

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-68668-7 — Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War  
Amnon Aran  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

## Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War

This is the first study of Israeli foreign policy towards the Middle East and selected world powers including China, India, the European Union and the United States since the end of the Cold War. It provides an integrated account of these foreign policy spheres and serves as an essential historical context for the domestic political scene during these pivotal decades. The book demonstrates how foreign policy is shaped by domestic factors, which are represented as three concentric circles of decision-makers, the security network and Israeli national identity. Told from this perspective, Amnon Aran highlights the contributions of the central individuals, societal actors, domestic institutions and political parties that have informed and shaped Israeli foreign policy decisions, implementation and outcomes. Aran demonstrates that Israel has pursued three foreign policy stances since the end of the Cold War – entrenchment, engagement and unilateralism – and explains why.

AMNON ARAN is Senior Lecturer in International Politics of the Middle East at City, University of London where his main research focuses on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the foreign policy of Middle Eastern states. He has contributed to the EU's Middle East Peace Task Force and he comments on Middle Eastern affairs for the BBC, Bloomberg, *Financial Times* and the *Guardian*.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-68668-7 — Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War  
Amnon Aran  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

*Cambridge Middle East Studies*

Editorial Board

Charles Tripp (general editor)  
Julia Clancy-Smith  
F. Gregory Gause  
Yezid Sayigh  
Avi Shlaim  
Judith E. Tucker

**Cambridge Middle East Studies** has been established to publish books on the nineteenth- to twenty-first-century Middle East and North Africa. The series offers new and original interpretations of aspects of Middle Eastern societies and their histories. To achieve disciplinary diversity, books are solicited from authors writing in a wide range of fields including history, sociology, anthropology, political science, and political economy. The emphasis is on producing books affording an original approach along theoretical and empirical lines. The series is intended for students and academics, but the more accessible and wide-ranging studies will also appeal to the interested general reader.

*A list of books in the series can be found after the index.*

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-68668-7 — Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War  
Amnon Aran  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

# Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War

---

Amnon Aran

*City, University of London*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-68668-7 — Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War  
Amnon Aran  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107686687](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107686687)

DOI: 10.1017/9781107280618

© Amnon Aran 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

First paperback edition 2022

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-1-107-05249-9 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-68668-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-68668-7 — Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War  
Amnon Aran  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

To my family

Contents

|                                           |                |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>List of Maps</i>                       | <i>page</i> ix |
| <i>List of Figures</i>                    | x              |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>                   | xi             |
| <i>Chronology</i>                         | xiii           |
| <i>List of Abbreviations</i>              | xx             |
| Introduction                              | 1              |
| 1 Entrenchment                            | 12             |
| 2 Redirection                             | 33             |
| 3 On the Brink of Peace?                  | 59             |
| 4 Engagement Incomplete                   | 87             |
| 5 Engagement under Assault                | 104            |
| 6 The Dividends of Engagement             | 124            |
| 7 Unpicking the Oslo Accords              | 148            |
| 8 Backtracking                            | 169            |
| 9 Just Beyond Reach                       | 195            |
| 10 Between Engagement and Unilateralism   | 215            |
| 11 In Search of a Foreign Policy Paradigm | 239            |
| 12 A Perfect Storm                        | 262            |
| 13 The Road Map for Regime Change         | 283            |
| 14 The Resurgence of Unilateralism        | 300            |
| 15 Events Dear Boy, Events                | 326            |

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-68668-7 — Israeli Foreign Policy since the End of the Cold War  
Amnon Aran  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

|      |                                              |     |
|------|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| viii | Contents                                     |     |
| 16   | The End of the Road                          | 342 |
| 17   | Vulnerable Ties                              | 366 |
|      | Epilogue                                     | 387 |
|      | <i>Appendix: List of Persons Interviewed</i> | 403 |
|      | <i>References</i>                            | 405 |
|      | <i>Index</i>                                 | 419 |

Maps

---

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 0.1 Israel and its neighbours | <i>page</i> xxii |
| 0.2 Israel political map      | xxiii            |
| 2.1 The Golan Heights         | 43               |

Figures

---

|                                                                                             |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 5.1 Rubble of building and car                                                              | <i>page</i> 120 |
| 5.2 Prime Minister Shamir delivering a speech                                               | 121             |
| 5.3 Shimon Peres (L) Yitzhak Rabin, Hosni Mubarak, Yasser Arafat and Warren Christopher (R) | 121             |
| 5.4 Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin                                                         | 122             |
| 5.5 Blown-up Egged bus                                                                      | 122             |
| 5.6 Caricature of Yasser Arafat                                                             | 123             |
| 5.7 Yitzhak Rabin, King Hussein and President Clinton                                       | 123             |
| 14.1 Soldiers and family in Hebron                                                          | 322             |
| 14.2 Separation barrier                                                                     | 322             |
| 14.3 Handshake between Foreign Minister Levy and his Chinese counterpart                    | 323             |
| 14.4 Prime Ministers Sharon and Vajpayee                                                    | 323             |
| 14.5 PM Ehud Barak, Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz and Major General Gabi Ashkenazi             | 324             |
| 14.6 Acting PM Ehud Olmert and Cabinet Secretary Israel Maimon                              | 324             |
| 14.7 Mass demonstration                                                                     | 325             |
| 14.8 Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Barak Obama                                     | 325             |

## Acknowledgements

---

I have been extremely fortunate along the journey that led to the publication of this book. My colleagues at the Department of International Politics at City, University of London, provided me with invaluable support. Anastasia Nesvetailova, Ronen Palan and Inderjeet Parmar, who served as heads of department, deserve special mention, as well as Dina Fainberg, Leonie Fleischmann, Iosif Kovras, Sandy Hager, Stefano Pagliari and Gadi Yishayahu. I am also grateful to a number of colleagues in other institutions including Chris Alden, Ronit Ben Dor, Klaus Brummer, Katerina Dalacoura, Rami Ginat, Christopher Hill, Clive Jones, Juliet Kaarbo, George Lawson, Cynthia Little, Oren Barak, Colin Shindler, Asaf Siniver, Karen Smith and Charles Tripp. All of them have been helpful in so many ways. My deep appreciation is extended to my friend, Dr Moshe Fox, for his continuous support of my research, and my interviewees, who spared the time to see me and answer my questions. My thanks go also to the team at Cambridge University Press, Maria Marsh, Daniel Brown and Atifa Jiwa, who were patient, responsive, professional and attentive to detail.

I owe an immensely profound debt of gratitude and friendship to Avi Shlaim, who has redefined and transformed our understanding of Israel's foreign relations with the Arab world. For the past twenty years, Avi has been a constant source of stalwart support, inspiration and guidance. Avi read every chapter of this book since I began writing, and met with me over lunches at St Antony's College, University of Oxford, to provide me with the most extensive and insightful feedback I could have asked for. I also would like to extend my deepest thanks to Rory Miller, a brilliant scholar of the international relations of the Middle East. Throughout my career, I have benefited from Rory's resolute support, stimulating intellectual engagements, friendship and guidance.

Over the years of writing this book, I have been extremely fortunate to receive love and support from my dear family and friends: Natalie Aran, Tom and Mog Aslan, Tony Duckett, Shai Eisen, Ezra Gabbai, Amina Harris, Keren, Guy, Lea and Thea Gelkoff, clan Gera, Itamar, Ifat and

xii      Acknowledgements

Amit Orgad, Nechemya Orgad, Gil Rabinovich, Guy Shinar, Yoav Shaked, Ophir, Jonathan and Abigail Salomon, Atalya (Kipi) and Kobi Wolf. Having reached the end of writing this book, I cannot but express my heartfelt feelings and love to my parents, Shai and Michael Aran, who, through thick and thin, were always there for me. To my wife, Shani Orgad, thank you for all your care, love and support. You are everything I have ever wished for from a partner to life, the ultimate companion with whom I have been blessed to be singing our own 'songs in the key of life'. Last, but by no means least, my sons, the Aran brothers, Yoav and Assaf. Every day you fill my life with love, light, meaning and joy. All the above deserve my deepest thanks and gratitude.

For any shortcomings the book might have, I alone am responsible.

## Chronology

---

### 1990

- 11 – June Yitzhak Shamir forms a government.
- 2 – August Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait.

### 1991

- 17 – January to 28 February The Gulf War.
- 25 – December Dissolution of the USSR.

### 1992

- 24 – January Israel and China establish diplomatic relations.
- 29 – January Israel and India establish diplomatic relations.
- 23 – June Labour defeats Likud in national election.
- 13 – July Yitzhak Rabin becomes prime minister.
- 16 – December Israeli deportation of 415 Hamas activists.

### 1993

- 19 – January Knesset repeals ban on contact with the PLO.
- 25 – July Israel launches Operation Accountability.
- 4 – August Assad rejects the Rabin ‘deposit’.
- 29 – August Israeli cabinet approves the DoP.
- 10 – September Israel and the PLO exchange formal letters of recognition.
- 13 – September Israel-PLO DoP signed in Washington, DC.
- 10–17 – October first state visit to China by an Israeli prime minister, by Yitzhak Rabin.

### 1994

- 25 – February Massacre of Palestinians at Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron.
- 6 – April Hamas’s first suicide attack kills eight people in Afula.
- 4 – May Israel and the PLO reach agreement in Cairo on limited Palestinian autonomy and establishment of the Palestinian Authority (Oslo I).
- 1 – July Yasser Arafat enters the Gaza Strip.

xiv Chronology

- 25 – July Washington Declaration ends state of war between Israel and Jordan.
- 26 – October Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty in the Arava desert.
- 27 – October Failed Clinton-Assad summit in Damascus.
- 30 – October–1 – November First MENA Economic Summit in Casablanca.

**1995**

- 27 – June Commencement of second round of negotiations between Israel's and Syria's military chiefs of staff.
- 28 – September Signing of the Israel-PLO Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II).
- 29–31 – October Second MENA Economic Summit in Amman.
- 4 – November Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by a Jewish fanatic.
- 20 – November Israel and the EU sign an Association Agreement.
- 27–28 – November Launch of the European Mediterranean Partnership or Barcelona Process.

**1996**

- 5 – January Hamas chief bomb maker and terrorist, Yahya Ayash, assassinated by Israel.
- 20 – January Yasser Arafat elected president in first Palestinian elections.
- 25 – February A Hamas suicide bomber blows up a bus in Jerusalem.
- 2–4 – March Four Hamas suicide bombs kill fifty-nine Israelis.
- 13 March Peacemakers summit held in Sharm el-Sheik.
- 11 – April Israel launches Operation Grapes of Wrath in Lebanon.
- 29 – May Binyamin Netanyahu defeats Shimon Peres by less than 1 percent in Israeli elections.
- 25 – September Deadly clashes following opening of tunnel in the Old City of Jerusalem.
- 13 – November Third MENA Economic Summit in Cairo.

**1997**

- 15 – January Israel and the PLO sign the Hebron Protocol.
- 26 – February 1997 Israel authorizes construction of 6,300 units for Jewish housing at Har Homa in East Jerusalem.

## Chronology

xv

- 14 – March Ahmed Dakamesh, a Jordanian soldier, kills seven Israeli schoolgirls.

**1998**

- 23 – October Netanyahu and Arafat sign the Wye River Memorandum.  
 2 – December 1998 Israeli government decides to suspend implementation of the Wye River Memorandum.

**1999**

- 17 – May Ehud Barak defeats Binyamin Netanyahu in Israeli elections.  
 26 – May–26 – July Israel supplies weapons to India during its Kargil conflict with Pakistan.  
 26 – July Israeli-Syrian negotiations resume.  
 4 – September Israel and the PLO sign the Sharm el-Sheik Memorandum.  
 15 – December Israel-Syria Blair House Summit.

**2000**

- 3–10 – January Israel-Syria Shepherdstown Summit.  
 26 – March Failure of Assad-Clinton Geneva Summit, effectively ending Israeli-Syrian negotiations under Barak.  
 24 – May Israel withdraws unilaterally from southern Lebanon, ending a twenty-two-year military presence in the country.  
 1 – June EU-Israel Association Agreement comes into force.  
 10 – June Hafez al-Assad dies; Bashar al-Assad assumes Syrian presidency.  
 13 – July Israel cancels plan to sell Phalcon air radar to China after US pressure.  
 11–25 – July Failed Camp David Summit.  
 28 – September Outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada.  
 7 – October Hezbollah attempts to kidnap IDF soldiers in the Mount Dov area.  
 23 – December President Clinton presents his peace plan to end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

**2001**

- 7 – March Ariel Sharon inaugurated as prime minister.  
 11 – September al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.  
 17 – October PFLP assassinates Israeli minister, Rehavam Ze'evi.

## 2002

- 3 – January Israeli naval commandos seize the *Karin A*, carrying weapons to the Palestinian Authority, in international waters in the Red Sea.
- 27 – March Hamas suicide bomber kills twenty-nine and wounds close to 150 in Park Hotel, Netanya.
- 28 – March Arab League summit in Beirut approves Saudi peace initiative.
- 29 – March Israel launches Operation Defensive Shield.
- 24 – June President Bush delivers speech, calling for a ‘provisional’ Palestinian state under new leadership.
- 5 – November Sharon dissolves national unity government following the departure of One Israel from the coalition.

## 2003

- 28 – January Likud wins thirty-eight seats in the Israeli elections, securing a second Sharon government.
- 19 – March Abu Mazen appointed as Palestinian prime minister
- 20 – March USA and Britain invade Iraq.
- 30 – April ‘The Quartet’ issues the road map.
- 25 – May Israeli government announces fourteen reservations on the road map.
- 3 – June Arab leaders’ summit with President Bush in Sharm el-Sheik.
- 4 – June Summit in Aqaba to launch the road map.
- 8–10 – October First state visit of an Israeli prime minister to India, by Ariel Sharon. The Delhi Statement of Friendship and Cooperation between Israel and India is signed.

## 2004

- 22 – March Israel assassinates Hamas’s founder and leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin.
- 14 – April Letter from Bush to Sharon backing disengagement from Gaza, supports the incorporation of the major ‘settlement blocks’ in Israel in any future agreement with the Palestinians.
- 6 – June Israeli cabinet approved the disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip.
- 26 – October Knesset approves the disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip.
- 11 – November Yasser Arafat dies, prompting elections for the Palestinian presidency.

**2005**

- 9 – January Mahmoud Abbas elected Palestinian president.
- 10 – January Third Sharon government sworn in.
- 15–22 – August Israel carries out the unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.
- 29 – April Syria withdraws its forces from Lebanon after a twenty-nine-year military presence.

**2006**

- 4 – January Ariel Sharon falls into a coma; Ehud Olmert becomes acting prime minister.
- 26 – January Hamas has a landslide victory in the Palestinian elections.
- 28 – March Kadima wins Israeli elections.
- 4 – May Ehud Olmert becomes prime minister.
- 25 – June Corporal Gilad Shalit is abducted by members of three Palestinian cells – Hamas, the Popular Resistance Committees and the Army of Islam.
- 12 – July Hezbollah launches raid across the Israeli border, killing eight soldiers and kidnapping two others.
- 12 – July–14 – August Israel-Hezbollah 2006 War.

**2007**

- February Israel and Syria restart indirect peace negotiations via Turkish mediation.
- 8 – February Saudi Arabia brokers the Mecca Agreement between Fatah and Hamas, leading to a Palestinian national unity government.
- 14 – June Hamas's military takeover of the Gaza Strip; Mahmoud Abbas dissolves the national unity government.
- 6 – September Israel destroys the Syrian nuclear reactor in Dir el-Zur.
- 27 – November The Annapolis Conference.

**2008**

- 3 – May Ehud Olmert presents US Secretary of State with his idea for a final peace agreement with the Palestinians.
- 18 – June Egypt brokers a cease fire between Israel and Hamas.
- 16 – September Ehud Olmert presents his peace offer to Mahmoud Abbas.
- 15 – October US Congress passes the Naval Vessel Transfer Act, which legally grounds US commitment to Israel to maintain its Qualitative Military Edge in the Middle East.
- 27 – December Israel launches Operation Cast Lead.

xviii      Chronology

**2009**

- 31 – March Binyamin Netanyahu sworn in as prime minister for second time.
- 14 – June Netanyahu concedes the need for a Palestinian state in his Bar-Ilan speech.
- 25 – November Israeli security cabinet approves partial ten-month settlement freeze.

**2010**

- 17 – December Arab uprisings erupt.

**2011**

- 11 – February Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, ousted.

**2012**

- 14 – November Israel launches Operation Pillar of Defence.

**2013**

- 22 – January Likud wins Israeli elections.
- 18 – March Netanyahu becomes prime minister for the third time.

**2014**

- 7 – July–26 – August Israel-Hamas war or Operation Protective Edge.

**2015**

- 14 – May Netanyahu becomes prime minister for the fourth time.
- 14 – July Iran nuclear deal signed between the Islamic Republic of Iran, five members of the UN Security Council plus Germany and the EU.

**2016**

- 13 – September The USA finalizes a \$38 billion package over ten years, of military aid to Israel.
- 21 – February US Secretary of State, John Kerry, presents his peace plan to Binyamin Netanya in Aqaba, Jordan; Netanyahu rejects the proposal.

**2017**

- 6 – December President Trump recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital and orders the US Embassy to move there.

**2018**

- 8 – May USA withdraws from the Iran nuclear deal.

## Chronology

xix

### **2019**

19 – July Israel passes nationhood basic law.

### **2020**

28 – January US President Donald Trump launches ‘Deal of the Century Peace Plan’.

Abbreviations

|       |                                                       |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| AIPAC | American Israeli Public Affairs Committee             |
| API   | Arab Peace Initiative                                 |
| BJP   | Bharatiya Janata Party                                |
| CIA   | Central Intelligence Agency                           |
| CNPC  | China National Petroleum Corporation                  |
| DIC   | Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation                |
| DoP   | Declaration of Principles                             |
| EEC   | European Economic Community                           |
| EESP  | Economic Emergency Stability Plan                     |
| EMP   | European Mediterranean Partnership                    |
| ENP   | European Neighbourhood Policy                         |
| EU    | European Union                                        |
| FAPS  | Framework Agreement on Permanent Status               |
| FTA   | Free Trade Agreement                                  |
| GCC   | Gulf Cooperation Council                              |
| GSS   | General Security Service                              |
| GWoT  | Global War on Terror                                  |
| IAEA  | International Atomic Energy Association               |
| IAF   | Israeli Air Force                                     |
| MENA  | Middle East and North Africa                          |
| MFA   | Ministry of Foreign Affairs                           |
| MIT   | Massachusetts Institute of Technology                 |
| MK    | Member of Knesset                                     |
| MSM   | Million Cubic Metres                                  |
| NATO  | North Atlantic Treaty Organization                    |
| NPT   | Non-Proliferation (of Nuclear Weapons) Treaty         |
| NSC   | National Security Council                             |
| OECD  | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| PA    | Palestinian Authority                                 |
| PFLP  | Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine         |
| PIJ   | Palestinian Islamic Jihad                             |

List of Abbreviations xxi

|        |                                            |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|
| PKK    | Kurdistan Workers' Party                   |
| PLO    | Palestinian Liberation Organization        |
| PRC    | People's Republic of China                 |
| QME    | Qualitative Military Edge                  |
| SLA    | South Lebanese Army                        |
| UK     | United Kingdom                             |
| UN     | United Nations                             |
| UNIFIL | United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon    |
| UNSC   | United Nations Security Council            |
| UNSCOM | United Nations Special Commission          |
| UNSCR  | United Nations Security Council Resolution |
| USA    | United States of America                   |
| WWI    | World War I                                |
| WWII   | World War II                               |



Map 0.1 Israel and its neighbours



Map 0.2 Israel political map