is crucial to reach out to all constituencies in this conflict, including and *especially* the toughest, in accordance with the principles of democracy, justice, and equality. If we do not, then those constituencies will not fail to make themselves known.

If we are to learn from the mistakes of the past, then we must not give into our base desires to effect a clinical, ethnic separation, where such separation is not even possible, let alone would it be sustainable.

So, returning to first principles, yes, *political* separation is not only possible but an absolute necessity. However, if we think outside of the box, we should be able to reach beyond Oslo and Geneva. And then just maybe we will get to Jerusalem, where, once again, I thought it wiser to spend most of my time!

Under the old paradigm, a two-state solution would see Israeli annexation of prime Palestinian land close to the Green Line in order to absorb the majority of Israeli settlers. This annexed land would then be swapped with the

Palestinians for equally sized but inferior quality land in Israel. As for the remaining “remote” settlers, they would be evacuated.

As time elapses, this annex-swap-evacuate approach will become even more convoluted. The direction toward which it is moving us is of a Palestinian pseudo-state, choked off from Jerusalem, bisected north-by-south, with pan-handles poking into it, and a competitor for the most complicated borders regime in the world. This is no way to secure Palestinians’ or – for that matter – Israelis’ future.

Keeping in mind the trauma of the 2005 Gaza disengagement – which was of a far smaller scale in respect of land of far lesser importance to Israelis – it would simply not be feasible in this day and age – politically, economically, or physically – to evacuate many or most of the remaining 80,000-120,000 so-called remote settlers from the West Bank. And how would efforts to create an ethnically homogenous Palestinian state impact the relationship between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel? Is it really an inward-looking, suspicious two-state solution that we want? If our two-state solution is not socially cohesive – if it is not underpinned by

democracy, justice, and equality – then a formal agreement would only see the conflict take on a new guise.

The peace process has been more of a pieces process. It has been a history of the interim approach to conflict resolution. With no clearly defined vision and a multiplication of obligations, the interim approach has encouraged the parties to dig their heels in rather than show flexibility or courage. Though formally the diplomatic community has moved away from interim agreements, as long as the issues in dispute are not fully integrated into the conflict resolution mechanism, we are still subscribing to an interim culture. Considering where we are now with President Trump's efforts to restart negotiations, this does indeed also apply to attempts to effect a settlement freeze as much as it would to any other attempt to achieve results on a step-by-step, issue-by-issue basis. Truly, nothing short of a comprehensive framework for final status negotiations will do to bring the parties to fruitful negotiations.

A two-state model and approach which are not fit for purpose only serve to strengthen the rejectionist camp. But there is another way of achieving political separation.

In physics we are encouraged to look for simple and elegant solutions. Accordingly, I put forward a simple and elegant proposal at the first Harvard conference.

Israel and Palestine, two independent but co-operative, democratic and sovereign nation states, Israel with a permanent Arab minority enjoying full citizenship rights, and Palestine with a permanent Jewish minority enjoying full citizenship rights.

At the second Harvard conference, I went into detail explaining how you achieve such a vision: a comprehensive framework for final status negotiations built around the win-win outcomes we make possible when we allow a settler option to remain as a fully integrated Jewish minority under Palestinian sovereignty. Of course, this must be subject to reciprocity implications in negotiations. After 50 years of illegal occupation and denial of statehood, the Palestinian people would rightly accept nothing less than genuine reciprocity. But then, if we have truly understood that there is nothing in between win-win and lose-lose – yes, the possibility of win-lose in this conflict is an illusion – this should be self-evident. We should be looking at these win-win outcomes we open up when we input a settler option to

remain under Palestinian sovereignty into a framework as a way of jumpstarting equitable trade-off across the full range of final status issues, security, borders, Jerusalem, refugees, and natural resources.

The framework document incorporating these ideas, which I made available to key players in advance of the July 2013 – April 2014 official Kerry-led negotiations is now available on the Kelman Institute website. I believe that it can be *our* trigger for comprehensive and successful Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The framework's uniqueness lies in its comprehensiveness. It brought the settler issue into the system of give and take for the first time, thus ensuring that all issues in dispute can be placed on the table. In the process, through the newly-introduced compromise, it created a mechanism for achieving maximized trade-off. This was another first.

It is true that the possibility of a Jewish minority staying under Palestinian sovereignty has been considered before. However, it has only been considered at the final status – not the framework – level. This means that it has been

considered as a left-over issue, and not as a – or, rather, the – catalyst for negotiations.

Brought into the framework, it can be the open sesame, inspiring a different approach to the key issues. Putting people first, it can define a new relationship between Arabs and Jews, Israelis and Palestinians. Placed in the regional context which we often talk about, it is this which means that, while the Arab Peace Initiative is the door that we would like to walk through, the Dual Democracies Initiative is the key to open that door.

The framework is both a means of successfully entering into negotiations, and of reaching final status agreement. On the entry level, the framework offers an alternative to procedurally inadequate preconditions. As we saw under the last U.S. administration's attempts to broker peace, preconditions unnecessarily elevated what should have been merely goodwill gestures, such as halting settlement growth or releasing prisoners, to the level of deal breakers. Equally during final status negotiations, the comprehensive vision of the framework can ease – and ultimately reverse – the tactical hardening of the parties' bargaining positions by providing the parties with the sense of direction and bigger

picture they need to stay the course, through deadlocks, to final status agreement.

While – understandably – many Israelis may not feel comfortable living under Palestinian rule, equally, many Israelis in the settlements with whom I have spoken would seek an option to remain under Palestinian sovereignty as a preference to displacement. Let us listen to these voices.

And let us consider the issue of recognition within the two-state solution differently, by moving away from recognition through words to *recognition through deeds*, and from unilateral demands of Palestinian recognition of the Jewish nature of Israel, to *mutual* recognition. We are currently stumbling upon this hurdle, and it is not hard to see why when we look at the issue from a Palestinian perspective. The Palestinian people will never sign up to a recognition formulation until they can see that, in so doing, the rights of their Palestinian Arab minority in Israel as well as their rights to self-determination within a two-state solution are assured. By shifting recognition from words to deeds and from one-way demands to mutual participation, it will be possible to clear this hurdle. By bringing the Dual Democracies model into the heart of negotiations – and

thereby introducing balance to the old Israel-PLO mutual recognition formula – the issue of mutual recognition will not be insurmountable.

Let us move the two-state solution into the zone of co-operation, *simplifying* conflict resolution. Building an emotionally resonant approach to conflict resolution which addresses respective fears and hopes, may be our best chance of bringing peace within reach.

As President Trump considers out of the box options, there is much in what I have just laid out that responds to his ambitious desire to reach the “*ultimate*” deal.

Thank you.