

The Political Cartoon and the Collapse of the Oslo Peace Process

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The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has long been challenging to researchers. The nature of the conflict appears, at times, to defy both the material interests and strategic rationality of the warring parties. The struggle has been described as possessing a primordial intensity, unpredictability and elusiveness that weighs heavily on academic research. Middle East experts have long understood the fundamental role of identity and symbolic rationality stating that “no student of Middle East politics can begin to understand the region without taking into account the ebb and flow of identity politics” (Telhani 2002: 2). While the powerful influence of identity on the region has long been accepted, it was the perceived stability of these identities that proved to be the greatest hindrance to analysis. It was not until the failure of traditional International Relations theory to satisfactorily explain the end of the cold war or the resulting surge of ethnic violence that occurred in its wake, that traditional approaches were reconsidered (McSweeney 1999: 1).

A cornerstone of this new research examines the relationship between malleable national identity and strategic behaviour (Barnett 1996: 401). If different national identities prioritize different material, ideational and moral aspirations, the security threats they define will differ accordingly (Mitzen 2003:8). Thus, variations in national identity directly impact both security concerns and policy (Jepperson 1996: 60). The susceptibility to change can result, at times, in dramatic shifts in policy comprehensible only when the undercurrents of identity are considered.

Identity associated interests are implicitly exclusionary, as they identify threats as external in origin, whether abstractions such as *anarchy* or *terrorism*, or associated with particular organizations, states or people. Relationships

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with outsiders, obviously, are not inherently antagonistic. The perception of outsiders determines who constitutes an ally, an adversary or an enemy. Where outsiders are deemed to share common interests, they are perceived as equally shared threats; and make potential allies. External parties with competing interests make for adversaries. An enemy emerges when an outsider appears to possess mutually exclusive interests to our own, reducing any meaningful interaction into a zero-sum game. Thus, an 'enemy' image is more than antipathy or dislike, but is based on a belief that one's values, interests or survival are directly threatened by the actions or even existence of the other group (Luostarinen 1989:125).

The corresponding security policy is equally impacted by the perception one has of the outsider. Rational outsiders are deemed responsive to diplomacy or negotiation. Irrational, immoral or deceptive characteristics, alternatively, significantly reduce the available range of action. 'Enemy' images anticipate hostility, exaggerate threat, and sanction violence; dismissing any action to the contrary as uncharacteristic, unintended, or strategically disarming (Steele 2005: 528). The more capable an enemy appears to be, the more immediate the need for response. While the more irrational the enemy is perceived to be, the narrower the available range of diplomatic action becomes (Stein 1996: 190; Conner 1998: 97). The depiction of an enemy as vermin spreading across the region implies extermination, not negotiation. Likewise, casting the opponents as an enemy of God demands *crusades* and *jihads* launched in God's name. Force against barbarians acts in the only language *they* understand. The associated characteristics of the enemy are preclusion to cooperation. The enemy is deemed too irrational, immoral or evil to negotiate with. The traditional preclusion to extreme political force is lifted. The greater the menace, the more permissible the aggressiveness is to protect our nation, our children and our civilization (Ramsbotham 2005: 117). To not engage such an enemy implies moral weakness.

As Fisher & Keashley argue, changes in conflict are enabled and visible through changes in enemy representation (Keashly 1996: 243). These indicate the source of the threat and against whom to defend. The more menacing the enemy is perceived to be determines the swiftness and force of our response. A change in enemy representation is suggestive of a change in policy. A worsening image of the opponent implies the escalation of a conflict (Zartman 2001: 12). As Stein argues, enemy images then contribute to the perpetuation and intensification of conflict (Stein 1996: 189). "The worse our enemy is, the more justified we feel in hating that enemy, and the easier it may be to rationalize action against the enemy" (Conner 1998: 97). Because symbolic systems are readily pushed to their logical conclusion, monitoring changes in the emergence and change in enemy images, then, reveals with it the perceived necessity, intensity and target of security policies (Entman 1993: 54) (Rowland 2002: 1). In this way, enemy representations possess a predictive capacity in security policy, narrowing expected action (Goerzel 2002: 714).

The End of Oslo and Return to Enemy Images

Enemy images and threat construction have long played a role in the Israeli - Palestinian conflict, with exaggerated fears and the dehumanized 'other' placing significant limitations on permissible state policy. The formidable Israeli armed forces retain a siege mentality, convinced that complacency can result in the destruction of Israel and usher in an Arab-instituted Holocaust (Barnett 1996: 435). Likewise, Palestinian conviction of a Zionist-led global conspiracy against them is neither dissuaded by fact nor served prevented should be deemed as futile resistance to omnipotent powers (Rowland 2002: 163). The overriding security threats are perceived to originate from the other side's ruthlessness and relentless ambition. It is little wonder that the region is immersed in exclusionist myths, demonizing ideologies and antagonist group histories, serving to legitimate necessary and inescapable violence (Ramsbotham 2005: 117).

Changes in symbolic perspectives have serious ramifications on how both sides perceived the nature of their conflict (Rowland 2002: 1). Any prospect of peace is contingent upon a fundamental transformation in identity to allow for the recognition and negotiation with the other (Telhani 2002: 18). The Oslo Peace Accords constituted such a watershed, breaking long standing symbolic taboos (Rowland 2002: 223). More than a territorial issue, Oslo was fundamentally a transformation of identity (Barnett 2002: 59). Rowland & Frank correctly state that the negotiations did not take place between Israelis and Palestinians, but between Labour Zionist and Palestinian Nationalist identities (Rowland 2002: 3). Each side successfully recast the other from *Arab* to *Palestinian*, and from *Zionist* to *Israeli*. The implication of this change was a legitimacy never before afforded the other side (Schultz 1999: 149).

Changes in the stereotypes associated with the 'other' side altered acceptable norms of behaviour and associated security risks (Schultz 1999: 144). Peace was transformed into not only an acceptable policy, but the preferred response to each party's security concerns (Barnett 2002: 61). In fact, the failure of the peace process was perceived as a greater threat to security. The success of Oslo became contingent upon the durability of these reconstituted identities. It then follows that the collapse of Oslo in 2001 and the searing intensity of the violence that followed reflected a dramatic return to the demonized stereotypes that defined the conflict for so long.

It was the material reality of terror attacks and Israeli reprisals that strained the new symbolic system. For the Israelis, "every suicide attack committed by the Islamic movements underlined the fact that the previously well defined boundary between friend and enemy had become exceedingly blurred" (Schultz 1999: 98). For Palestinians, Israeli helicopter attacks and collective punishments were not sustainable with the image of Israel as their partner in peace. The actions of the other side were increasingly viewed as dishonest, irrational and malicious. Under severe strain, progress in the peace process,

however piecemeal, managed to prop up the Oslo symbolic system until the summer of 2000 when final status talks were begun between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. As discontent and disillusionment brewed, ruptures in the symbolic systems became evident.

Methodology

Shifts in identity and enemy constructions are reflected in shifts in discourse (Khan 2004: 37). The challenge of discourse analysis stems from conscious attempts to manipulate media discourse. In the Middle East, as in other arenas, discourse can be consciously employed as a strategic tool to deliberately deceive foreign patrons, projecting an image starkly different from domestic representation (Khan 2004: 73). Both Israelis and Palestinians engage in a macabre contest for emotional supremacy of pain and suffering, vying for international economic and political support (Wolfsfeld 2001: 114). In trying to discern communication that reflects genuine public sentiment, this paper proposes to expand the analytical toolset available to security studies to cartoon analysis.

By reducing events into single framed visuals, cartoons have often been dismissed as simplistic representations of otherwise complex situations. As satire, they are self-acknowledgedly joking in nature and not serious discourse. Furthermore, they are unfounded opinion discourse, sharing all the biases of their societies, making them no less racist, sexist or prejudiced than their audiences (Templin 1999: 20). They do not offer any new lines of argument or challenge any existing bias. Rather, they use current events to reinforce the existing beliefs of their audience. Thus, cartoons make us smile, not because they are novel, but because they confirm the truth we already know (Greenberg 2002: 190). In this way, the editorial cartoon is capable of providing insight into public opinion.

If reconsidered, however, the very reasons they offer researchers give unique insight into the public opinions fueling conflict (Lester 1995: 217). The reliance on visual analogy makes the cartoon incapable of introducing new insight or analysis. They must analogize and reference beliefs familiar to the reader (Press 1981: 19). Rather than “providing the information that the reader lacks, (the cartoonist) is telling the reader what the public is already presumed to know” (Greenberg 2002:190). Cartoons are not challengers to, but amplifiers of, discontent, affirmers of existing prejudices, and bolsters of group solidarity directing the scorn, lament and fears of their community against those outsiders that threaten them. In reflecting public opinion uncritically, they offer useful insight into public opinion.

As satirical devices, cartoons are given considerably more leeway in their analysis than traditional news discourse. Their unfounded accusations function to reflect the irony, absurdity or unacceptability of situations. In doing so, they reflect the intangible, irrational and unsubstantiated concerns, fears, and

hopes of a community (Conner 1998: 110; Slymovics 1993: 24). Their joking nature dismisses a crudity and offensiveness that would be inexcusable, if not impossible, if written out in words (Buell 1988:847; Tunç 2002:48).

Yet, cartoons do more than reveal the contentious concerns of community, they openly accuse by reducing events into causal relationships. In doing so, they attribute responsibility for the status quo to a target of scorn through the artistic device of opposition. Opposition refers to the process where highly complex situations are reduced into binary themes (Greenberg 2002:187). The cartoon reduces the most complex of events into an intelligible clash of opposites between a righteous victim and a corrupt, evil or foolish antagonist. The audience is embraced as a '*righteous we*' counterpoised with the accused (Duss 2001: 966). The accused embodies the threat posed to the community. As such, the cartoon personifies national threats.

This ability to express latent hostility "not yet openly acknowledged by more serious commentators in the same media" suggests a predictive capacity to monitor shifts in identity and enemy construction (Goertzel 1993:716). If changes in enemy depictions are indicative of shifting norms and reconstituted identities, then the cartoon becomes an ideal barometer of changes in both the nature and intensity of a conflict. In conveying sentiments too difficult to articulate or with no verbal equivalent, the cartoon constitutes opinions often absent from other forms of discourse (Morris 1993:196) (Kress 1996:17). Importantly, unfounded accusation is no less actionable than materially verifiable accusations (Miall 2001: 10). An Israeli Palestinian case study of the reemergence of enemy depictions that preceded the collapse of the Oslo peace process validates this claim.

Political cartoons published in both Israeli and Palestinian newspapers between June and November 2000 reveal an alarmingly rapid transformation from adversarial to enemy images. The image of shrewd, reluctant or conniving negotiators degenerated into barbaric, animalistic and immoral nemeses. The representational sample of cartoons is drawn from the three major Palestinian and Israeli dailies. Combined, these six newspapers represent an impressive 95% of the Israeli and Palestinian readership (JMCC 1998 #29; Limor 2000: 2). While other papers exist, they represent fringe or fundamentalist communities within both societies.

Israeli Cartoons

The Israeli cartoons were drawn from the three main Israeli dailies, *Haaretz*, *Yediot Achronot* and *Maariv*. Founded in 1919 *Haaretz* is Israel's oldest paper, operated by the Schocken media conglomerate (Viser 2003: 115). Positioning itself as the government's unofficial opposition, has made it both popular for its balanced reporting and unpopular for challenging widely accepted Israeli beliefs (Dor 2005: 48). Founded in 1939, *Yediot Achronot* is owned by the

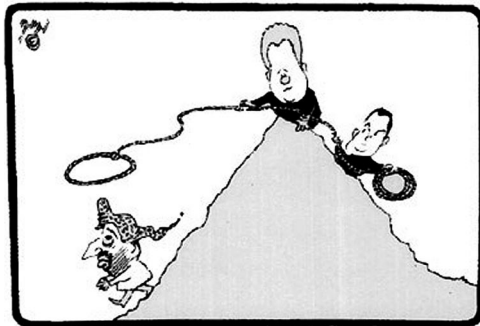
Moses family media conglomerate. It is by far the most popular newspaper in Israel reaching an estimated three-quarter of all Israeli households. Although it adopts a tabloid style, dedicating considerable space to sensationalist and 'soft' news, it employs some of the most distinguished reporters in the country for its political and national news reports (Dor 2005: 108). Founded in 1948, *Maariv* is owned by the Nimrodi family. It is the most right wing of the three papers, advocating a highly patriotic position that mimics the country's early ideological presses seeking to boost morale, advocate Zionism and promote national unity (Dor 2005: 19). Despite the ideological disagreements between the three papers, the collapse of Oslo witnessed a considerable similarity in the portrayed perception of the Palestinian partner in peace. The increased vilification of this 'other' from reluctant negotiator to enemy corresponded to the increasing violence that erupted into the Al Aqsa Intifada.

The Israeli offer to relinquish a vast amount of the disputed territories and offer Jerusalem as a shared capital shattered deeply entrenched Israeli taboos, reflecting the length and breadth of the distance they had gone in the interests of peace. Difficult as these were, it was the rejection by Arafat that was beyond comprehension. When offered

an internationally recognized country, an end to hostility and the preferred choice of capital, Arafat and the Palestinians had refused. The rejection was completely incompatible with the actions of a leader seeking nationalist self-determination for his people. The only possible explanation for the Israelis was that Arafat was either irrational, or that he had ulterior motives. A growing sentiment emerged that perhaps the Palestinians were not interested in peace

after all, and that the process had simply been a strategic attempt to lull the Jewish state into a false sense of complacency, facilitating a more sinister age

During the Oslo peace process, Arafat had increasingly been seen as an elusive negotiator. In June 2000, as final status negotiations loomed, Arafat is depicted as unwilling to go the distance. In a cartoon that ap-



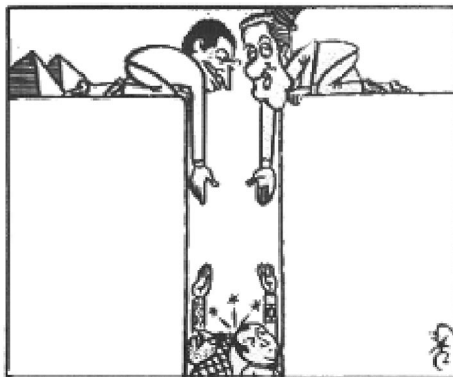
Yediot Achronot June 7, 2000



Maariv July 27, 2000

peared in *Yediot Achronot* on June 7, 2000, both Clinton and Barak are shown to be attempting to bring an obviously reluctant Arafat to the negotiation table. Arafat, while unwilling, is not depicted as an enemy. He appears fearful of being caught. He is neither aggressive nor threatening, and Israeli interests are served by capturing him and returning him to the negotiation table. Peace is still the goal, and Arafat's reluctance is the threat to Israeli interests.

As the Camp David talks progressed, a growing sentiment that Arafat's reluctance was an attempt to draw even more concessions from an willing Barak emerged. Arafat's reluctance, combined with Israeli eagerness, appeared to be the threat to Israel. On July, 2000, Arafat rejected Barak's latest offer including the division of Jerusalem for no more than a Palestinian promise to reign in militants. This was viewed as incomprehensible. A cartoon published in *Maariv* two days later reflected Israeli public opinion turning against the process, viewing Barak single-handedly making concessions to a complacent Palestinian leadership, confidently resting on the Temple Mount. Again, Arafat is not portrayed as menacing but rather as content with the process.



The Palestinian rejection had a disconcerting effect on the Israeli public opinion. While new proposals were being drafted in an effort to salvage the negotiations and secure a peace deal, by August Oslo was clearly in need of rescuing. A Dec 30th 2000 *Ha'aretz* cartoon shows the negotiations in desperate need of rescuing by their patrons. The parties are not partners, neither facing



Maariv October 4, 2000

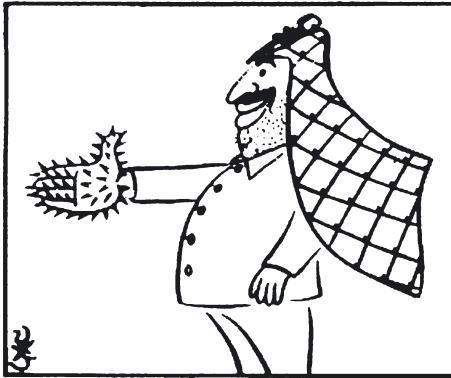
each other, nor, more importantly, joining in a common effort to rescue the other or the process. Though Arafat is not portrayed as threatening, the increasing sentiment that perhaps this process is not *big enough for the two of us* suggests public opinion turning against the process.

On September 7, 2000, Arafat rejected a modified proposal that sought to ad-

dress possible Palestinian concerns. More significantly, the rejection was outright, with no Palestinian counter-proposals. Continued negotiations were seen as dangerous. Speculations over the authenticity over Arafat's commitment to peace grew. The September 15, 2000 cartoon in *Haaretz* signals an important shift in Israeli confidence in the peace process. While neither menacing nor evil, Arafat is depicted as dishonest, with Israel unable to take Palestinian intentions at face value. He is increasingly portrayed as distrustful, making false gestures for peace.

Arafat grows more menacing as tensions between Israelis and Palestinians mount. September ended with flared tempers, stone throwing at the Temple Mount and rioting in Ramallah. The impact on Israeli opinion of the October 3rd death of twelve-year-old Mohammed Jamal al-Durah in an exchange of gunfire between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants was only worsened by the PA's flagrant use of this child's death in a propaganda campaign. The

accusation that Israel murdered al-Durah and his glorification as a martyr disgusted the Israeli public. The perceived willingness for Palestinians to sacrifice their children was seen as a collective support for infanticide. In a cartoon on October 4, 2000, Arafat is portrayed as an immoral leader, readily sacrificing innocent children while he himself is remaining out of harm's way. The logic of peace with such a leader is questionable.

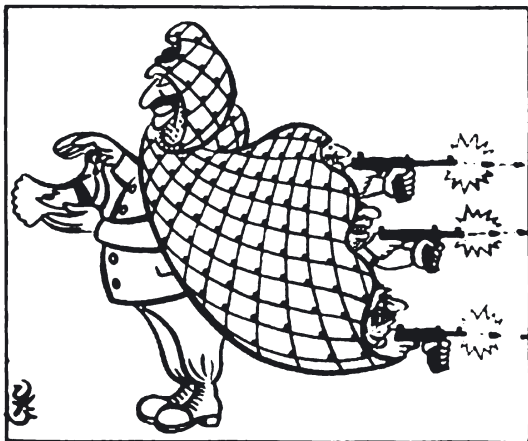


Haaretz September 15, 2000

The failure of September's diplomatic efforts was attributed to Arafat. No longer deemed a reluctant negotiator or dangerous adversary, Arafat was willfully destroying the peace process. The significance of the shift in *Haaretz's* representations of Arafat stems from the newspaper's existing editorial policy to deliberate support the peace process. However, even *Haaretz* could no longer legitimately portray Arafat as a peace partner. He was the enemy of peace, and since peace was in Israel's interests, Arafat's open assault on the peace



Haaretz October 8, 2000



Haaretz November 17, 2000

process made him a threat to Israel. The October 8, 2000 cartoon shows Arafat wildly swinging peace, his characteristic smile now a leer, with the caption reading “*this is my atonement*”.

Increasingly, Arafat was seen to support the peace *process* while being opposed to peace *itself* and the normalization of relations with Israel. The peace process was a calcu-

lated attempt to garnish international political and economic support. Arafat’s claims that he lacked the resources to reign in terror groups was nothing more than an attempt to draw even more concessions from Israel and the international backers of peace. Not only had he failed to make any effort to reign in the terror groups, he was increasingly seen as their patron and protector. A November 17, 2000 cartoon shows Arafat’s peace efforts as a perfect shield for terror activities. Terror was increasingly being seen as a tool of Arafat, not an impediment for him. The peace process diverted world attention from the true Palestinian intention to see the destruction of Israel. Ceasefires were simply strategic attempts to re-arm. Israel had been disarmed by this false diplomacy.

By November 2000, the majority of the Israeli public accepted the Oslo peace process as a failure, despite the best diplomatic efforts to keep the process on life support. Arafat’s lament

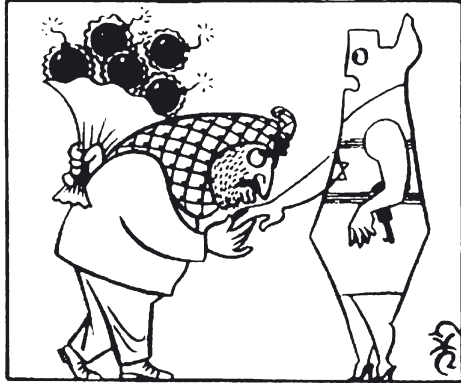
over the end of the process was seen as public showmanship. A November 15, 2000 *Maariv* cartoon shows Arafat as no more than a crocodile crying false tears standing over the graves of Yitchak and Leah Rabin as well as the peace process. The crocodile reflects his true nature, an inhumane lurking menace to Israel, standing over the grave of one of Israel’s greatest leaders, who gave his



Maariv November 15, 2000

life for the very peace that Arafat destroyed.

By the end of November 2000, Arafat is no longer an enemy of peace, or a shield for militants, but is himself the enemy of Israel. A November 24, 2000 cartoon shows Israel as having been foolishly wooed by a charming Arafat, whose gifts of peace carry with them Israel's demise.

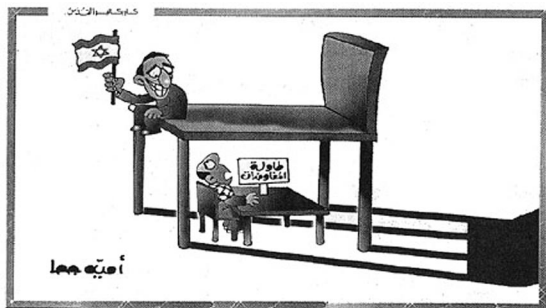


Haaretz November 24, 2000

Palestinian Cartoons

Palestinian cartoons tell the story of an increasing disillusionment with the peace process and a worsening depiction of their Israeli peace partners. As the peace process wore on, the promised improvement in Palestinian life never materialized. Israel's delay tactics, continued incursions into autonomous areas and settlement expansions, all took place under the guise of peace talks. Israel was seen as uninterested in seeing the establishment of an independent Palestine, and would only support a peace that saw a weak and controllable state. In short, peace would serve Israeli interests. While Israeli cartoons focused predominantly on Arafat, Palestinian vilification condemned not only Barak, but extended to the army and ordinary Israelis.

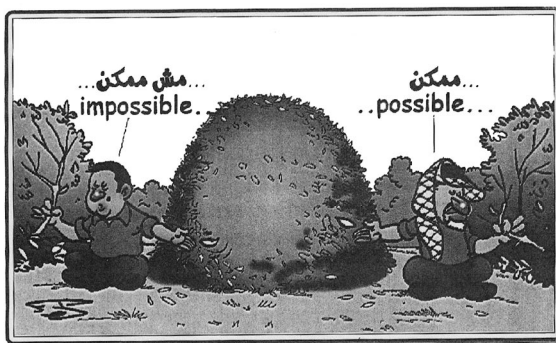
The Palestinian cartoons were drawn from the three main Palestinian dailies: *Al Quds*, *Al Hayat Al Jadeeda* and *Al Ayaam*. *Al Quds* was launched in 1968 as the first paper to be published in the occupied territories (Nossek 2003: 187). It is the most widely read and respected of all Palestinian newspapers (Frisch 1997: 1251). This stands in contrast to *Al-Hayat al-Jadida* which was established in 1994 by the newly formed Palestinian Authority (Nossek 2003: 189). It is the highly politicized mouthpiece for the Palestinian authority, and is in no way an independent press (Jamal 2001: 266). Finally, *Al Ayaam*, launched in 1995, constitutes a middle ground between *Al Quds* and *Al Hayat al Jadeeda*. It is the second most widely read paper, serving roughly 19% of the Palestinian readership (1998 JMCC poll). While technically an independent press, its



Al Quds June 12, 2000

founder, Akram Haniya, maintained a close relationship with Yasser Arafat and was a Palestinian negotiator during the Oslo peace process (Nossek 2003: 189).

For most Palestinians, the July 2000 Camp David negotiations were seen as highly unbalanced, with Israel holding bargaining superiority. While the fairness of the Oslo peace process was highly suspect, Israel was not seen as an enemy. Palestinians could simply not be expected to be on a level negotiation field against the self-interested Israelis. A June 12, 2000 *Al Quds* cartoon depicts an Israeli representative holding a far superior position to Palestinian negotiators, unapologetically waving the Israeli flag. They are not so much peace partners as they are unequal participants in a peace process. The Israeli negotiator is not seen as threatening, but rather quite content with the process, which will obviously serve their interests.



Al Ayaam July 13, 2000

As negotiations carried on, Palestinians increasingly blamed the Israeli negotiators for the impasse. A July 13, 2000 *Al Ayaam* cartoon reveals growing sentiment that Barak represented a barrier to, rather than a partner in, peace. Prior to Barak's July 25, 2000 offer, Israeli negotiators put forward little by way of concessions. Israeli nitpicking over minor details of implementation was evidence of their unwillingness to adhere to the spirit of the peace process. A July 13, 2000 *Al Ayaam* cartoon shows a willing Arafat working beside,



Al Hayat Al Jadeeda
July 11, 2000

but not with, Barak, who is clearly not negotiating in good faith. The cartoon conveys the perceived futility of negotiating with Barak, with parties not seeing eye to eye. While Barak poses no threat, he offers no benefit to Palestinians. The peace process is an empty diplomatic effort.

By July 2000, with Palestinian frustration mounting, negotiations

appeared more antagonistic. Barak's offer not only failed to acknowledge Palestinian willingness to relinquish over 77% of historic Palestine, but constituted an Israeli insult to injury by seeking to further expand the 1967



Al Quds August 1, 2000

borders. The hardening of negotiations is evident in a July 11, 2000 *Al Hayat Al Jaddeda* cartoon in which Oslo has become a showdown. Barak, assuming an aggressive stance, forces Arafat to stand in defense of Palestinian interests. Barak is increasingly seen as a threat to the future of Palestine.

The American-brokered Camp David summit appeared to reinforce the sense of unevenness in the negotiations. The American leader's support of Israel is revealed in the blame Clinton placed on Arafat for threatening the peace process. The reality of the situation, however, was that an Israeli-American conspiracy is responsible for the demise of the peace process, with the Americans supporting positions that Palestinians simply could not accept. An August 1, 2000 *Al Quds* cartoon shows Barak congratulating Clinton on suffocating peace efforts.



Al Hayat al Jadeeda September 3, 2000

In August 2000, negotiations stall as Israeli negotiators refuse to discuss Palestinian sovereignty over Al-Haram al-Sharif or any other Muslim holy sites in *Al Quds*. September sees increasing confrontation between Israeli security forces and Palestinians protesters. A September 3, 2000 cartoon shows a dramatic transformation of representation, as Israel is cast as

an enemy. Israel is no longer represented by its nationalist secular leadership, but seen as a violent ogre. Negotiations with Israel are futile, as the conflict is portrayed as a confrontation with barbarians who threaten Muslim holy sites. Israeli designs for Al-Haram al-Sharif are more clearly evident. Israel is not only the enemy of Palestinians but is just as much an enemy of God, a clear indication of the emerging belief that this was a religious conflict.



Al Ayaam November 1, 2000

The passing of September 13, 2000, the expected Palestinian Independence Day, with no prospect for statehood, was only worsened by the visit by the despised Ariel Sharon to Al-Haram al-Sharif on September 28, 2000, which symbolically demonstrated Israeli

control over Muslim holy sites. When protests erupted in Ramallah, Israeli soldiers opened fire on Palestinian students. Israel was increasingly viewed as a ruthless conqueror. The image of the immoral occupier had returned. It was the death of Mohammed Jamal al-Durah on October 3, 2000 that revealed the depths of the Israeli arrogance, murdering a twelve-year-old child in the arms of his father, indifferent to the presence of international media. Israel was an evil force with blood on its hands with whom no negotiations were possible. The Israeli army was an immoral agent, making ultimatums. An October 10, 2000, an *Al Ayaam* cartoon captures this sentiment of Israel as a soulless menacing figure. Israel was an ever-present threat to Palestinians.

October 2000 witnesses the most intense fighting since the start of the Oslo peace process.



Al Ayaam October 10, 2000

The lynching of two Israeli officers by a Palestinian mob was met with Israeli fury. Israeli helicopters slammed missiles into Arafat's headquarters, Palestinian police stations and media outlets. The intensity of fighting transformed Israel from resistant negotiator to a figure of animalistic savagery. A November 1, 2000 *Al Ayaam* cartoon reveals Barak's true nature, not as source of peace, but a creature of the night who reigns death from above. Israel was a force of evil against whom any moral agent must fight. The symbolic system that had made Oslo possible was dead.

Conclusion

This paper argued that cartoon analysis offer insight into the nature, intensity and durability of conflict. While the correlation between the changes in 'enemy' construction and the shifts in political behavior is a necessary precondition for warfare, they are not often clearly observable by external parties. The rapid shift from peace negotiations to open conflict that occurred in between August and October 2000 required such a transformation. The killing of a Palestinian child or Israeli claims to *Haram Al Sharif* were not a new phenomena. What made the death of al-Durah and Sharon's visit to the Temple mount significant was that they correlated and validated a shift in the perception of the 'other' that had already occurred in both the Israeli and Palestinian opinion. As an internal form of discourse, political cartoons possess an unapologetic capacity to capture the emotionally charged, contentious and emergent shifts in opinion. The analytical potential of cartoon analysis thus lies in providing insight into the undercurrents of public sentiment in situations where significant shifts in opinion may have dire consequences, such as in the case of growing disillusionment on both sides with an ongoing peace process.

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