

The Evolution of Canadian Diplomacy towards the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Derek Mackay

Student Number: 7351705

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Jones

23 July 2015

Abstract:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to persist despite decades of efforts from regional actors and the international community to find a lasting peaceful solution. Canada has been connected to this issue since it played a significant role in the partitioning of Palestine. This paper explores the role that Canadian diplomacy has played in trying to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the creation of Israel in 1948 and analyzes the reasoning behind the approaches taken. Canada has historically been viewed as an honest broker in the Middle East but more recently the Government of Canada has used rhetoric that supports a more one-sided approach to the issue. This paper will discuss the impact of current Canadian diplomacy towards Israel and Palestine, as well as if the diplomatic tools Canada is equipped with can be used in ultimately helping to resolve the conflict.

Table of Contents

i. Abstract	p.2
1. Introduction	p.4
2. Canada's Role in the Partition of Palestine	
2.1 A Reluctant Participant	p.5
2.2 Canada's Role on United Nations Special Committee on Palestine	p.10
2.3 The UN Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine	p.13
3. The First Decade of Canada-Israel Relations	
3.1 Continued Canadian Involvement	p.14
3.2 The status of Jerusalem	p.15
3.3 Emergence of the Refugee Issue	p.16
3.4 Arms Shipments	p.19
3.5 The Canadian Role in Resolving the Suez Crisis	p.21
4. Canadian Policy towards Israel and Palestine from 1958-1968	
4.1 Adherence to Impartiality	p.22
5. Canadian Policy towards Israel and Palestine from 1968-1993	
5.1 A shift in Canadian Foreign Policy?	P.27
6. Canadian Policy during the Chrétien Era	
6.1 An Active Role in the Multilateral Peace Process	p.30
7. The Shift towards Current Canadian Policy on Israel and Palestine	
7.1 The Martin Year's	p.34
7.2 Policy under Prime Minister Stephen Harper	p.35
7.3 Conclusion	p.37
8. Bibliography	p.44

1. Introduction

By taking a fair minded approach to the Middle East over the past few decades, Canada has built a reputation as an honest broker that can play a role in stabilizing the region. Canada has been involved in the conflict between Israel and Palestine since its work at the United Nations to help bring about the partition of Palestine. It continued on with a balanced approach put forward by the Department of External Affairs which helped to maintain continuity with regards to Canadian foreign policy regardless of which political party was in power, even though there has been a historical tendency for Tory MP's to be more supportive of Israel. The work of specific individuals like Lester B. Pearson helped to raise Canada's profile in the Middle East and increase Canada's soft power. Along with the personal policy making of individuals like Pearson and his colleagues, was the need to balance Canada's own interests that often included ensuring good relations were maintained between Great Britain and the United States. Canada may have reluctantly become involved in the Israeli-Palestinian issue but in the early years of the conflict it proved to be an effective mediator and balanced the interests of both sides reasonably well.

However Canada is at risk of losing this privileged position as a result of its recent actions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although Canada is not a major power it is capable of finding specific areas in which it can contribute to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. This MRP will examine what Canada's past involvement has been in the peace process and the contributions that these policies made. This paper will also examine the current Canadian government's policies towards the peace process and the reasons behind these policies. In its conclusion, the paper will suggest how Canada can take a more constructive approach towards the peace process and discuss why this matters for Canada.

2. Canada's Role in the Partition of Palestine

2.1 A Reluctant Participant

Canada's influence in international affairs arguably peaked in the period immediately following WWII. Over one million Canadians served in the Armed Forces during the war and the entire country was mobilized towards the Allied war effort. For the first few years following the war Canadian foreign policy would take on a functionalism approach. This approach was based on the idea that "representation on post-war international bodies should be determined on a functional basis which will admit to full membership those countries, large or small, which have the greatest contribution to make to the particular object in question"¹. Canadian policymakers began to take advantage of Canada's middle power status to seek out and pursue foreign policy objectives of particular Canadian interest. This was manifested mostly in a dedication to international institutions such as the United Nations². Canada had demonstrated they could play a significant role in WWII and by emphasizing a functional approach to foreign policy the post war Canadian government was trying to ensure that Canada maintained a high standing in international affairs. The postwar Canadian government also originally intended to pursue this functionalist approach by keeping close relations with Great Britain and collaborating with the Commonwealth³.

The conclusion of WWII gave rise to an entirely new set of international issues that would strain relations between the major powers, and would require effective diplomacy to prevent the outbreak of another large scale conflict. The Canadian government led by Mackenzie King believed that it was in Canada's national interest to ensure that the United States and Great Britain maintained good relations in order to counterbalance the emerging threat of the Soviet

¹(Stacey, 1981)

² (Holmes, 1982)

³ (Holmes, 1982)

Union and to contribute to international peace and security⁴. After WWII the King government considered the Middle East and the question of Palestine to be low on its list of foreign policy priorities. At this time Canada had little strategic interest or commercial trade with any of the countries in the region. One of the main foreign policy goals of Canada was to help maintain good relations between Britain, which many Canadians felt a strong connection with, and good relations with the United States, an emerging superpower⁵. Canada did not open its first embassy in the Middle East region until it opened an embassy in Turkey in 1948. King's overall attitude towards foreign affairs was that it would be best to avoid international issues that were not a direct concern to Canada and was weary of getting involved in financially costly ventures⁶.

In the early stages of the United Nations effort to solve the complex situation in Palestine the Canadian government held a position that could be classified as pro-British neutrality. Prime Minister King preferred not to be involved yet at the same time felt a duty to not directly go against the British position. Mackenzie King indirectly supported the British 1939 White paper on Palestine and believed it would help to facilitate a Jewish homeland by securing "agreement among those whose interests are directly concerned. The White paper called for limiting the number of Jewish refugees allowed into Palestine and King, on the advice of the External Affairs Department thought that supporting a mass migration of Jews into Palestine would disrupt the British effort to have direct consultations between Arabs and Jews on important questions relating to the future of Palestine .

It has also been noted that King had personally expressed pro Zionist views in his earlier time as Prime Minister, while speaking to the Ottawa Convention of the Zionist Federation of

⁴ (Husseini, 2008)

⁵ (Ferns and Ostry, 1976)

⁶ (Bercuson, 1985)

Canada in 1922⁷. However, some of King's policies were unsympathetic towards Jewish people. For example King supported the anti-Jewish immigration policy put in place by his Head of Immigration Frederick Blair. Between 1933 and 1948 Canada only accepted approximately 5000 Jewish refugees. Canada accepted a lower number of Jewish refugees than any other Western nation during this time period⁸. In 1939 Canada infamously turned away a ship full of Jewish refugees, some of whom later died in the Holocaust.

Eliezer Tauber questions whether Canada's involvement in the partition of Palestine was a matter of national interest or whether it was driven mostly by a small group of diplomats that were following their personal beliefs. There were numerous factors from within the Canadian government and from external pressures that played a role determining the approach and role that Canada would play in addressing the Palestinian situation. Although Canada preferred to steer clear of the issue they were often called upon by members of the UN to be active participants in solving the crisis. This began with Lester B. Pearson's role as head of the Canadian delegation to the Special Assembly and his election as Chairman of the Assembly's First Committee responsible for political matters. Canada's role continued as Canada was chosen to appoint a delegate to serve on the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) along with 11 other nations. Canada's involvement continued to evolve and Pearson and members of the Canadian delegation at the UN took on a greater role serving on Subcommittee 1 of the Ad Hoc Committee which was tasked with studying the partition option put forward by UNSCOP⁹.

⁷ (Kimche,1960)

⁸ (Troper and Abella, 1983)

⁹ (Tauber, 2002)

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 declared Great Britain's support for the "establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people"¹⁰. It also stated that Great Britain would do their best to achieve this goal with the promise that nothing will be done which "may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. Or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in another country"¹¹. By the end of WWII Britain was allied with and had made commitments with a number of Arab States as well. During WWI Muhammed Sharif al- Faruqi an ally of the British and Arab leader had been promised that concessions would be received by France and a number of Arab states. This included an Arab homeland in return for Arab support in fighting the Ottoman Empire¹². It was the British who brought the issue of Palestine to the UN as they wished to withdraw from their mandate rule of Palestine without having the region descend into complete chaos. Britain was caught between the aspirations of the Arabs and Zionists and the promises made in the Balfour Declaration¹³.

Approximately six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust during WWII. Although some survivors returned to their homes in Western Europe, virtually all of the surviving Eastern European Jews felt they had no home to return to. There were over two hundred thousand Jewish displaced persons in Europe at the conclusion of WWII¹⁴. A U.S report sent to Pearson while he was stationed at the Canadian Embassy in Washington stated that "It seemed imperative after the annihilation of six million Jews in various countries in Europe that arrangements should be made in at least one country in the world for the Jewish people to be definitely freed from the

¹⁰ (Bercuson, 1985)

¹¹ (Sachar, 1976)

¹² (Fromkin, 1989)

¹³ (Fromkin, 1989)

¹⁴ (Hussein, 2002)

limitations and fears imposed by minority status”¹⁵. Many Jews felt they needed a nation of their own as they no longer had trust in the European countries where they had previously lived.

The situation in Palestine was further complicated by the fact that relations between Arabs and Jews had been deteriorating since the 1920’s. In 1936 there was an Arab revolt that was eventually suppressed by the British. This resulted in the establishment of the British Peel Commission which recommended a partition of Palestine into a Jewish State, an Arab State and an area of British mandate¹⁶. When Britain could refocus on the area in 1946, British troops were being killed almost daily by Jewish groups fighting for independence. By the time Britain referred the question of Palestine to the United Nations in 1947 there was a well-established community of seven hundred thousand Jews in living in Palestine. The British Liaison to UNSCOP described the situation as “a tragic, irrational and inevitable stroke of fate, over which the peoples concerned...had no control”¹⁷. Britain no longer wanted the responsibility of governing in such a hostile environment and understood that they could not unilaterally make a decision that would please both the Arabs and the substantial Jewish population of Palestine¹⁸.

It was under these circumstances that Britain referred the issue of Palestine to the United Nations General Assembly in 1947. The Arab-Jewish conflict was now viewed by some countries as a threat to international peace and security. The Canadian government wished to stay off of the investigation committee but conceded that they would participate if pressed by other member states especially the United States. Canada eventually agreed to be part of the investigative committee that would establish the terms of reference and membership of

¹⁵ (Executive Office of the President-War Refugee Board, “German Extermination Camps- Auschwitz and Birkenau)

¹⁶ (Bethell, 1979)

¹⁷ (Horowitz, 1953)

¹⁸ (Tauber, 2002)

UNSCOP¹⁹. The Canadian government and certain Canadian officials and diplomats were more concerned about how the UN's ability to address this issue would impact the future of the UN. In a 1947 speech by then Secretary of External Affairs Louis St. Laurent, he noted that "Canadian security lay in the firm structure of international organization"²⁰. This was the first time a UN Committee had attempted to tackle such a complex international issue. The department of External Affairs believed that if the UN were unable to solve this crisis it would severely hamper the credibility and effectiveness of the UN in the future, which would be detrimental to Canadian interests. The Palestine problem was particularly difficult as it was possible that "a solution acceptable to the UN as a body and supported by a majority in the UN might not prove to be a solution that either party was prepared to accept"²¹.

2.2 Canada's Role on United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)

The preparatory committee formed on May 15, 1947 was tasked with defining the terms of reference and scope of UNSCOP. It decided that delegates from 12 UN member countries would make up the special commission. It was decided that Canada's delegate would be independent of the Canadian government and would not take direction from Ottawa during their time on the Committee. King and his officials decided that Justice Ivan Rand would be the Canadian delegate on UNSCOP. Rand was a former Attorney General in New Brunswick and a serving member of the Supreme Court of Canada when he was asked to be Canada's representative on the Committee. Leon Mayrand, a career diplomat was appointed as Canada's alternate delegate and would also take part in the Committee proceedings²².

¹⁹ (Robinson, 1971)

²⁰ (MacKay, 1970)

²¹ (Bercuson, 1985)

²² (Husseini, 2008)

In order to understand the cause of the conflict and to best devise a solution the members of UNSCOP set off for Palestine on June 10, 1947. The trip to Palestine to meet with both Zionist organizations and leaders from the Palestinian community contributed to the way that Ivan Rand would view the conflict as well as what he would come to believe to be the most feasible option for achieving peace in the region²³. Justice Rand had multiple powerful emotional experiences during his time in Palestine that are believed to have impacted how he viewed the situation in Palestine. Rand was particularly sympathetic to the plight of Jewish Refugees. While touring Palestine with a member of the Jewish Agency, Rand was shown a ship in Haifa's harbour that had been detained by the British because it contained European Jews who were considered illegal immigrants. Rand found it unsettling that people who had survived the tragedy of the Holocaust continued to suffer²⁴.

While traveling with the same member of the Jewish Agency, Rand made a stop at an Arab tobacco plant and was offended when he was told that no Jews would be allowed inside. Rand also expressed dismay at the poor working conditions and use of child labour in the factory. A conversation between David Ben Gurion and Rand where Ben Gurion expressed that "even without the United Nations, the Jews in Palestine would be able to manage" also impressed Rand²⁵. It was with these personal experiences in mind that Justice Rand began to support the idea of partition as the best solution in Palestine. It can be argued that these personal experiences would cause Rand to put the needs of the Jewish people over those of the Arabs²⁶. However he did express that "our object seems to me to be quite clear: to satisfy not the Jew nor

²³ (Minute of a conversation between Mr. Radak and Mr. Rand 11.8.47)

²⁴ (Tauber, 2002)

²⁵ (UNSCOP, Report, vol.3, "Questions on Evidence of Jewish Agency)

²⁶ (Husseini, 2008)

the Arab, but the enlightened and intelligent conscience of mankind as represented by the United Nations”²⁷.

The first idea that Rand advocated involved two politically separate Arab and Jewish states. However they would have shared services in certain areas so that the economic unity of the two states could be maintained²⁸. It has been argued that “Justice Rand was by far the main contributor to the partition scheme with economic union”²⁹. Once the members of UNSCOP convened in Geneva in early August of 1947, four possible options were being discussed with regard to Palestine. The Committee members would recommend one of what they referred to as four undesirable options. They included; a unitary state over all of Palestine either fully Jewish or fully Arab, a federation, a binational state, or a partition. Although not all of Rand’s recommendations were accepted by the Committee he was responsible for the building the basis of UNSCOP’s recommendations. “According to his memorandum, the question of Palestine’s future was “primarily” the manner in which the essential interests of the Jews arising under the Mandate were to be accomplished with the least impact upon the Arab population”³⁰. It is important to note that Rand was not being directed by Ottawa nor was he keeping Ottawa updated on the proceedings of UNSCOP. The Canadian government began to become more involved in the process of resolving the situation in Palestine but were not tied to supporting the ideas that Justice Rand had put forward³¹.

²⁷ (Bercuson, 1985)

²⁸ (Memo of conversation between Horowitz and Rand, 6 August 1947)

²⁹ (Spencer, 1959)

³⁰ (Tauber, 2002)

³¹ (Husseini, 2008)

2.3 Ad Hoc Committee on Palestinian Issue

The Canadian position had originally been to stay clear of the Palestinian issue, but Canada would continue to be involved as the decision making process concerning Palestine continued. In September 1947, the UN General Assembly gathered for its second regular session in New York. In 1947 Palestine was not the only significant issue facing the United Nations. An Ad Hoc Committee was created in order to focus solely on the Palestinian issue. The Canadian delegation to this Committee was instructed not to commit to any position on Palestine until it could be determined where the U.S, Soviet Union, and Britain stood on the issue. It was during this time that Lester Pearson began to assume a larger role representing Canada's policies regarding Palestine³². The Ad Hoc Committee came up with two potential options for the future of Palestine; a partition or a federal state. Subcommittees were formed to study each of these options. Canada would become a member of Subcommittee one along with nine other nations. Pearson strongly believed that subcommittee members "must scrutinize carefully any plan we contemplate in order to anticipate the difficulties it may create."³³ Pearson was adamant that for whatever solution was agreed upon there must be an appropriate enforcement mechanism in place.

Tauber examines if Pearson's involvement in this process, acting as a negotiator and helping Britain, the U.S, and Soviet Union to find compromises with regards to Palestine was done to promote Canada's interests or done on a personal level. Tauber argues that "The role played by Canada and Pearson during the debate convinced everyone of Canada's integrity and

³² (Tauber, 2002)

³³ (Western, 1948)

impartiality”³⁴. Pearson was active in seeking support for votes in favour of partition in the General Assembly. Although Canada did not have as much interest in the Middle East as the major powers did, supporting partition does seem to be in line with Canada’s foreign policy objectives at the time, which included successful resolution of this issue by the UN, even if King was reluctant at first to support it for fear of upsetting Great Britain. It is important to note that not all members of Canada’s UN delegation agreed with Pearson’s stance. One Canadian diplomat believed that “no attempt was made to meet the very strong moral and political claims of the Arabs”³⁵. On November 29, 1947 UN Resolution 181 (II) was passed by the UNGA that called for the partition of Palestine.

3. 1948-1958: The First Decade of Canada-Israel Relations

3.1 Continued Canadian Involvement

Canadian diplomacy in the Middle East did not become less important after Palestine had been partitioned and Israel had been created. In the first decade of Israeli independence Canada would continue to demonstrate that a middle power can still contribute meaningfully to international peace and security. Lester B. Pearson who was instrumental in the creation of Israel as a diplomat would remain an influential figure in Middle Eastern diplomacy as he served as Canada’s Minister of External Affairs from September of 1948 until June 1957. Although the UN had been successful in deciding how to proceed on the issue of Palestine, the region remained volatile as demonstrated by the Arab attack against Israel after the cessation of British rule in Palestine and the declaration of the state of Israel as independent. In addition to Israel’s security there were a number of other pressing issues that were of concern to Canada. These

³⁴ (Bercuson, 1985)

³⁵ (Tauber, 2002)

included; the status of Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugee issue, arms sales to Israel and the surrounding Arab States, and the Suez Crisis of 1956³⁶.

Despite Canada's active role in promoting and working towards the resolution calling for the partition of Palestine and the subsequent creation of an independent Jewish state, Canada did not immediately recognize Israel. There was a seven month gap between the creation of Israel and recognition given by Canada. This was followed by Canada supporting Israel's accession to the United Nations a few months later³⁷. It was not until 1953 that an Israeli embassy opened in Canada, and in 1954 Canada appointed its first ambassador to Israel which was a non-resident Ambassador. In 1958 the first resident Canadian Ambassador was appointed to Israel and took up residence in Tel Aviv. Canada did not support Israel's position that Jerusalem should be its capital, and therefore placed Canadian diplomatic staff in Tel Aviv rather than the controversial setting of Jerusalem³⁸. The position to place the embassy in Tel Aviv was taken by most other nations as well.

3.2 The Status of Jerusalem

The resolution passed by the UN that called for the partition on Palestine also stated that Jerusalem would be an internationalized city in order to ensure the protection of Holy sites important to Jews, Muslims, and Christians. However the status of Jerusalem was complicated by the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. In a speech to the UN in November, 1948 Pearson called on the UN to support the agreed upon status of Jerusalem "the recommendation it had previously made that there be international control of Jerusalem, and should call upon both parties to cooperate in

³⁶ (Kay, 1996)

³⁷ (Kay, 1996)

³⁸ (Hibbard, 2012)

implementing this recommendation”³⁹. The position of the government of Canada at this time with regard to Jerusalem has been referred to as functional internationalism. Canada was in favour of giving both Israel and Jordan control over secular affairs within their respective zones of Jerusalem, while having UN or international control over the religious sites in order to ensure their protection⁴⁰. The Canadian position on this issue is an example of a middle of the road approach that was attempting to make the best of a difficult situation by appeasing Israelis and Arabs, as well as the international community. There was also domestic pressure in Canada mostly from Canadian Catholics to ensure that religious sites were protected and remained accessible. However, Canadian diplomats were aware that internationalization of the city was likely not feasible given the current facts on the ground. Canada was interested in finding a solution that would be acceptable to both Israel and Jordan. The position was based on “quasi-reality with cautious regard for Israeli and Jordanian claims to sovereignty which would not be countenanced outside United Nations endorsement”⁴¹. This is also consistent with Canada’s emphasis on solving issues multilaterally through institutions like the United Nations.

3.3 Emergence of the Refugee Issue

The question of how to deal with Palestinian refugees displaced during the partition of Palestine had not been adequately addressed during the creation of Israel. Canada immediately recognized the plight of these individuals and was committed to finding a politically feasible solution to the issue. The government of Canada acknowledged that “while Israel had absorbed the bulk of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries, the Arab Palestinians posed an ongoing

³⁹ (Pearson to Security Council, Statements and Speeches, External Affairs 48/61)

⁴⁰ (Kay, 1996)

⁴¹ (Kay, 1996)

seemingly intractable problem”⁴². In the period following partition Canada was the fourth largest contributor of aid to Palestinian refugees. This was a significant undertaking for the international community to deal with as there were over six hundred thousand Arab Palestinians considered as refugees after the British mandate over Palestine came to an end. Some Canadian MP’s expressed to the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs that Israel should play an increased role in aiding Palestinian refugees⁴³. It did not become a significant source of tension between the two nations, but Canadian officials were disappointed that the Israeli government would not as a gesture of goodwill accept a small number of refugees or agree to provide compensation. Canada did accept a relatively small number of Palestinian refugees.

Canada’s concern for the refugees was demonstrated by its vote in favour in December, 1949 for the creation of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA). This Agency would be in charge of caring for the refugees and providing services such as health care and education. Its first director was a Canadian named Howard Kennedy. Canada committed hundreds of thousands of dollars each year of this first decade to UNWRA⁴⁴. However, it was understood that financial assistance was not the answer to finding a permanent solution to the refugee problem. This would include, according to Canadian officials, resettlement in Arab lands and repatriation to Israel. Along with humanitarian and moral concerns for the well-being of the refugees, Canadian officials realized that in order to maintain what they considered a balanced and prudent approach to foreign affairs they must make sure that the predicament of Palestinian refugees did not go unresolved.

⁴² (Kay, 1996)

⁴³ (Minutes of Proceedings, 25 May 1955, 558)

⁴⁴ (Kingston, 2007)

Pearson in his capacity as Minister of External Affairs also took this opportunity to press for UN administration of the Gaza strip in a 1957 address to the UNGA. Pearson believed that this would be beneficial for the refugees living in the crowded Gaza strip who were currently under the administration of Israel and Egypt. This attempt was applauded by some diplomats as a creative solution to the problem faced by the refugees in the Gaza strip but ultimately it was not accepted by the UN. When the Progressive Conservative's came into power under Prime Minister John Diefenbaker in June 1957, material and financial aid for Palestinian refugees continued even though Diefenbaker was seen to have a more pro-Israel stance⁴⁵. The principle of providing aid to refugees had become entrenched in the institutional knowledge of Canadian bureaucrats. The Progressive Conservative Party throughout Canada's history has often had MP's with a more pro-Israel stance. For example before becoming Prime Minister Joe Clark promised to move Canada's Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem but ultimately decided against it. Although Diefenbaker was more likely to favour Israel this view was kept in check by the federal bureaucracy who favoured a more even handed approach.

Diefenbaker supported Israel for being the free and democratic state that upheld Western values in the Middle East. He admired the success that Israel was able to achieve in their relatively short existence. As a Red-Tory Diefenbaker was a supporter of nationalism. It is possible that he identified with the Jewish people and their unwavering desire to have a national homeland built upon Western democratic values⁴⁶. It is also possible that religion played a part in Diefenbaker's support of Israel as he had discussed the Judeo-Christian tradition that Canada and Israel shared when speaking to Jewish groups. Perhaps another aspect to his support for Israel was the lack of respect and distrust he felt towards the Department of External Affairs. He felt

⁴⁵ (House of Commons Debates, November 1957, 1515)

⁴⁶ (Newman, 1973)

that most of the public servants in this department were Pearson partisans. Members of External Affairs were known for being sympathetic towards the Arabs⁴⁷. It is possible that Diefenbaker's mistrust of these officials judgement helped to cement his pro-Israel views. On the political level Diefenbaker pushed for maintaining close ties with Great Britain throughout his time as Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. He did not support Canada's stance during the Suez Crisis that Israel and Great Britain had been the aggressors⁴⁸. In this instance his support for Great Britain might help to explain his support of Israel.

Another possible reason that could help to explain both Diefenbaker's pro-Israeli leanings and the overall tendency for Conservative MP's in Canada to be supporters of Israel is the "distinctive party based traditions in foreign policy" idea put forward by John Kirton⁴⁹. Up until recently Canadian politics have been dominated by two major parties that can be referred to as brokerage parties. Although different ideologically the two parties end up converging towards each other as they seek to gain support from voters during election time. It is possible then that traditionally starting with the Progressive Conservative Party that the Conservative Party has adopted support for Israel as a hallmark issue in an attempt to win votes and differentiate itself from the Liberal Party⁵⁰. This could also have been an attempt by the Conservative Party to attract Jewish voters who traditionally voted for the Liberals.

3.4 Arms Shipments

Another way to evaluate Canada's foreign policy towards Israel and Palestine in the decade that followed the partition is the government's policy with regard to arms shipments to

⁴⁷ (Newman, 1973)

⁴⁸ (Newman, 1973)

⁴⁹ (Bow and Black, 2008)

⁵⁰ (Bow and Black, 2008)

Israel and Arab states respectively. Western nations including Canada were reluctant to supply military armaments to nations in the Middle East as a result of the violence that erupted after the partition and the potential for future conflict. Canadian bureaucrats developed five principles that should be followed when examining requests for arms shipments from Israel or Arab states. These principles were; “a) no discrimination between Israelis and Arabs; b) government knowledge of all sizes and character of shipments going out; c) shared information among Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States; d) pressure on both the Arabs and Israelis to curtail arms requirements and reach a settlement; e) consideration of the strategic importance of this policy for the West⁵¹”. Canadian policy towards the Middle East in this period had to be made with the realities of the Cold War in mind, as well as Canada’s desire to have a balanced approach and be seen as an honest broker in the region. The Soviet Union began to supply Egypt with weapons systems and in turn Israel put added pressure on Canada to provide them with arms for defensive purposes. Canada would agree to send Browning machine guns to Israel and eventually adopted a policy of evaluating each individual request from Arab states and Israel and making a decision accordingly⁵². Another factor to take into consideration for Canadian decision makers was the opinion of the United States and United Kingdom regarding the export of arms to the Middle East. In some instances Canada’s exporting of arms went against the wishes of these two nations. One major sale that Canada had agreed to was to send to Israel 24 F-86 interceptor jets being built in Montreal. The government justified this large sale by pointing out that they were aircraft meant for defensive purposes and that the Egyptian Air Force had been increasing its number of aircraft, which was considered a threatening gesture by Israel. The export of the F-86 Jet was eventually called off by Prime Minister St. Laurent after intense debate, public

⁵¹ (National Archives of Canada, files of the Department of External Affairs, 50 000-B-40, 12 March 1950)

⁵² (National Archives of Canada, Privy Council files, vol. 20, 27 April 1950)

scrutiny, and indecision by the government and with the outbreak of hostilities between Egypt and Israel in the Suez Crisis⁵³.

3.5 The Canadian Role in Resolving the Suez Crisis

The crisis began on July 26, 1956 when Egypt under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser seized control of the Suez Canal and nationalized it. Egypt planned to charge ships to pass through the canal in order to generate revenue for its government. Britain and France were both concerned that Egypt could stop the flow of oil through the canal, adversely affecting both of their economies. In late October 1956 Israel along with Britain and France attacked the Egyptian forces at the Canal Zone. In the summer of 1956 French officials had begun to plan for a possible military operation along with Israel. Prior to this point France and Britain had also been making plans for a possible intervention in the Canal Zone⁵⁴.

These events had a number of significant ramifications for the international community and for Canada. Great Britain and France did not inform the United States or Canada about their participation in this attack, as a result the United States was caught off guard and this strained relations between these nations⁵⁵. Canada now had a number of factors to examine in its policy making process with regards to this crisis. When forming foreign policy “the cabinet was guided first by consideration for its Western friends, particularly the U.S, Britain, and France, then by the security and defence needs of Israel in quasi-balance with its neighbours, third by the United Nations and its role in the conflict, and fourth by the impact of policy decisions on the body politic in Canada”⁵⁶. Numerous Canadian interests were at stake in this conflict. The

⁵³ (National Archives of Canada, files of the Department of External Affairs, November 1956)

⁵⁴ (Ovendale, 1999)

⁵⁵ (Ovendale, 1999)

⁵⁶ (Kay, 1996)

maintenance of good relations between Great Britain and the United States was a key component of Canadian foreign policy. Any discord between these allies could also potential strengthen the position of the Soviet Union, which was detrimental to global peace and security and therefore Canadian interests. St. Laurent also regretted that the action had taken place without United Nations approval⁵⁷. Canadian officials drafted a response to the British to ensure Canada's position on the situation was known. "The Canadian response included a warning to Eden about the possible escalation of the conflict should the nuclear-equipped Americans and Russians become involved"⁵⁸.

Lester Pearson would play a leading role in mediating the conflict eventually winning the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts. Pearson put forward the idea of a multinational peacekeeping force to act as a barrier between the two opposing sides. Pearson's idea was successful partly because it allowed all combatants to save face by withdrawing to allow in the peacekeepers, while not having to admit defeat at the hands of the other side. A United Nations Emergency Force led by Canadian General E.L.M Burns, was stationed in the Suez Canal Zone to ensure the two warring side remained apart. Pearson was undoubtedly one the most influential Canadian actors during this decade of relations between Canada, Israel, and Palestine.

4. Canadian Policy towards Israel and Palestine from 1958-1968

4.1 Adherence to Impartiality

Zachariah Kay argues that if the first decade of relations between Canada and Israel can be characterized by a prudent approach on behalf of Canada, then the subsequent decade is

⁵⁷ (Melady, 2006)

⁵⁸ (Melady, 2006)

characterized by Canada's strict adherence to impartiality⁵⁹. The prudent approach undertaken by Canada was a result of acknowledging the importance that Middle Eastern stability would play in helping to maintain international peace and security well into the future. Similar to the rise in status that Canada experienced on the international scene after WWII, was the boost Canada received in diplomatic circles from the work of Pearson at the UN in helping to resolve the Suez Crisis. Canada would use this position throughout the next decade to continue to work towards peace between Israelis, Palestinians, and the Arab States. The work of Canadian diplomats and bureaucrats played a significant role in formulating Canadian Middle Eastern policy during this time period.

As a member of the Pro-Zionist Canadian Palestine Committee, Prime Minister Diefenbaker was expected by some political observers to adjust Canadian foreign policy to be slightly more favoured towards Israel. It can be argued that although Diefenbaker did receive an official visit from Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion he did not significantly alter Canadian policies towards Israel and Palestine that had been established in the previous decade. This is in part due to the advice he would receive from public servants on the Israel-Arab situation. Kay writes that "The permanence of a civil service vouchsafes a guided tradition and prevents turbulence in policy execution without hindering beneficial initiatives"⁶⁰. Diefenbaker had previously stated before he held office that as Prime Minister he would move Canada's embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. He never followed through on this as it faced stiff opposition from the bureaucracy who viewed it as an unnecessary and controversial move. Near the beginning of Diefenbaker's time in office a memo was sent from Canada's embassy in Tel Aviv to the undersecretary of External Affairs. It pointed out the suggested policy for the

⁵⁹ (Kay, 2010)

⁶⁰ (Kay, 2010)

government to follow in the region and read as follows “a) A desire to use our influence where possible to encourage moderation and patience in Israel’s relations with Arab states and in Israel’s cooperation with the UN in its efforts to lower tensions and maintain peace in the area; b) within the limitations imposed by economic factors including that of distance, to promote trade between the two countries”⁶¹. Canada’s commitment to using the UN as a tool for reaching international agreements remained.

Although it decided to never become a nuclear weapons power, Canada did emerge in the post WWII setting as a leader in nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. In order to maintain impartiality, Canada adopted a policy of a phantom veto for the Arab states. This meant that if Israel requested a nuclear reactor from Canada and the Canadian government agreed, this same offer would be made to any Arab states that requested the reactor⁶². Canada demonstrated an adherence to impartiality by not providing nuclear technology to Israel over Arab concerns that it could be used for the development of nuclear weapons. Another factor that played into Canada’s decision on this issue was that at the time of Israel’s request for nuclear technology Canada was still a member of the UNEF peacekeeping mission that had been established after the Suez Crisis⁶³. The government would have potentially opened themselves up for criticism had they been working towards peace through UNEF yet also providing Israel with potentially deadly nuclear technology.

The second decade of Canadian-Israeli relations saw Pearson; the man who had been influential in the founding of the state and the resolution of the Suez-Crisis become Prime Minister of Canada in 1963. Canada continued to be concerned about the situation facing

⁶¹ (National Archives of Canada, RG 2 series, A-5-a, vol, 2746)

⁶² (Kay, 2010)

⁶³ (Kay, 2010)

Palestinian refugees. This seemed to frustrate some Israeli officials as the Israeli Ambassador to Canada, Gershon Avner complained of Canada's "egregious impartiality"⁶⁴. Under Pearson, Canada stuck to maintaining its impartiality during the biggest setback of Israel-Arab relations of the decade, the Six Day War.

Tensions had been rising between Egypt and Israel as a result of an Egyptian military build-up along its border with Israel and the action taken by Egypt's leader of expelling the UNEF peacekeeping force. The Six Day War began on June 5, 1967 with Israel launching pre-emptive strikes against Egypt which was aided by Jordan and Syria. After six days of fighting Israel had successfully defeated the armies of the three Arab nations and had taken control of the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula and East Jerusalem. During the conflict the government of Canada declined to send non-lethal items requested by Israel such as plastic trench covers, for fear of being seen as taking Israel's side in the conflict⁶⁵. Canada was opposed to this conflict but recognized that the international community had to deal with the aftermath of the conflict which brought with it more refugees and increased tensions between Israel and the Arab world.

At this time Canada was a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Canadian diplomats worked tirelessly at the UN as facilitators between diplomats of their fellow UNSC members to ensure passage of a resolution that addressed the aftermath of the Six Day War. UNSC Resolution 242 was passed in November, 1967. The Resolution called for Israel to withdraw from the areas it had occupied and for nations to cease all states of belligerency and recognize the right of each other to exist. The government of Canada also

⁶⁴ (Israel State Archives, Avner to MABAR, 13 April 1965)

⁶⁵ (National Archives, Vol.10112 File 20-1-2-ISR, 6 June 1967)

opposed the action of Israel unifying Jerusalem, as Canada has discouraged unilateral action on sensitive issues such as this one and still supported internationalization of the city⁶⁶. It is important to note that Resolution 242 was not immediately accepted by all the relevant actors but did lay the foundation for future negotiations and peace agreements between Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria⁶⁷.

Throughout Conservative and Liberal governments between 1958 and 1968 Canada remained committed to using its status as a middle power to mediate disputes and facilitate agreements through the structure of the United Nations and promoting the idea of liberal institutionalism. Kay declares that “such a policy will be maintained as long as the aforementioned conflict continues and will be advantageous to Canada, because the policy also affords opportunities for occasional creativity through diplomatic initiatives in attempts at conflict resolution while not deviating from the impartial path”⁶⁸. However it is debateable as to how much longer Canada would continue to pursue this policy of impartiality when dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which continues to this day. In 1968 Pierre Elliot Trudeau would take over from Pearson as leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister of Canada. He would be responsible for leading Canada in the next decade, which would see more conflict and turmoil between Israel and Palestine.

⁶⁶ (National Archives of Canada; files of the Department of External Affairs RG 25 series MG 26 N6, Vol.8 1332)

⁶⁷ (Noble, 2012)

⁶⁸ (Kay, 2010)

5. Canadian Policy towards Israel and Palestine from 1968-1993

5.1 A shift in Canadian Foreign Policy?

Trudeau may have been the predecessor to Pearson who was a champion of the UN, international institutions, and peace keeping but he did not initially place the same importance on these for Canadian foreign policy. Trudeau wanted to forge a closer link between foreign and domestic policy, which could be understood to mean a foreign policy that would have a positive impact on Canadians at home⁶⁹. Despite a mostly balanced approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Canada as a Western nation had more in common with Israel as a fellow liberal democratic nation. The Yom Kippur war of 1973 did not stop Canada from voicing its support for Israel but it did make Canadian officials more attentive to Arab views. In October 1973 Egypt and Syria led a coalition of Arab states in an attack against Israel with the intention of gaining back territory they had lost during the Six Day War. As a result of the war the Arab members of OPEC imposed an oil embargo on Western nations. Canada was affected by a steep rise in oil prices which made the government more sensitive to Arab concerns⁷⁰.

There were also some other Israeli actions that the Trudeau government did not agree with. The annexation of East Jerusalem was not supported by Canada and neither was the settlement building in occupied territories which is recognized as illegal under international law. At the UN, Canada had usually voted against resolutions put forward that singled out Israel for criticism. However this policy began to change under Trudeau and Canada would now sometimes abstain from these votes or even in some instances vote in favour of the resolution

⁶⁹ (Halloran and Hilliker, 2015)

⁷⁰ (Hibbard, 2012)

offering criticism of Israel⁷¹. It was during this time period that Canadian diplomats first established contact with Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) officials who had come to represent the Palestine people and their goal of establishing their own independent state. However this was controversial as the original goal of the PLO was the destruction of Israel. The government of Canada also acknowledged and supported the idea that Palestinians needed a homeland to call their own. Once again, Canada contributed peacekeepers in the region, in both the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, but this time it was done much more reluctantly when compared to the enthusiasm that Pearson had for the idea. There was also pressure from the United States for Canada to participate in these missions⁷².

When Trudeau gave way to the Conservative government of Joe Clark in 1979 a controversy was created when Prime Minister Clark stated his intention to move Canada's embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Once again, the civil service expressed reservations about this as they believed it would damage Canada's reputation as an honest broker in the region. The potential move was also criticized by members of the Canadian business community who had interests in Arab states. Along with the Arab states themselves opposing the embassy move, U.S President Jimmy Carter believed it would possibly upset the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement he had recently helped to reach at Camp David, a process Canada was in favour of and a positive development for stability in the region⁷³.

As a result of the backlash caused by his suggestion of moving the embassy Clark commissioned a study to be done by a former Conservative Party leader, Robert Stanfield to examine if Canada needed to adjust its policy towards the Middle East. In his report he stated

⁷¹ (Brynen, 2007)

⁷² (Taras and Goldberg, 1989)

⁷³ (Brynen, 2007)

that “To use effectively whatever influence we may have in the area to encourage moderation and compromise we must retain credibility with both sides as a fair- minded interlocutor”⁷⁴. The report ultimately recommended the embassy not be moved and Clark took this advice. Clark likely accepted that Stanfield’s statement was accurate and that as a middle power Canada did not have the luxury to make a controversial decision and still be a relevant actor in trying to bring stability to the region.

Israel’s 1982 Operation Galilee in Lebanon and some of the events that took place during the war including the killing of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians were criticized by Canada. Trudeau was “dismayed with the escalation of the conflict represented by the massive movement of Israeli forces into Lebanon.”⁷⁵ A benefit of Canada’s historical support for Israel was that Canada’s opinion may be held in higher regard by Israeli officials than other nations. Trudeau sent a letter of protest to the Israeli PM over this military action, with the hope that Canada’s opinion might influence future Israeli actions⁷⁶. Trudeau recognized that Israel had the right to defend itself from PLO attacks on Israeli settlements, but in his letter he urged Israeli Prime Minister Begin to use restraint when responding to these attacks. Trudeau was of the opinion that the majority of the responsibility for the violence occurring in Lebanon rested with the Israelis. As a result of the Israeli action in Lebanon, in addition to killing of civilians in refugee camps and Israel’s rejection of Reagan’s Middle East Peace Plan, anti-Israeli sentiment was beginning to grow within the Federal Cabinet. Members of the Liberal Party’s Quebec Caucus wanted to upgrade official relations with the PLO; however this was overruled by other influential Liberal

⁷⁴ (Hibbard, 2012)

⁷⁵ (Goldberg, 1990)

⁷⁶ (Hibbard, 2012)

Party members.⁷⁷ There were a number of reasons why Trudeau was opposed to Operation Galilee in Lebanon as it was referred to by the IDF. Trudeau did not believe that Operation Galilee would successfully eliminate the PLO threat and that there was the potential for the superpowers to become involved, and therefore escalate the conflict⁷⁸.

With the return of the Conservative Party led by Brian Mulroney in 1984 Canadian policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian issue remained in line with that of many other Western nations. Canada continued to examine resolutions at the UN criticizing Israel closely and chose to vote against Israel when it felt it was truly justified. The growing discontent of Palestinians erupted into the first Intifada in 1987. Israel was facing criticism from the international community for its response to the uprising and a speech by then External Affairs Minister Clark was also quite critical of Israel. In a speech he stated “Human rights violations such as we have witnessed in the West Bank and Gaza, in these past agonizing weeks, are totally unacceptable, and in many cases are illegal under international law”⁷⁹. This open criticism of Israel was a first in Canadian Middle Eastern policy and represented a discord between Clark and Mulroney who had a short time previously expressed support for Israel and commended them for showing restraint in their dealings with Palestinians⁸⁰.

6. Canadian Policy during the Chrétien Era

6.1 An Active Role in the Multilateral Peace Process

During his time as Prime Minister Jean Chretien strengthened Canada’s relations with both Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization. In 1995 a PLO diplomatic mission was

⁷⁷ (Goldberg, 1990)

⁷⁸ (Goldberg, 1990)

⁷⁹ (Hibbard, 2012)

⁸⁰ (Hibbard, 2012)

allowed to open in Ottawa. The second Intifada also began during Chretien's time as Prime Minister and Canada supported a UNSC Resolution that condemned Israel's response as overly harsh and criticized Ariel Sharon for visiting a holy Islamic site that angered Palestinians. However due to anger on behalf of Israeli officials Chretien ended up apologizing in a letter for Canada's UNSC vote⁸¹. It is one thing for a government to fairly consistently view a conflict that does not always directly impact its interests through unbiased lenses. The next step is to become actively involved in working towards a solution, which meant working towards a two state solution. The entrenched nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the two intifadas, and other outbreaks of violent conflict demonstrated that proactive action needed to be taken by the international community if any progress towards peace in the region was to be made.

In preparation for bilateral talks between Israel and Palestine in Madrid in 1992, Canada was asked to help address one of the most controversial points of contention between the two sides. From 1992 until 2000 Canada was directly involved in the multilateral aspect of the peace process. Canada was chosen to serve as the chair of the Refugee Working Group (RWG). The refugee issue is one of the most important issues to be resolved in order for the peace process to be successful. The Palestinian position is that refugees and their descendants should be able to return to the areas they were living at the time they were forced to flee⁸². If this position were put into practice millions of Palestinians would return to present day Israel. Israel does not accept that the refugees can return to Israel as it would upset the predominantly Jewish demographic nature of the state. However Israel does accept that Palestinian refugees can return to the territories that would eventually become the state of Palestine⁸³. Israel also supports the position

⁸¹ (Sasley and Jacoby, 2007)

⁸² (Peters, 1996)

⁸³ (Peters, 1996)

that the living conditions of refugees should be improved and attempts should be made to permanently resettle the refugees in the countries they are currently living in⁸⁴.

As chair of the Refugee Working Group, Canada led the discussion on how to alleviate the suffering of people displaced by the Arab-Israeli conflict. The final resolution on the issue could only be achieved through Israeli-Palestinian bilateral negotiations. Due to the disagreement over the right of return for refugees the working group put forward significant efforts to improve the living conditions of the refugees. The RWG worked to define the scope of the refugee issue which was essential to moving forward on the issue. Data on the number and whereabouts of Palestinian refugees was updated. The RWG encouraged dialogue and in particular was able to reach agreement on some aspects of family reunification. As the group's main goal was improving the lives of the refugees an important area of focus became mobilizing the financial resources to make this possible⁸⁵. The RWG was the only working group to continue meeting between 1995 and 2000 as relations between Israel and Palestine worsened. Work in this group was able to continue in large part due to the Canadian commitment and skill at multilateral diplomacy⁸⁶. Canada's role as chair of the RWG also pleased pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian groups within Canada because Canada was taking an active role in the Middle East Peace Process. The United States was also pleased that Canada was making a serious effort to resolve this issue as it allowed them to focus on other aspects of the peace process⁸⁷.

Dalia Dassa Kay argues that multilateral cooperation in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be viewed as a process of interaction rather than solely as a set of outcomes⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ (Rempel, 1999)

⁸⁵ (Peters, 1996)

⁸⁶ (Brynen, 2007)

⁸⁷ (Brynen, 2007)

⁸⁸ (Kaye, 2001)

Through this understanding of the multilateral talks it can be argued that Canada also played a significant role in the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS). The United States and Russia were the gavel holders for this group but Canadian bureaucrats played a significant role in the maritime confidence building aspect of the ACRS Working Group. Canada acted as the extra regional mentor for maritime related projects. The maritime arena was seen as an area that would allow for cooperation between Israel and Arab States with relatively few disagreements⁸⁹. Maritime incidents had occurred in the region so it was also necessary for agreements to be reached that would allow Israelis and Arabs to successfully deal with potential future incidents. Although the ACRS Working Group was not as successful as the RWG some technical agreements on maritime issues had been made and contacts between Israeli and Arab naval officers had been made. As Dassa Kay argues it is possible for progress to be made even if the overall outcome of the working group was not successful. The process of interaction alone in this case helped to build regional security⁹⁰.

As part of what became known as the Ottawa Process, less official peace initiatives were supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International trade. The Canadian Development agency and the International Development Research Centre also contributed to these track two diplomatic efforts. Track two efforts focused on bringing together Palestinians and Israelis for dialogue in order to find common ground on the difficult issues of the peace process. This dialogue was done with little publicity but it demonstrates that Canada was being proactive and taking concrete steps to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although operating at arm's length from the government these initiatives were supported by the Canadian Foreign

⁸⁹ (Kaye, 2001)

⁹⁰ (Kaye, 2001)

Affairs Minister at the time Lloyd Axworthy⁹¹. However, because funding for these discussions was coming from three different government sources it was sometimes difficult to secure funding in a timely fashion. Canada's efforts in the Ottawa Process, as an extra regional mentor for maritime related projects, and as chair of the RWG had a positive effect on the overall Middle East Peace Process negotiations⁹². Another consequence of Canada's actions was that its Middle East policy was viewed positively by most of the international community. This helped to maintain Canada's reputation as an effective practitioner of negotiation, dialogue and diplomacy.

7. The Shift towards Current Canadian Policy on Israel and Palestine

7.1 The Martin Years

Canada's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace process began to shift under the government of Paul Martin. This shift in Liberal Party policy has been attributed to pro-Israeli Liberal parliamentarians becoming Cabinet Ministers in the Martin Government. Six members of a group called Liberals for Israel were appointed to the Federal Cabinet. This would ensure that Israel's interests would be well represented in Cabinet meetings⁹³. These Cabinet Ministers along with Gerald Schwartz who was an advisor and fundraiser for Martin advocated for an evaluation of Canada's voting pattern at the UN with regard to resolutions that were critical of Israeli actions⁹⁴. The voting behaviour of Canada in the United Nations General Assembly continued to change, as Canada would abstain from some votes that condemned the

⁹¹ (Brynen, 2003)

⁹² (Robinson, 2011)

⁹³ (Barry, 2010)

⁹⁴ (Barry, 2010)

actions of Israel⁹⁵. Historically this was an unusual policy for the Liberal Party to pursue as traditionally in Canada the Conservative Party was viewed as being more sympathetic towards Israel.

Canada was in the minority as most other nations voted in favour of the resolutions that were critical of certain Israeli actions. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Canada has arguably become Israel's most supportive friend. This runs in contrast to the majority of Canada's historical involvement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which was characterized by a fairly balanced approach. However it is important to note that many aspects of official government policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian issue have not changed that much since Harper took office. Official Canadian policy condemns Israeli settlements in occupied territory and is fully supportive of the creation of a Palestinian state, Israeli's security, and a two state solution. Yet the overall tone of Canada's approach has changed, with much more vocal support for Israel and less support for UN institutions such as UNWRA.

7.2 Policy under Prime Minister Stephen Harper

The different approach taken by the current government is mostly demonstrated through rhetoric and symbolic actions that are in contrast to past Canadian actions. The current government has emphasized support for democracies and a value oriented foreign policy. There seems to be a gap between the official policy of the government and its rhetoric towards Israel and Palestine. The government is more vocally critical of Palestinian actions and can be more ambiguous towards Israeli actions that are criticized by the majority of the international community. Canada was the first country to cut off aid to the Palestinians after Hamas came to

⁹⁵ (Brynen, 2007)

power in the Gaza Strip in 2006⁹⁶. Harper has been vocally critical of Canada's past policy towards the Middle East. In a 2006 interview he stated "my own assessment of Canada's role in the Middle East in the past decade or so is we've been completely absent. I don't see any evidence we've been playing any role"⁹⁷. It is clear that Canada's past diplomatic efforts are not held in high regard by the current Prime Minister.

Historically the party that was in power did not have a significant effect on policy towards Israel and Palestine as the bureaucrats in the Department of Foreign Affairs were able to for the most part successfully influence political leaders. The shift in Canadian policy towards Israel began under the Liberal Martin government, but what is the reason for the increased one sided approach taken by the current government? Prime Minister Harper believes his government's foreign policy approach is based on a moral approach and prioritizes this over impartiality. In a 2003 speech while leader of the Conservative Alliance Party he stated "We need to rediscover Burkean conservatism because the emerging debates on foreign affairs should be fought on moral grounds"⁹⁸.

There is also the argument that domestic politics and an attempt to win more of the Jewish Canadian vote is behind the Conservatives policies towards the Israel-Palestine issue. In addition to this the argument has been made that Harper's policy towards Israel is also meant to appeal to Canadian Evangelical Christians who feel a strong connection with Israel as it is the birthplace of Christianity⁹⁹. There are social issues in Canada that this specific group of voters would like to see changed. However, it is not politically realistic for the party governing Canada

⁹⁶ (Heinbecker, 2007)

⁹⁷ (Heinbecker, 2007)

⁹⁸ (Kennedy, 2014).

⁹⁹ (Barry, 2010)

to change Canada's laws with respect to gay marriage or abortion as most Canadians favour the current laws. By showing strong support for Israel, Harper is able to pursue a form of personal policymaking and appeal to Evangelical Christian voters through this support for Israel which they view as the moral thing to do. However Canada also has a significant Arab population many of whom have voiced their displeasure with current Canadian foreign policy towards the Middle East¹⁰⁰. However Canada's Arab population do not have as many powerful interest groups and are less organized when compared to their Jewish Canadian counterparts. This in addition to competing viewpoints within the Arab community makes it more difficult for Arab Canadians to influence Canadian policy towards the Middle East¹⁰¹

Critics of the government's approach to the Israeli-Palestinian issue argue that Canada's position is detrimental to the process of resolving this conflict. A strong argument can be made that Canada's one sided approach to this issue has led to a loss of influence in the international arena. One example of this is that Canada was not able to secure a seat as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2010. This is not solely the result of Canada's rhetoric and actions towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but it likely played a role; the Harper government has also been more critical of the United Nations as a whole. Canada did not receive the voting support that it had received from Arab countries in the past. Canada has made it more difficult for itself to play a constructive role in the peace process with its current stance. Arab nations are now less likely to view Canada as an honest broker that approaches the conflict with an open mind and the ability to make innovative suggestions in an effort to bring about peace.

¹⁰⁰ (Clark, 2007)

¹⁰¹ (Sasley and Jacoby, 2007)

Canada may be an advanced and economically powerful but its influence in international affairs rests with the strength of international institutions. If Canada is content to withdraw from international affairs and focus much more on domestic policy it does not make a significant difference what say Canada has in international affairs or if it plays a helpful role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However if Canadian leaders believe that in order to pursue Canadian interests action must be taken in international affairs then Canada will have more influence in the international community if it is an active member and uses its resources to contribute to international peace and security.

7.3 Conclusion

It is important for any Canadian government to understand that how Canada is viewed amongst the international community has a significant impact of the amount of clout Canada has regarding international issues. Although Canada is not a superpower there is a role for Canada to play in the Middle East peace process. The current government approach is not the most effective way for Canada to make a positive contribution to peace between Israel and Palestine. A small country like Norway has effectively used diplomacy and negotiation to play a significant role in the search for peace¹⁰². Former Foreign Affairs Minister of Canada Bill Graham has stated that, Canada must maintain its capacity to act as an appropriate intermediary for it is the only way to truly help our friends¹⁰³. Canada needs to find its niche and focus efforts in this area in order to help move along the peace process. In addition to this, a more balanced fair minded approach must be applied in order to win back the respect of the international community.

¹⁰² (Musu, 2012)

¹⁰³ (Barry, 2010)

Canada is currently in the unique position of being one of Israel's closest allies. Being a good friend to Israel does not mean avoiding criticism of Israel. The best way to ensure Israel's security is to work towards a two state solution. As a close friend of Israel, Canada should not be afraid to criticize Israeli actions that are contrary to international law such as settlement construction in the occupied territories. Canada should continue to fully support Israel when international law is on their side, while at the same time use its position of friendship to offer constructive criticism of Israeli policies that are detrimental to the peace process.

Canada does have an interest in seeing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict come to a peaceful resolution. Global peace and security is increasingly important in today's interconnected world. When fighting broke out between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006 it became quite evident that conflict in the Middle East can have significant consequences for Canadians¹⁰⁴. Thousands of Canadian citizens in Lebanon were evacuated by the government of Canada during this conflict. It is also in Canada's interest to take a greater role in the peace process because it would be seen in a positive light from the perspective of the United States. The U.S has recently made significant efforts encouraging negotiations that broke down in April of 2014. It is possible that political will to press on with this issue is declining¹⁰⁵. Time may be running out to find a two state solution that is acceptable to both Palestinians and Israelis, as Jewish settlements are built in occupied territory and the demographic make-up of the area continues to change. Canada's involvement in the peace process would be welcomed in order to reinvigorate the process.

¹⁰⁴ (Heinbecker, 2007)

¹⁰⁵ (de Kerckhove and Petrolekas, 2014)

Canada does not need to be actively seeking to solve every problem plaguing the international community but working towards a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be beneficial for Canada. Canada is currently part of a multinational coalition fighting ISIS in the Middle East. However the fight against extremism can likely not be won with air strikes and military power alone. Having good relations with Arab nations might allow Canada and its partners to fight extremism more effectively and too prevent some of the root causes of extremism. Playing an active role in the peace negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis is one way for Canada to foster goodwill with the Arab world. Although tension between Russia and the West may not have reached Cold War levels it has certainly risen significantly as a result of Russia's annexation of Crimea. The international community has already seen that Russia's support for Syria has made it difficult to solve the crisis occurring there. If Canada can help to restart the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks it could have a stabilizing effect on the region and could allow for cooperation between Russia and the West which may help to reduce tensions and increase international peace and security.

It can be overwhelming to think about what area to concentrate on when aiming to help with the peace process because of the number of contentious issues, such as the status of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, the security barrier and refugees. Due to its past work on the issue of Palestinian refugees Canada should seek to reengage with this issue. The government of Canada should allocate resources to restart discussion of the refugee issue and support track two initiatives if it is not possible to get the necessary Israeli and Palestinian government officials to participate. Canada was criticized in the past for suggesting that they could resettle some Palestinian refugees in the event that a final two state solution is agreed upon. However because of the unlikelihood that all refugees would be able to return to Palestine, this is a concrete way

that Canada could help the peace process. It is not an ideal solution but it demonstrates that Canada is willing to make significant efforts towards the peace process and it would allow a number of Palestinian refugees to live secure lives.

Canada should be careful of where its aid money being sent to Palestine goes because aid can sometimes help to reinforce the status quo and lead the actors involved to avoid dealing with the key issue of the conflict¹⁰⁶. Along with focusing on finding a solution to the refugee issue, Canada can contribute by providing technical expertise. As a highly developed democratic nation Canada has developed expertise in governance, judicial reform, economic development, and border control¹⁰⁷. Canada should share its knowledge in these areas with Palestinian officials in order to prepare them for eventual statehood. Federal departments will need to work together to put these proposed initiatives into action and there must be a willingness on the part of the government to allocate resources to this cause. These policies will not be effective unless Canada has the confidence of the people living in the region¹⁰⁸. By recognizing its limits and having clear objectives Canada will be able to contribute to the Middle East peace process. Talk is simply not enough to contribute to the resolution of this decades old conflict.

In November of 2012 the United Nations General Assembly held a vote on whether or not to grant Palestine non-member observer status at the UN. Canada voted against this resolution. In terms of the world's population approximately 5% of the population voted against Palestinian membership, with the United States making up the majority of this percentage¹⁰⁹. As previously discussed Canadian foreign policy usually takes into account the position of the

¹⁰⁶ (Brynen, 2003)

¹⁰⁷ (Barry, 2010)

¹⁰⁸ (Jacoby, 2000)

¹⁰⁹ (Whitbeck, 2013)

United States and other like-minded nations. One way for Canada to evaluate its current policies is in relation to these other states. Canadian statements regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seem to be at odds with many European nations¹¹⁰.

Although the United States is still Israel's most important security partner they have expressed more criticism of Israel recently than Canada has. President Obama was particularly disappointed in Prime Minister Netanyahu's comments that there would be no Palestinian state if he were re-elected, which he ultimately was. Conversely, former Canadian Ambassador to Israel Michael Bell argues that "Canada's position should not be modelled after that of the United States. Similarly, Canada should not aspire to be seen in the region as either a supporter of the United States or for that matter, the European Union countries, Rather Canada should act as an independent third party with the expertise, determination, and staying power to support those who take risks for peace"¹¹¹. This approach advocates adhering to Canada's own strategy in the region which would include playing to its areas of traditional expertise like negotiation and mediation.

The majority of the preceding sections of this paper outline events where Canada has played a role in solving a conflict between involving Israel and the Arab world or shows how Canada has worked to facilitate agreement on divisive issues. This reoccurring theme lessens during the Martin government and has continued to the present day. It is time for Canada to embrace its diplomatic past that emphasized multilateral diplomacy and work constructively towards finding a peaceful solution to this conflict. The diplomatic tools and institutional knowledge that Canada has built up throughout its history should be used to focus the

¹¹⁰ (Kaunert, 2014)

¹¹¹ (Bell, Molloy, Sultan, and Shaker, 2007)

government's efforts and to put pressure on both the Palestinian and Israeli representatives to get back to the negotiating table and address this conflict. Barry writes that "Harper has repositioned the country from being a small part of an elusive solution to the centre of an entrenched problem"¹¹². It is necessary for Canada to be part of the solution even if it is only a small part of the overall peace negotiations.

¹¹² (Barry, 2010)

Bibliography

Barry, Donald. "Canada and the Middle East Today: Electoral Politics and Foreign Policy." *Arab Studies Quarterly*. 32.4 (2010): 191-117. Web.

Bell, Michael, Michael Molloy, David Sultan, and Sallama Shaker. "Practioners' Perspectives on Canada-Middle East Relations." *Canada and the Middle East: In Theory and in Practice*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2007. Print.

Bercuson, David. *Canada and the Birth of Israel: A Study in Canadian Foreign Policy*. Toronto: U of Toronto, 1985. Print.

Bethell, Nicholas. *The Palestine Triangle: The Struggle between the British, the Jews, and the Arabs, 1935-48*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1979. Print.

Black, David, and Brian Bow. "Does politics stop at the water's edge in Canada? Party and Partisanship in Canadian foreign policy." *International Journal* 64.1 (2008). Web.

Brynen, Rex. "Canada's Role in the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process." *Canada and the Middle East: In Theory and Practice*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007. Web.

Brynen, Rex. . The "Ottawa Process" An Examination of Canada's Track Two Involvement in the Palestinian Refugee Issue. Ottawa, 2003. IDRC Stocktaking Conference on Palestinian Refugee Research. Web.

Clark, Janine A. "Canadian Interests and Democracy Promotion in the Middle East." *Canada and the Middle East: In Theory and in Practice*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2007. Print.

CO 537/2338/1: "UNSCOP Session of 7th July 1947. Questions on Evidence of Jewish Agency." UNSCOP, Report, vol. 3, pp.66-67. ISA 93.03/2270/1: "Conversation between Justice Rand and D. Horowitz" 6 August 1947.

de Kerchove, Ferry, and George Petrolekas. *The Strategic Outlook for Canada*. Ottawa: Conference of Defence Associations Institute, 2014. Print.

Ferns, H., & Ostry, B. *The age of Mackenzie King*. Toronto, Ontario: Lorimer Press, 1976. Print.

Fromkin, D. *A Peace to End All Peace*. New York, New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 1989. Print.

Goldberg, D. *Foreign policy and ethnic interest groups: American and Canadian Jews lobby for Israel*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1990. Web.

Halloran, Mary, John Hilliker, and Greg Donaghy. "The white paper impulse: reviewing foreign policy under Trudeau and Clark." *International Journal* 70.2 (2015): Web.

- Heinbecker, Paul. "Canada and the Middle East: Ambivalence or Engagement." *Canada and the Middle East in Theory and in Practice*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007. Print.
- Hibbard, Steve. "Canada's Middle East Policy: The End of Fair-Minded Idealism or a New Beginning?" *Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East* (2012). Web.
- Holmes, John W. *The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order, 1943-1957*, vol 2. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982. Print.
- Horowitz, David. *State in the Making*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953. Print.
- House of Commons: Standing Committee on External Affairs Minutes.
- House of Commons, Debates, Canada, Ottawa. 1949-58.
- Hussein, Agha. "The Last Negotiation: How to End the Middle East Peace Process." *Foreign Affairs* 81.3 (2002): 10-18. Web.
- Husseini, Hassan. "A "Middle Power" in Action: Canada and the Partition of Palestine." *Arab Studies Quarterly* 30.3 (2008): 41-55. Web.
- Israel Foreign Office, file 1, box 2270 ('Memo of conversation between Horowitz and Rand, 6 August 1947').
- Israel Foreign Office, file 1, box 2270, ('Minute of a conversation between Mr. Radak and Mr. Rand on 11.8.47)
- Israel State Archives, Foreign Office file 35960/20, Avner to MABAR 13 April 1956.
- Jacoby, Tami. "Canadian peace building in the Middle East: Case study of the Canada fund in Israel/Palestine and Jordan." *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*. 8.1 (2000): 83-91. Web.
- Kaye, D. *Beyond the Handshake: Multilateral Cooperation in the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. Print
- Kay, Zachariah. *The Diplomacy of Impartiality: Canada and Israel 1958-1968*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2010. Print.
- Kay, Zachariah. *The Diplomacy of Prudence: Canada and Israel, 1948-1958*. Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 1996. Print.
- Kaunert, Christian. "Introduction: Rethinking Western Foreign Policy on the Middle East." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 27.3 (2014): 495-502. Web.
- Kimche, Jon and David. *Both Sides of the Hill*. London: Secker and Warburg, 1960. Print.
- Kingston, Paul. "Promoting Civil Society Advocacy in the Middle East and at Home: Non-Governmental Organizations, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Middle

East Working Group 1991-2001." *Canada and the Middle East: In Theory and in Practice*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2007. Print.

Kennedy, Mark. "The Harper Doctrine: Why Canada's Prime Minister Supports Israel." *The Ottawa Citizen* 3 Aug. 2014, Politics sec. Web. <<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/the-harper-doctrine-why-canadas-prime-minister-supports-israel>>.

MacKay, R.A (ed.) *Canadian Foreign Policy 1945-1954: Selected Speeches and Documents*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970. Print.

Melady, J. *Pearson's Prize: Canada and the Suez Crisis*. Toronto, ON: Dundurn Group, 2006. Web. National Archives of Canada, files of the Department of External Affairs RG 25 series

Musu, Costanza. "Canada and the MENA region: The Foreign Policy of a Middle Power." *Foreign Policy Journal*. 18.1 (2012): 65-75. Web.

National Archives of Canada (NAC), Department of External Affairs Records.

National Archives of Canada, Privy Council files RG 2 series.

Newman, P. (1973). *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Vol. 70). Toronto, Ontario: McClelland and Stewart.

Noble, John. "In the Media: Canada's Unquestioning Support of Israel Isn't Helping." *Canadian Global Affairs Institute* (2012). Web. <<http://www.cgai.ca/inthemediadeceember102012>>.

Ovendale, R. (1999). *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars* (Third ed.). Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited

Pearson to Security Council, Statements and Speeches, External Affairs 48/61.

Peters, J. *Pathways to Peace: The Multilateral Arab-Israeli Peace Talks*. London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996. Print.

Rempel, T. "The Ottawa Process: Workshop on Compensation and Palestinian Refugees." *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 29.1 (1999): 36-49. Web.

RG 25/3034: despatch 2730, Embassy (Washington) to SSEA 5 December 1944, enclosing report by Executive Office of the President-War Refugee Board, "German Extermination Camps- Auschwitz and Birkenau".

Robinson, A. "Canada's credibility as an actor in the Middle East peace process: The refugee working group, 1992-2000." *International Journal*. 66.3 (2011): 695-718. Web.

Robinson, Jacob, *Palestine and the United Nations: Prelude to Solution* (Washington, 1947) rep. Westport, 1971. Print.

- Sachar, Howard M. *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976. Print.
- Sasley, Brett E., and Tami Amanda Jacoby. "Canada's Jewish and Arab Communities and Canadian Foreign Policy." *Canada and the Middle East: In Theory and in Practice*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2007. Print.
- Spencer, Robert A., *Canada in World Affairs: From UN to NATO 1946-1949*. Toronto, 1959. Print.
- Stacey, C.P., *Canada and the Age of Conflict: A History of Canadian External Policies, vol 2, 1921-48; The Mackenzie King Era*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981. Print.
- Taras, David, and David Goldberg. *Domestic Battleground: Canada and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 1989. Print.
- Tauber, Eliezer. *Personal Policy Making: Canada's Role in the Adoption of the Palestine Partition Resolution*. Westport: Greenwood, 2002. Print.
- Troper, H., and Irving Abella, I. *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1983. Print.
- Western, Maurice, "Canada's Role in the Second Assembly," *International Journal*, 3:2 (Spring 1948), pp.120-131. Web.
- Whitbeck, John. "The World Has Spoken." *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*. 32.1 (2013). Web.