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The European Union in the Quartet: Acceptance and Influence in the Middle East Peace Process

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ABSTRACT

In 2002, the European Union (EU), the United States, Russia, and the United Nations coordinated their efforts to find a peaceful end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict collectively, as the Quartet for Middle East Peace. There are few examples of the EU represented as one by the supranational body on a global stage over a matter of foreign affairs. This paper asks how the EU and its institutions have been accepted by the other members of the Quartet, and whether or not the EU is an influential group member. The Road Map negotiations in late 2002 illustrate two important trends: the EU's desire to foster a mutually acceptable, two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, and its persistent belief that the United States must remain impartially dedicated to the Middle East Peace Process. These proceedings demonstrate that the EU is accepted as a legitimate and indirectly influential force in the peace negotiations.

KEYWORDS

Middle East Quartet, Road Map, two-state solution, European Union, Israel-Palestine

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at the center of turmoil and terrorism in the Middle East. The European Community (EC) as well as the United States (US) actively, but individually, aided governments of both Israel and Palestine throughout the 1970s, hoping to arrest violence and foster peace. Throughout the turmoil of the intervening years, the EC, later the European Union (EU), has remained a vigilant advocate for Middle East peace through the present day.

In the early 2000s, the US, the EU, the Russian Federation, and the United Nations (UN) began officially coordinating their efforts towards Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The US joined the other three actors in coordinated peace discussions in 2002, and the four tried "...to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East" (United Nations Security Council [UNSC], 2002). Collectively acting as members of the "Quartet" for Middle East Peace, the coalition presented a rough sketch of their plan for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on December 20, 2002, but it required much negotiation on the specific terms for both Israel and Palestine, postponing its release until April 30, 2003. The United Nations Security Council endorsed this "Road Map" on November 19, 2003 (UNSC, 2003).

The Quartet wanted to organize an international conference discussing a solution to the Israel-Palestine problem. At the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit in April 2003, US President George W. Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas met and agreed to follow the Road Map, ending with two sovereign states (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 11). The Road Map, which was influenced by earlier European plans, presented a timetable for peace by 2005 (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 33). However, it was difficult for outside powers to monitor adherence.

When that designated timeline was not met and both Israeli and Palestinian extremists began heavier attacks on one another, the Quartet members pulled aid from the region and cut off communication, hoping the governments would curb the attacks independently (European Union Center of Excellence [EUCE], 2008, p. 3). The Quartet realized it needed to adjust the Road Map's structure, and in 2006, the group developed the three basic principles that remain at the plan's core today. The Quartet demands that violence cease immediately and is maintained through monitored, non-violent, mutually enforced interactions in the future; that Israeli statehood is recognized; and that all previous agreements are accepted, including plans detailed in the Road Map (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 33).

Drafting the Road Map required that Quartet members demonstrate their commitment to regional peace and reveal the extent of their international power and influence. This paper examines how the other members of the Quartet, as well as the Israelis and Palestinians, perceive the EU within the MEPP, and evaluates the EU's ability to influence policy in foreign affairs. I ask whether or not the EU is an accepted and influential member of the Quartet. The EU does not currently have a common foreign policy between member states, but a unified approach in the Quartet could evince the possibility of future, European-level foreign policy action. The member states achieved some degree of unity in the MEPP, but only up to a point, as will be illustrated, for instance, by how easily the US can block EU participation. I assert in this paper that the EU is accepted as a unified actor in the MEPP, partially because of its ideological influence; the EU's plan for a two-state solution had been around the longest and the EU persistently encouraged negotiators to remain at the table. The EU's acceptance in this intergovernmental body is important because it gives power to the supranational bodies of the EU and could legitimize European-level foreign relations

policies in the future. However, I also emphasize that, because it is contingent on US participation and agreement, the EU's power to influence change as a member of the Quartet is limited.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, I provide a brief history of relations between both Israel and Europe, and Palestine and Europe. Then, I discuss the way the EU's institutions and representatives function in the Quartet and their limitations. Next, I consider the reception of the EU by other countries, specifically the other two nations of the Quartet. I focus on the way the US interacts with the EU on a supranational level in MEPP matters, rather than as individual states. A case study of the Road Map negotiations in 2002 and early 2003 is presented to illustrate the EU's influence on the MEPP as a Quartet member. The case study focuses on EU involvement in the negotiations from June 2002, when the Road Map was conceptualized, through January 2003.

HISTORY OF EUROPE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE SINCE THE 1970S

The EC first became collectively engaged with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in 1973 in the wake of the Yom Kippur War and the global oil crisis (EUCE, 2008, p. 1). The Community believed that Israel should pull out of the Palestinian territory and recognize its autonomy, and that the Arab world needed to accept Israel as a state (Özcan, 2008, p. 63). The nine member states unknowingly determined from that day forward that the Middle East would be an essential piece of international relations policy to deal with on a European level. European support for a Middle East peace agreement has increased with each successive EU enlargement. In practice with EU integration, the member states have largely reconciled their differing opinions over the Middle East, in the interest of presenting a collective, European-level foreign policy to the region.

In 1977, at the London Summit, the EC proposed the hallmark policy stance of a “two-state” solution. The European Council meeting that followed shortly after the summit addressed the Middle East; part three of the Council's concluding statement on the Middle East states: “[t]he Nine have affirmed their belief that a solution to the conflict in the Middle East will be possible only if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give effective expression to its national identity is translated into fact, which would take into account the need for a homeland for the Palestinian people” (European Council, 1977, p. 93). The EC threatened its Israeli relations by recognizing Palestine's right to exist. Three years later in June 1980, the EC issued the Venice Declaration further responding to the conflict. The Venice Declaration acknowledged both Israel and Palestine's rights to exist and urged each side to do the same; supported Palestine's right to autonomy; and recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the representative government of the territory (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 9). This declaration set the policy precedent for a “two-state” solution, having a sovereign Palestine living in peace with Israel, although the EC is not often recognized for this accomplishment.

The Oslo Accords, also called the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, revived the “two-state” idea in 1993. In these accords, Israel and the PLO accepted one another as official legal parties in the arrangements, falling in line with the Venice Declaration of 1980 and exemplifying Europe's influential precedent-setting abilities (Tahir, 2008). A loose framework was put into place for reaching peace by the end of the decade. Two years later, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was established and the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement known as “Oslo II” mandated Israeli forces leave Palestinian

territories (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 10). The PA did not replace the PLO as the ruling and official negotiating body; it was only given control of security obligations, particularly in the West Bank territory, which was occupied by the Israeli forces (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 10)¹.

The Oslo Accords did not have a reasonably attainable, established end goal; they were simply an attempt to get both governments working side by side. As Tahir (2008) says, “[t]he Oslo Document, though a big breakthrough, provided the framework for a solution to the conflict, rather than a solution” (p. 71). Without strong incentives for Israel or Palestine to make the effort, there was no collaboration. Ultimately, the Oslo Accords failed despite any diplomatic support, because neither the Israeli government nor the PLO found a reason to meet their requirements in a timely manner (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 10).

While the EU was looking for a way to directly affect negotiations, a pattern of indirect influences could be found instead. The EU issued the Berlin Doctrine in 1999 calling for a sovereign Palestine (EUCE, 2008, p. 2). The EU recognized that the US’s participation was necessary, and effectively encouraged the major international power back to the negotiation table. The EU displayed good faith in its ability to work collaboratively with the US towards Middle East peace. When the US returned to negotiations with Israeli and Palestinian officials after a brief self-removal, however, the EU was again not directly included in the talks. The EU’s limited effectiveness can be seen here. The EU essentially watched for the first few years of the twenty-first century when the US’s Camp David Accords in 2000 failed to end the conflict (EUCE, 2008, p. 2). Instead of lessening violence in the Middle East, tensions between Israel and Palestine escalated to become the second intifada in 2000 (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 11)².

EU COHESION UNDER SUPRANATIONAL BODIES

Foreign policy was largely left out of the European Economic Community (EEC) Treaty itself, but member states of the EU have made a long, slow and halting effort to negotiate a common foreign and security policy over the past four decades. Some European-integration enthusiasts attempted to coordinate the member states’ foreign policies in 1952, just after the EEC was established (Hix & Hoyland, 2011). Coming so soon after the end of World War II, many countries were skeptical about allowing Germany to rearm. Devout French nationalists rejected the treaty to establish a European Defense Community (EDC) in a National Assembly (Giegerich & Wallace, 2010; Hix & Hoyland, 2011). While the EDC did fail to get ratified, it served as a catalyst for European cooperation on foreign affairs. Under new French leadership of President de Gaulle in 1961, the “Fouchet Plan” proposed closer political cooperation again. However, the EEC was expanding at the time, and the proposal was a contentious subject that encroached on national sovereignty too soon for some member states and candidate countries, specifically the candidate Britain, to be comfortable with (Giegerich & Wallace, 2010). This time, the Dutch rejected the proposal in referendum.

1 Israel, along with the USA, interpreted the PLO to be a terrorist organization and the US pulled out of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations for a time in the early 2000s because of this association. Consequently, the Palestinian Authority falsely falls under the same assumption. Actually, the Hamas, a political faction, has an extremist branch, which is responsible for most attacks on Israel and Israeli posts in or near the debated Palestinian territory (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 18).

2 The First Intifada occurred in 1987, when Palestine raised violence against Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip (Özcan, 2008, p. 63).

In 1969, member states moved closer to a common foreign policy with the European Political Cooperation (EPC), which was established at the Hague Summit (Hix & Hoyland, 2011). Committees of national foreign ministers and other bureaucrats came to agreements about foreign affairs. The decisions reached in these committees were in no way binding; however, the member states also said they would not purposely allow contradicting national policies or actions that would undermine their collective agreement (Hix & Hoyland, 2011, p. 311). In 1991, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) out of the EPC, restructuring the goals, institutional positions, and decision-making processes concerning foreign policy. This treaty grouped policies into three pillars. Certain issue areas were conceded to the European-level government to control, while others were reserved for national governments. CFSP constructed the second intergovernmental pillar to be monitored and discussed by heads of states, not European officials (Giegerich & Wallace, 2010). The Maastricht Treaty took great strides for cooperation, but brought up the issue of defense, which was one of the issues expanded upon in the Amsterdam Treaty, enforced in 1999 (Hix & Hoyland, 2011).

Today, defense is still an evolving and controversial part of the EU's CFSP. Military forces in the EU are organized nationally, which makes cohesive international policies difficult. The lack of a unified military force also makes it more difficult for the EU to be recognized as a useful, effective participant in the Middle East. Military intervention in the second intifada was not attempted, but international military intervention is almost certainly going to be necessary in the transition from an Israeli-occupied Palestine, to a separate state³. The EU's lack of joint military power affects the way the EU is seen on a world stage. While individual member states can choose to deploy their individual military forces, there is very loose dedication and coordination between the member states; Britain and France are the only two member states that deploy their forces outside of Europe unless in coordination with a NATO or UN peacekeeping mission (Giegerich & Wallace, 2010, pp. 439–440). Even if the EU wanted to deploy military forces, the supranational bodies could, at most, implore the member states' governments to do so. In negotiations, the EU can be ambassadorial, but in this time of war, as said by one reporter, "it is explosives that dictate the course of events, not diplomatic declarations" (Ya'ari, 2002, para. 3); this mindset diminishes the EU's direct influence on the international relations stage.

The EU's international participation progressed when the Treaty of Amsterdam created supranational, diplomatic positions that turned out to be central to EU participation in the Quartet. There are two individuals that most frequently represent the EU in Quartet affairs: one is the High Representative (HR) of the CFSP and the other is the EU Special Representative (EUSR) to the MEPP, sometimes called the EU Special Envoy (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 33). The Quartet members meet on two different levels, by the principals and the envoys. The HR meets with other "principal" representatives of the Quartet member states, officially including the US Secretary of State, the UN Secretary General, and the Russian Foreign Minister (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 33). At the "envoys" level, the EUSR for the MEPP is the representative. The EU's legitimacy as an international-policy setter rather than only an economic power is strengthened because these supranational actors

3 The three phases of the Road Map, to be described further in subsequent sections, acknowledge that the international community will be called on to assist the rising state, Palestine. Since terrorist attacks and violence stemming from the tensions of this conflict are common occurrences, it can rightfully be interpreted that the forming state will require military assistance, even if only to maintain borders and help squash riots by extremists.

represent it internationally.

The first HR was Javier Solana, a former NATO Secretary General⁴. As the EU HR, Solana travelled to the Middle East frequently trying to advance relationships between the EU and other national leaders. HR responsibilities were not decisively outlined in the Treaty of Amsterdam, but Solana earned respect for the position that has been passed on to his successor, Catherine Ashton. Aside from comforting devout nationalists within Europe that his position was not a threat to their sovereignty, Solana's personal initiative to travel and extend a European front to the rest of the world had an enormous influence on the perception of this office internationally. In the Quartet negotiation of the Road Map, Solana had a lot of work to do to keep all of the parties at the table without angering the individual member states by overstepping his bounds. Solana took steps to gain international acceptance for the EU's foreign relations and there is no report of any individual member state publicly disagreeing with his actions in the MEPP negotiations.

The EUSR position seemed to be necessary for the MEPP to ever really get underway, and so it was established in 1996. The representative remains in the Middle East as an ambassador, an advocate for peace policies implemented by the HR and keeping him or her informed of progress towards the two-state solution (Great Britain: Parliament, 2007, p. 37). The envoys of the Quartet meet separately from the principals as their representatives since the envoys are more frequently available. Separate envoy meetings were mentioned in various news reports in between the principals' meetings for the Road Map negotiations, crediting the envoys with working out some minute details of the negotiations. The most current EUSR appointment took effect on February 1, 2012; Andreas Reinicke was appointed to serve as special envoy to the MEPP until June 30, 2013 (Ashton, 2012)⁵.

The British Parliament's House of Lords' Annual Report from the European Union Committee claimed in 2007 that there was still a lack of cooperation between the EU institutions and member states that does not benefit its role in the process or in the Quartet (p. 30). This accusation is true – the EU institutions' power and involvement in the MEPP are limited as expressed within the treaties, which hinders the EU from being a directly influential actor in the process. An example of the member-state–EU-institution rift in the MEPP occurred in 2002 when the British Prime Minister Tony Blair invited the Quartet and the Palestinian representatives to meet in London to discuss developments in Palestine (Zacharia, 2002). Britain was not the rotating EU president at the time, but Blair still personally invited the parties.

There are two ways that the external parties could interpret Blair's action. It may be interpreted as one member state's attempt to supersede the HR's power, showing dissension within the Union. To show cohesion, it would have been best for Solana to publically summon the actors instead. On the other hand, Blair's offer to host the event in London could be interpreted as a valiant effort to bring the parties to the EU, advancing external perspectives of its contribution to, dedication to, and prominence within the MEPP negotiations. The US applauded the conference and its purpose, rather than questioning the cohesion of the Union (Zacharia, 2002). US approval of Blair's action kept the EU from appearing divided and weak in this instance.

4 Solana became HR in 1999 and served two, five-year terms in this position (Giegerich & Wallace, 2010, p. 442).

5 Miguel Moratinos was appointed to be the EU Special Envoy to the peace process in 1996 (EUCE, 2008, p. 2). Marc Otte was appointed to the position on July 21, 2003 and served until February 1, 2012 (Ashton, 2012).

ACCEPTANCE OF THE EU AS A QUARTET MEMBER

The EU gained recognition as a unified actor on the global stage in part with the help of its united statements in the UN. Transcripts of UN General Assembly meetings illustrate that the EU member states support a unified position in MEPP matters⁶. At times, each member state feels the necessity to individually express what the representative EU President also says. Looking at the Quartet, though, the individual member states are not individually involved in conversations with the US or Russia over MEPP matters. As illustrated in the previous section, the HR and the EUSR for the MEPP meet with the Quartet, and Quartet meetings are only called by and open to the individuals holding principal or envoy positions. If this unified front is accepted and treated as such by the Quartet members, its acceptance may encourage more European-level foreign affairs cooperation within the EU. More importantly, its acceptance could increase its participation and direct influence on the negotiations.

Even though supranational actors actively represent the EU, the US has historically rejected EU participation in negotiations in the MEPP. The US became the global hegemon at the end of the Cold War, and remains such with the world's most omnipresent military power. In 1974, while the EC was advocating for the European Political Community and the European Defense Community, the US reportedly supported the EU's integration in these new areas, but only after the EU reassured the US that it would not make external political decisions that would poorly impact the US (Tahir, 2008). After the Venice Declaration, the US government reportedly "disapproved of independent European diplomacy in the Middle East", a statement that had a drastic effect on the perceptions that other nations – especially Middle Eastern nations – had about Europe (Tahir, 2008, p. 60). In the 1999 talks following the Berlin Declaration, the US mediated negotiations between Israel and Palestine, and the EU was not invited to participate in the negotiations (EUCE, 2008, p. 2). These roadblocks imposed by the US further prove that the EU cannot be directly effective in international affairs yet. However, the EU can indirectly affect policy when its involvement is supported by a stronger world power.

While the US's reasons for appearing to disapprove of and block EU involvement in the MEPP at times are inconclusive, the US has generally accepted working with EU supranational representatives within the Quartet. The most important factor in the US and the EU continuing to work together for the MEPP despite any contentions is that both sides do want to see a peaceful end to problems in the region. The EU's acceptance as a cohesive actor allows it to be interpreted as one of the two leaders in the Quartet. The US and the EU appear to have strong bilateral diplomatic relations with opposite parties, so the EU's acceptance as an actor allows it to voice concern for Palestine and balance the talks.

By contrast, Russian and UN actions within the Quartet are not publicized as frequently or as widely. The UN is only seen passing Resolutions once the Quartet has reached its collective decision. Only two Resolutions were passed in the time period of the MEPP Road Map negotiations: Resolution 1397 (2002) and Resolution 1515 (2003). Russia ap-

6 There are many examples of this unity. Around the time of the Road Map negotiations, Denmark was the representative of the EU in the UN meetings. Look to the official record of the General Assembly's fifty-seventh assembly on Friday, December 20, 2002: the Denmark representative begins his remark with "I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union" (United Nations). All EU speakers at UN meetings began their remarks with this same general disclaimer, reminding the General Assembly that he or she spoke for more than just his or her own nation, but for the entire union of states.

pears to be most influential when it is voicing support for a position already taken by either the EU or the US, as judged from its actions in the Road Map negotiations. The EU and Russia, while they have many of their own bilateral issues that could be mentioned, advocate for a Palestinian state together within the Quartet.

Russia publicly speaks of the EU as a unit; they jointly reiterated their support for the three-phased Road Map in November 2002 (“EU, Russia Back,” 2002). Common statements by the EU HR and Russian President support that the supranational EU is accepted by Russia as an international policy actor within MEPP matters. In their statement, they directly urged both Yasser Arafat of Palestine and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to follow through with the plan (“EU, Russia Back,” 2002). Recognizing the Israeli demands, the statement did specifically point to the terrorist attacks in the region and requested that the PA find a way to curb them (“EU, Russia Back,” 2002).

Both the US and Russia deal directly with the EU HR in principal negotiations for the Road Map, and there have not been any primary reports of contentions about it. There are no public records in which either country talks about the EU as individual states when discussing the MEPP. Because the other two sovereign Quartet members have not tried to work around the fragile structure of the EU’s External Affairs Committee or the HR to work directly with one country or a few rather than the supranational EU on MEPP issues, the EU appears accepted as a supranational foreign relations player. The US and Russia realize that the EU is acting as one in the MEPP, represented originally by Solana and presently by Catherine Ashton on the principal level.

THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE ROAD MAP

Case Study of EU Influence on the Quartet

The EU’s main effect on the peace negotiations is its ideological influence on the Road Map. Europe’s “hallmark” policy stance for a two-state solution was not attributed to them once the most powerful global actor adopted it: US President George W. Bush publicly announced on June 24, 2002 the framework for a US-backed peace plan in the Middle East (Feng, 2002). News articles from global publications refer to the Road Map as a “US-backed” peace plan, only rarely mentioning the EU, and even less frequently Russia or the UN. The EU’s indirect effect on the MEPP is illustrated here. This case study of the Road Map negotiations from 2002 to 2003 illustrates the EU’s influence on, and indeed its necessity to, the MEPP.

In September 2002, the Quartet met in Washington DC to discuss the Road Map. The *Agence France Presse* refers to the plan as an EU plan, while the *Xinhua General News Services* and others call it a US proposal (Feng, 2002; “EU Foreign Envoy,” 2002). Historical circumstances led to the inconsistent reports. President Bush was the one who first announced the rough outline of a plan publicly in 2002, and, because of the US’s established hegemonic power, the plan was credited to the US. However, the Road Map that Bush presented called for actions that had striking parallels to a plan that Germany initially proposed within some EU discussions earlier that same year (EUCE, 2008, p. 2)⁷. Not only were these similarities between the plans evident, but Bush’s plan also called for Palestine to be a separate state by 2005 (Feng, 2002); the US was publicly promoting a two-state solution. The EU had been

⁷ The EU discussed the plan internally while the US was withdrawn from negotiations. As such, this European proposal is not a published document.

advocating a two-state solution since the 1980 Venice Declaration. The policy the EC proposed did eventually appeal to other states, even though it took almost thirty years to see. Once the US also advocated the EU policy, it became widely credible. The two-state solution idea is one of the most prominent and important ways that the EU indirectly influenced the entire track of the MEPP.

The structure of the Road Map changed through the negotiation process. The Bush-announced outline of a peace plan in 2002 established a three-year deadline for Israeli-Palestinian peace, ending in a state for Palestine, but with “tough” Palestinian requirements (Feng, 2002, para. 7). The interests of Israel were heavily protected under this version of the plan, because it required more initiative and reform from Palestine before negotiations would even begin. The US had aligned itself carefully with Israel before the Quartet was formed and, as a Quartet actor and the natural leader, it promoted a policy that was attractive to Prime Minister Sharon and his government.

To influence the US and assert the EU’s position as a Quartet player, Solana travelled to Washington DC on September 16, 2002 to meet with Secretary of State Colin Powell and other officials (“EU Foreign Envoy,” 2002). In this meeting, the new structure of the plan was established, with three phases leading more concretely to a two-state solution in 2005. The plan required a lot more from Israel than the original, vague US statement in June. The three phases of the plan are summarized here: first, by June 2003, Palestine would make large government and security policy changes, including starting work on a constitution, and Israel would withdraw from Palestinian territory to the territory boundaries recognized before the second intifada; the second phase, from June 2003 until December 2003, would incorporate international players, specifically members of the Quartet, into a support conference encouraging multilateral communication over the Palestinian constitution, and would establish a Palestinian state with “provisional borders” by 2003; and the third and final phase, to be completed in 2005, would be another set of negotiations to turn the interim Palestinian state into a permanent one in 2005 (“EU Hopes to Move,” 2002; “Highlights of how United States,” 2002).

The version of the Road Map discussed in the September 16 meeting was to be reviewed by the Quartet once more and was then to be revealed to the public on December 20, 2002 (“Glimpse of ‘Quartet,’” 2002). Solana met with Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and they talked about the three-phase structure of the Road Map on October 10, 2002 (“EU Hopes to Move,” 2002). At the time of this meeting, the Prime Minister seemed generally willing to accept the plan, although he did show concern over pulling out all military enforcements from the Palestinian territory for the security of Israelis (“Israel Says it Principally,” 2002). However, closer to the December 20 meeting, Sharon became adamantly opposed to the Road Map. As it was incrementally discussed with Israeli and Palestinian officials, one of the main contentions was Israel’s requirement to pull back from Palestinian territories in Phase I. *The Jerusalem Post* criticized the Road Map vehemently for requiring Israel to withdraw its military forces from the Palestinian territory while terrorist attacks were still on the rise (Ya’ari, 2002). The Israeli government’s problem with the plan was that there was not enough emphasis or requirement for Palestine to stop the terrorist attacks on Israel (Hazboun, 2002). Israel wanted to see more requirements and strict consequences to entice Palestinian reforms. If Israel was to pull its armies out of the Palestinian territories, it wanted reassurance that the violence was going to stop on the Palestinian side.

Contention over the Road Map's Release

The largest disagreement within the Quartet was over when the Road Map should be released. Democratic elections were to be held in Israel on January 28 and in Palestine on January 20 for new governments (Copson, 2002). The US was not observably confident in the legitimacy of the elections in Palestine (Heintz, 2002), but the elections for the Israeli government were deemed highly influential, as it could mean Sharon would no longer serve as Prime Minister. Because of his focus on the election, Prime Minister Sharon refused to talk about the Road Map and urged the United States to defer the date of the plan's release until after the elections (Copson, 2002)⁸.

The US claimed that if the Road Map were published in December, just a few weeks before elections in Israel, it "might be undermined by attacks from candidates" ("Middle East: Peace Proposal Delayed," 2002, para. 2). Secretary of State Colin Powell said after the December meeting, "[b]ecause of the Israeli elections, to be frank, and because of the number of issues that are before the Israeli public right now, we think it would be wiser in this instance for us to continue work on the Road Map and wait until after the Israeli election is over" ("EU/US: New Transatlantic Splits," 2002, para. 2). The other three Quartet members wanted the plan to be adopted at the December meeting. While they were able to voice their disappointment that the plan was not released, the EU's direct effectiveness was undermined as the US single-handedly stopped the group's peace plan from progressing.

The EU was steadfast in its position that the Road Map should be revealed before the elections in January. It saw the December 20 meeting as the best time to finish putting the pieces together and present it publicly. Per Stig Moeller, foreign minister of Denmark, expressed on behalf of the EU that the Road Map should be seen before people go to cast their votes in the Israeli election, so they can consider the effect of their vote on the successful implementation of the plan and thus an end to the violence ("EU/US: New Transatlantic Splits," 2002). The EU asserted that progress along the Road Map required the international community to take action, supporting and if necessary intervening on either side (Zacharia, 2002). Within the EU, the Council was adamant in statements leading up to the meeting on December 20 that a "clear, detailed and unified position on the Road Map must come out of the Washington meeting" ("Accord Close," 2002, para. 5). While the EU could rally public support, it could not directly influence the US to release the Road Map.

In the end, instead of publicizing the Road Map, the Quartet issued a joint statement, once again calling for "an immediate, comprehensive, cease-fire" to violence and promising to finalize plans as soon as elections in the area were over (United States of America State Department, 2002). Although the plan was not released, much to the EU's dissatisfaction, the December 20 meeting did add a clause to the Road Map specifically stating, "a Palestinian state could only be created when the Palestinians had leadership 'uncompromised by terror'" ("Middle East: Peace Proposal Delayed," 2002, para. 4). Europe continued to influence the ideology of the Road Map, although it was not able to secure the Road Map's adoption in the face of US resistance.

Israeli Rejection of the EU Serves as Quartet Motivation

The EU optimistically spoke about the importance of strong bilateral relations between

8 It is important to note the timing of the Road Map negotiations and the state the US was in following the September 11th attacks. The US depended on bilateral relations with Israel during this time as the US War on Terror was beginning.

it and Israel in November of 2002, the time between the two Quartet meetings. However, while the EU stressed this in public discussions and statements, it was also accused of keeping Israel at a distance. Politically, the EU claimed that the “Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights are illegal”; this statement raised a strong reaction from Israel, which demanded the EU be nonpartisan in negotiations or remove itself from the discussions (Teitelbaum, 2002, para. 9).

In January 2003, with Israeli elections looming, Prime Minister Sharon began degrading Europe’s role in the Quartet. Prime Minister Sharon said, “To the European side I said, ‘Your attitude towards Israel and the Arabs and the Palestinians should be balanced...when it will be balanced you are mostly welcome to participate.’ But at this moment, the relations are unbalanced” (Perry, 2003, para. 6). The reason Sharon claimed that the EU was biased was that the EU was not proposing to remove the Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat from power (Perry, 2003). “The support that we give to the Palestinian Authority is designed to enhance Israel’s security, rather than the reverse, and we deny that we are in any sense unbalanced or that we fail to understand the situation,” EU Commission spokesperson Emma Udwin said in response to Sharon’s accusations (“Peace ‘Road Map’,” 2003, para. 11). There was constantly a struggle amongst the Quartet members to be visually and absolutely equal in respects to both Israel and Palestine’s interests.

Sharon’s accusation of the EU spread rapidly, paired with another flippant statement that called the Quartet “nothing”, claiming it should not be taken seriously (Perry, 2003, para. 8). Sharon’s denunciation of the Quartet angered all of the members and immediately motivated them to take steps to see the Road Map completed. After Sharon’s statement was released, Powell said, “We [the US] remain committed to the work of the Quartet and we remain committed to the roadmap we believe provides a way forward” (“Powell Hopes for ‘New Energy’,” 2003, para. 3). Sharon’s statement enticed Russia to call for an immediate Quartet meeting at the end of January to finalize the Road Map. The EU already advocated for the Road Map’s completion, and with this added incentive, it was driving more fiercely. The State Department issued a press statement on April 30, 2003 with the Quartet’s detailed Road Map. It was then delivered and accepted in Resolution 1515 by the United Nations in November 2003⁹.

CONCLUSIONS

Europe, between the EC and the EU, set some of the most basic and most important precedents for the MEPP that have influenced today’s plans put forth by the Quartet. The two-state solution, most significantly, is a policy proposal that the EU advocated since 1980. Seeing as the EU had only just begun establishing itself as a permanent world actor, the EU ran into difficulties finding support for this plan at the time and gaining Israel and Palestine’s cooperation. With the formation of the Quartet, EU policies for Middle East peace were pooled with US military power and strategies along with Russian and UN networks to reach the same end goal Europe had in mind for the region since 1980.

Despite occasional disagreements among its member states, the EU presents itself as a unified actor within the Quartet under the representation of the EU HR and other special envoys, as illustrated by the above account of the Road Map negotiations. While the EU

⁹ This Road Map in its final stage is difficult to locate because the timeline and players were constantly changing. It was first released on April 30, 2003 as a press statement through the US Department of State. The Road Map is transcribed in Kurtzner and Lasensky’s (2008) book, *Negotiation Arab-Israeli Peace* (p. 161).

institutions in general have room to grow more cohesive on foreign affairs issues, they have not been so fragmented as to diminish the EU's position in the Quartet, and the EU does act unified within the Quartet under the various European representatives. As it stands, the other parties involved recognize the EU as a single actor, not 27, in the MEPP. The UN was already accustomed to hearing the EU speak with one voice on some matters within its General Assembly. As the EU increased its presence in the Middle East region, Palestinians welcomed the EU as a mediator, grateful for its support of both sovereign states. Despite Sharon's accusations in 2003 that the EU was biased, Israeli officials did frequently meet with European representatives, recognizing these people as proxies of the entire Union. As for the other Quartet members, documents frequently place "Europe" in communication with "the US," treating the EU supranational authority as just as much of a legitimate, international actor as representatives of the US State Department. When working towards the MEPP, Russia did not reportedly have any problems accepting the EU power as legitimate, despite any bilateral issues that may stand. It is conclusive that the Quartet members and parties involved accept the EU as a legitimate, unified actor within its context.

The EU saw its own potential in negotiating with the regional leaders and the US over MEPP issues. It encouraged the US to return to negotiations in the early 2000s, and, since all parties have been committed to the cause, the EU and US have worked relentlessly to put forth an unbiased solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With acceptance established, the relationship between the EU and the US during the Road Map negotiations further proves the EU's necessity to the Quartet. The EU encouraged the US to remain vigilant to the peace effort in the early 2000s; subsequently, the Quartet continuously moved peace plans forward. Even though it is only conditionally and indirectly effective on Quartet actions, the EU's dedication to a two-state solution in the region makes it an accepted player and an asset to the Quartet's overall worth.

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