

# The Dutch and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process during the Second Intifada

## A swift transition towards security?



MA thesis International Relations in Historical Perspective

Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Author: S.A. Bliemer

Mentor: Dr. P.A.M. Malcontent

**Cover Photo:**

*The remains of an EU funded Palestinian housing project in the West Bank after Israeli demolitions. An image that characterizes the EU's lack of influence in a peace process that took a turn for the worse.*

Source: The Times of Israel. *EU could seek damages for West Bank buildings razed by Israel*. 07-11-2016. Available at: <https://goo.gl/kRt3Of>

# Table of content

<i>Preface</i>	5
<i>Map 1: Israel and Palestine conflict areas</i>	6
<i>List of acronyms</i>	7
<b>1. Research design</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.1. Introduction</b>	8
<b>1.2. Objectives</b>	10
<b>1.3. Research question and design</b>	12
1.3.1. Research question	12
1.3.2. Time period	12
1.3.3. Design of research	13
<b>1.4. Relevance</b>	14
<b>1.5. Structure of research</b>	16
<b>2. In anticipation of erupting violence</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.1. Introduction</b>	17
<b>2.2. The Oslo Accord</b>	17
2.2.1. Sidelined at Oslo	17
2.2.2. The Dutch response to the Oslo Accords	18
2.2.3. The EU response to the Oslo Accords	19
<b>2.3. Towards the Camp David negotiations</b>	21
2.3.1. Changing circumstances	21
2.3.2. Continuing Dutch and EU policies	21
2.3.3. New negotiations without the EU	23
<b>2.4. Concluding remarks</b>	24
<b>3. The impact of the Second Intifada</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.1. Introduction</b>	25
<b>3.2. Erupting violence</b>	25
3.2.1. A retracted EU	25

<b>3.2.2. Excessive violence: the international responses</b>	27
<b>3.2.3. The Dutch involvement</b>	28
<b>3.3. Ongoing conflict</b>	31
<b>3.3.1. International developments</b>	31
<b>3.3.2. From BP to ENP</b>	32
<b>3.3.3. Maintaining the dialogue</b>	33
<b>3.3.4. Changing Dutch politics</b>	34
<b>3.3.5. Towards a new roadmap</b>	36
<b>3.4. Concluding remarks</b>	37
<b>4. From physical violence to political disarray</b>	39
<b>4.1. Introduction</b>	39
<b>4.2. International efforts</b>	39
<b>4.2.1. The Dutch and EU stance on new peace initiatives</b>	39
<b>4.2.2. Shifting priorities</b>	40
<b>4.3. The Palestinian elections</b>	43
<b>4.4. Concluding remarks</b>	44
<b>5. Conclusion and discussion</b>	45
<b>5.1. A recap of the results</b>	45
<b>5.2. Research question answered</b>	47
<b>5.3. Discussion</b>	48
<i>Literature</i>	50
<i>Books</i>	50
<i>Scientific articles</i>	51
<i>Newspaper articles</i>	52
<i>Reports</i>	52
<i>Websites</i>	58

## Preface

This thesis marks the end of my Master International Relations in Historical Perspective at the University of Utrecht. Within my Master program, I improved my abilities to combine past with present events and national and international politics. These two skills were of great help to complete this research. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is characterized by issues and events from the past, which still heavily influence the debate in the present. In this research, the difference between national and international politics is somewhat mixed, as the Dutch policy is partly intertwined with EU policy, while EU policy is largely determined by the positions of individual member states.

My interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has taken quite a journey since I started my Master program. After a course on the historical debates surrounding the conflict, I experienced how the conflict is still leaving its marks in international relations today, due to my internship at the Palestinian Mission to the Netherlands in The Hague. These experiences, together with this research, have greatly contributed to my understanding not only of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but of the issues surrounding international conflicts in general.

This thesis could not have been finished without the support and helping hands of many others. I would like to express my gratitude to Peter Malcontent for his knowledge and council during this research, as well as to all of my family and friends for their support.

### Map 1: Israel and Palestine conflict areas



Source: *Huffington Post*, 2011.

Available at: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/19/israel-map-the-palestinian-864379.html>

## List of acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
BP	Barcelona Process
EEC	European Economic Community
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EU	European Union
MEPP	Middle East Peace Process
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MP	Member of Parliament
PA	Palestinian Authorities
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
SEU	the State of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States (of America)

# 1: Research design

## 1.1. Introduction

The goal of many peace initiatives by involved actors like the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) has been to reach a comprehensive agreement to end the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, all of these initiatives failed in their promise. The current conflict over security, justice and nationhood has been raging on since the end of World War Two. In the years that followed, many acts of violence increased contradictions between Israeli and Palestinians, further endangering a lasting peace. Attempts to restore trust and realize real progress in peace talks have often showed to be in vain.

In 2010, researcher Joel Peters wrote an article in which he discussed the ongoing struggles of the EU to get involved and contribute to the peace process over the years. According to Peters, the EU showed to be a long term supporter of the right of self-determination for the Palestinians. The geographical proximity to the region and political, economic and cultural bonds resulted in the EU feeling to fulfill a special role within the peace process. Especially during the 1970's and 1980's, the core message of the European powers towards the conflict consisted of self-determination and justice for the Palestinian people and ending human rights violations of all involved actors. A two state solution based on the pre-1967 borders was the starting point of the European approach (Peters, 2010: 511-512).

The critical EU stance towards Israel concerning the use of extrajudicial violence, the occupation of the West Bank, increased settlement activities and the ongoing Palestinian refugee issue resulted in a deteriorated relationship between the European powers and Israel. This led to Israel locking out the EU at new peace talks. During the Oslo Accords negotiations at the start of the 1990's, the EU was mostly at the sidelines instead of engaging in the peace talks, which were led by the US. To restore the Israeli trust in the EU, the EU and Israel signed an important Association Agreement (AA), which strengthened the political, cultural and economic bonds. After the signing of the first Oslo Accord in 1993, the EU saw a possibility to



engage in a new regional peace initiative, namely the Barcelona Process (BP). This process was focusing on promoting peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean region. By creating a new economic and political network, the relationships between states in the region should improve. However, this changed after the failure of the Oslo Accords and Camp David talks in 2000. New erupting violence, which resulted in the second Palestinian Intifada (*uprising*), ended the trust and progress of the BP (Peters, 2010: 518-520).

According to Peters, this marked an important turning point in the EU policy towards the conflict. From this point on, the EU started to contemplate the seemingly never-ending conflict as a threat to its own and regional security. Out of fear for radical polarization of the conflict, stability and an end to the ongoing violence became a top strategic priority for the EU (Peters, 2010: 521). Other researchers supported this thesis by Peters. According to Nathalie Tocci, for decades the EU's peace process policy consisted of two main pillars, namely the two-state solution and respect for human rights and international law. However, implementing a fair policy to uphold these pillars has been increasingly difficult (Tocci, 2009: 387-401). Other researchers like Pijpers stated that from 2002 the EU policy started to shift as a result of the rising violence in the region. The 9/11 terrorist attacks, the new Intifada and the Second Gulf War made the US prioritize security in the region. The US 'War on Terror' had its effects on EU policies as well. During this period, the EU followed the US leading role in the region, what resulted in an increasingly critical EU policy towards (Palestinian) terrorism (Pijpers, 2007: 4-6). According to Peters, this led to a new pillar in addition to the two already mentioned pillars of Tocci, namely the pillar of regional stability/security.

During the 1990's, the EU focused on enlarging its role within the peace process. The EU became further institutionalized and gained more political power as an increased number of European nations joined the EU. The EU were optimistic they could play an important role in establishing peace. They increased their critical view of the Israeli government, who in the EU's eyes, maintained a policy that blocked a final peace accord. In many statements and resolutions, the EU convicted the refusal to respect international law and human rights. This critical view on Israel did damage the EU-Israel relation and resulted in the EU being ignored at peace talks. To counter this problem, the EU focused on improving economic relations. With

supporting the newly established Palestinian Authority (PA) with large financial funds, and appointing of a special EU envoy to the peace process, the EU tried to enlarge its influence (Peters, 2010: 515-517). According to the EU, this newly created economic network should strengthen political ties as well. The BP is a good example of the EU's regional economic policy that was implemented during the 1990's (Peters, 2010: 517-518). This policy can be characterized as a regional policy, which tried to involve many states within a framework of cooperation.

After the second Intifada, the EU implemented a more bilateral approach because the regional economic approach of the 1990's showed to be ineffective to increase EU influence and reaching a final peace agreement. This new bilateral approach featured more direct contact and discussion between EU member states and Israel and the PA. The EU hoped that by improving bilateral relations, they could influence and support the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) more effectively. This also meant concerns of human rights were increasingly discussed in meetings between EU and Israeli officials, and less in the public debate. Furthermore, due to the violence that seemed to be without end, the EU adopted a more security driven policy, which prioritized security and stability over international law and human rights. From this moment on, the EU did not try to squeeze themselves into the peace talks, but accepted their supportive role and the US lead to end the violence and bring stability to the region (Peters, 2010: 523). The EU remained the largest donor for the PA and Palestinian development work, but all involved actors knew by then that if the US did not pressure Israel, nothing would change. (Wassenberg & Faleg, 2012: 23).

## 1.2. Objectives

According to Peters, the EU has made a swift transition with respect to its views on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The urgency to end the conflict out of humanitarian interest has changed into an urgency driven by security/stability motives. This security driven policy was focusing on creating stability in the region, without military interference that might actually worsen the security situation. This new foreign EU policy regarding international conflict areas became more prominent after violence erupted in the region at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Mérand et al., 2011: 271). When the situation worsened, the EU's soft approach

of improving regional economic relationships proved to be inefficient with regards to solving the conflict. Peters states the EU should (re)take a leading role in the peace process, without being dependent on the US, to further internationalize the peace process and reach a final peace agreement.

This research will provide a critical look on the work of Peters as well as elaborate on it. Peters states the EU underwent a swift transmission from being human rights driven to security driven. This research will provide a closer look on this period in time to determine if this transmission was truly swift or if the EU always implemented safety and security as a main pillar in their policies. Furthermore, Peters mainly described the EU as a single actor, with a single voice. However, the EU is a conglomerate of many different states which differ in policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To better understand the political process and issues that determined the EU's policies, this research will also investigate the policy development of a medium sized EU member state regarding the MEPP. Including a single EU state in this research will enrich the work of Peters, because the interaction between an EU member state and the creation of EU common policy will be included. This will elaborate on the research of Peters, as it will give an indication of the cooperation within the EU concerning the peace process. Furthermore, implementing a case study will enrich the work done by Peters as this will provide much more detailed information on how the EU adapted their policies to maintaining EU member state support.

The EU member state that will be the case study within this research is the Netherlands. The Netherlands has traditionally been a strong partner of Israel, both politically, economically and culturally. But the Netherlands has also a long tradition of prioritizing human rights in its foreign policy. Both the Netherlands and the EU are main contributors to development aid in Palestinian territories. These development policies are strongly tied with human rights issues in the region. The Netherlands consider development aid and human rights as being indissoluble connected (Baehr et al., 2002: 17). For these reasons, the Netherlands will provide a perfect case study for this research. Concluded, the main objective of this research is to investigate to which extent the Dutch and EU policies have underwent the swift transitions that are presented by Peters. This research will not only be a check for

statements of Peters, but will also elaborate on his work as the EU common policy is further investigated by adding the case study of the Netherlands. The Netherlands will be the main focus in this research. However, the Dutch and EU policies are often heavily influenced by each other and therefore very much connected. Comparing Dutch and EU policies will provide this research with a complete view of the changes in policy, both on national (Dutch) as on international (EU) level.

## **1.3. Research question and design**

### **1.3.1. Research question**

This research will use a single research question. The two main focus points of this research are investigating if the statements of Peters are correct, and what the role of the Netherlands was within the EU policies. These two main focus point are both represented in the following research question:

*To which extend did both the Dutch and the EU underwent a swift transition towards a security/stability driven policy concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 2000?*

### **1.3.2. Time period**

The time period of this research starts at 2000. This year, the Oslo Accords peace process definitely broke down during the Camp David negotiations in which US president Clinton tried to turn the tide. This meant the end of the cautious optimism of the 1990's that a final peace agreement was within reach. The attacks of 9/11 and the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in a restatement of the US policy towards the MEPP. The new US security policy concerning the region as a result of the War on Terror was, as discussed before, largely copied by the EU. However, this process did not happen overnight, but evolved over the years. Therefore, this research will discuss multiple key moments in the period 2000-2006 in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This period has been chosen because it coincides with the second intifada that raged in Israel and the Palestinian territories between 2000 and 2005. Regional violence and instability was now further fueled with a cruel series of terrorist attacks and acts of counterterrorism. The results of the intifada and the impotency of the international community to facilitate promising peace talks resulted in a landslide victory for

Hamas during the Palestinian elections of 2006. This resulted in more violence and political instability in the region. Concluding, the period 2000-2006 symbolized a new violent and unstable period of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during which, according to Peters, the EU changed its views and policies concerning the MEPP. Therefore, this period has been chosen to be the focus of this research.

### **1.3.3. Design of research**

This research will focus on both the Dutch and the EU policy changes regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the introduction of this research, aspects of the proposed EU policy change by Peters have been discussed. This change did not occur suddenly, but slowly evolved during over the years. The Dutch role will therefore be investigated by analyzing many major events within the chosen time period. By analyzing how the Dutch responded to these developments, this research can present clear results of the possible Dutch and EU policy changes. Moreover, special attention will be given to the implications of the Dutch policies for the EU policies. How did these Dutch standpoints change and how did they differ from the EU's policy adjustments? These are important questions in relation to the chosen events.

This research will be primary conducted by investigating and comparing policy papers, government statements and events during the chosen time period. By executing an analysis of actions and normative statements, this research will expose any changes in attitude and policy towards the MEPP. Not only government's positions are of importance, but moreover the debate surrounding the creation of these positions are a main focus. These debates are vital to understand which arguments actors used while establishing their points of view. Did they underline the security aspects, or was justice and protecting human rights the core message? Any differences within the arguments of the Dutch and the EU might prove they had different starting points regarding creating effective policy. It might be their policies are largely the same, but their argumentation is fundamentally different. Therefore, focusing on the arguments of the Dutch and those of the EU are vital to understand the Dutch role within the change in policy.

## 1.4. Relevance

EU member states often have different views on foreign policies what makes it worth investigating how these different views influence the general EU policies. Because member states cannot always agree on a single explicit policy, these common EU policies can become less outspoken and less effective. Since the outbreak of the Intifada, the EU started to follow the US policies more closely, as the Middle East conflict grew more violent and complicated. A 2003 EU strategy security document proved to be very similar to the US approach at that time (Bindi & Angelescu, 2012: 327). Pijpers already predicted that if the EU would continue to follow the US policies without implementing a strong policy themselves, the EU would lose its credibility of being a potential important broker in the MEPP (Pijpers, 2002: 40-42). The EU member states agreed on the importance of promoting stability and facilitating peace talks, but were divided on many other aspects. Meanwhile, the EU left a leading role in the MEPP to other actors, most importantly the US (Schweiss et al., 2006: 124-125). This research will give multiple examples on how these EU common policies are complicated due to internal disagreement. This is an important contribution to the research of Peters, who focused on the EU as a single actor.

Next to complementing the work of Peters, this research also contributes to other scientists who focus on the interaction between the EU and its member states. Many scientists do highlight that a large variety of views exist within the EU, but do not go into much detail. Mérand, Foucault and Irondelle discuss the change of EU security policy since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet-Union. They focus on the influence of changes in EU institutions and changes in international security relations in the region as well as worldwide. They do mention in their studies that many different events happened all over Europe, but conclude that this left the member states with one new security idea that was widely supported (Mérand, Foucault and Irondelle, 2011: 6-8). Schweiss et al. are providing a similar research, but include a focus on the relationships between the EU and major international actors like Russia and the NATO. Their research also underlines the ethics of the EU's policy changes over the years. Schweiss et al. conclude the common EU democratic and humanitarian values were a main contributor to the EU policies, not mentioning many differences between EU member states (Schweiss et al., 2006: 3). Bindi and Angelescu take a



different approach by focusing on the differences of institutions and power within the EU as an organization, instead of focusing on the member states. This way, the EU is treated as an independent actor, with its own agenda totally separated from the member countries (Bindi & Angelescu, 2012: 2-3). These are some examples of different perspectives on the EU as an actor. This research takes all these viewpoints into account to determine how EU member states influence and contribute to the EU's viewpoints and policies.

This research is also relevant because it will give an important insight in the foreign policy discussion within the EU. By investigating the Netherlands as a case study, this research can provide new information regarding the power of individual member states to influence EU policy. Dutch researchers Schout and Rood concluded that the Dutch are often supporting the EU common policies to solve transnational short-term problems. However, the Dutch do not prioritize dedicating themselves to long-term foreign affairs policies, being afraid their economic interest will be endangered (Schout & Rood, 2013: 93-94). Other specific research towards the Dutch-EU relation on foreign affairs is scarce, and even Schout and Rood do not focus on the Israeli-Palestine conflict. This research can therefore provide this piece of information. By not accepting the EU as a single actor, but as a conglomerate of nations and viewpoints, this research provides new insights in the mutual differences within the EU and how EU member states and the EU influence each other's positions and foreign policies.

Moreover, this research will contribute to the knowledge of how the Dutch policy concerning the conflict changed over time. There are not many scientific works on the Dutch position towards the MEPP. Grünfeld is a researcher that focused on the Middle East policies of the Netherlands. Grünfeld elaborated in multiple works on the central issues the Dutch are facing regarding the MEPP (Grünfeld, 2008: 1-4). Soetendorp wrote a book on the Dutch and the Israeli-Arab conflict, but this book dates from 1982 (Soetendorp, 1982). Hellema, Wiebes and Witte's work on the Dutch foreign policy in the Middle East during the Oil Crisis of the 1970s illustrates how the Dutch use foreign affairs to solve international issues in the Middle East. However, this is during a whole other era and does not yet include the EU as a main actor (Hellema, Wiebes & Witte, 2004).

Finally, the Dutch are historically considered a loyal partner of Israel, always underlining Israel's rights of existence and self-defense. On the other hand, the Netherlands are a main protagonist of international human rights, underlining the importance of respecting international human rights. These two faces of the Dutch policy clashed even more since 2000. Economic relations with Israel increased significantly, as Israeli technological industry flourished. But the ongoing settlement expansion, human rights violations etc. increased as well (Wassenberg & Faleg, 2012: 23-24). How did the Dutch cope with these difficult circumstances? This research can therefore contribute to the discussion how nations balance their economic and human rights interest in their foreign policy.

## **1.5. Structure of research**

This research is structured as follows. In chapter two, the role and position of the Netherlands and the EU during the MEPP in the 1990's will be discussed. This will establish a clear view of the starting point of the Dutch and the EU at the beginning of the chosen time period. Subsequently, chapter three will be the core chapter within this research, in which the policy changes of the Dutch and the EU will be discussed on the basis of a number of events during the second Intifada. Finally, in chapter four the Dutch and EU policies will be investigated at the time of the Palestinian elections in 2006. Like stated before, this moment marks the end of a long and violent period in the conflict, that resulted in massive Palestinian support for Hamas. At this point, the EU policy had totally shifted according to Peters. Therefore, this is the exquisite moment to measure the results of all the developments during the intifada and their impact on the Dutch role within the MEPP. The results will be summarized in the conclusion, in which the main research question will be answered.



## 2. In anticipation of erupting violence

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter will discuss the Dutch and EU viewpoints and involvement surrounding major events concerning the MEPP in the 1990's. Within this period, the Oslo Accords, the BP and the Camp David negotiations are main events that will be discussed. This chapter will provide an important framework that will help determine what defined the Dutch and the EU MEPP policies before the outbreak of the second Intifada. According to Peters, this period was marked as a time in which the EU was prioritizing human rights and international law, with less focus on the security aspect. Was this really the case and what were the viewpoints of the Dutch? Altogether, this chapter will provide a proper starting point for the core part of this research.

### 2.2. The Oslo Accords

#### 2.2.1 Sidelined at Oslo

The Oslo Accords negotiations were largely led by the US, with support of Norway, who facilitated the peace talks. However, Norway was not, and still isn't, an EU member state. This meant that while a European nation was involved in the peace talks, there was no EU involvement. The Dutch were not involved during the negotiations of the Oslo Accords. Ghassan Al-Khatib, a member of the Palestinian negotiation delegation stated that the Palestinian leadership opted for a stronger EU presence during the peace talks, mainly because of the relatively strong support of the EU towards the Palestinian cause and their large contributions of development aid (NRC, 10-06-1992). However, Israel opposed this idea. Former Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Van den Broek stated after the first Oslo Accord in 1993 that the Dutch government facilitated similar negotiations between Israeli officials and PLO representatives just four years earlier. These talks were supported by both Arafat and Perez and were held in secret in The Hague. However, these talks ended quickly. According to Van den Broek because the PLO had far too many demands (NRC, 11-09-1993).

### 2.2.2. The Dutch response to the Oslo Accords

The Dutch supported the Oslo negotiations, because they were based on the two state solution model, an important base of the Dutch MEPP policy. After the initial success of the first Oslo Accord, the Dutch started, within the EU framework, to provide massive financial support to the newly established PA. This way, the EU hoped to be able to gain influence in future peace talks, as well as underlining their involvement in development aid and good governance (Soeterik, 2012: 33) (Gianniou, 2006: 8-9). The Palestinians were still trying to involve EU countries in the peace process. Late 1993, Arafat opted that Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Kooijmans could mediate between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel in future peace talks. Kooijmans responded by offering further financial and technical assistance for rebuilding the Palestinian economy and institutions (Het Parool, 11-01-1993).

The Dutch praised Norway for their contribution to the successful first agreement. VVD (Liberals) Member of Parliament (MP) Weisglas stated Norway proved the vital role small western countries could play within international relations (Trouw, 10-09-1993). Their own peace talks initiative four years earlier, and the role the Norwegians played during the Oslo Accords might have convinced the Dutch they could play a more significant role in future negotiations. However, at the same time, further EU integration was imminent. The conversion of the European Economic Community (EEC) into the EU with the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 marked a new period of collective foreign policies. This further restricted individual EU member state actions. With the expansion of EU institutions, the emphasis of individual member states switched towards a more common EU policy approach. Also, the Dutch underlined that one strong EU foreign policy will enable the Dutch to increase their influence in international politics (HTK, 24337, nr. 14, 1995: 5). The EU's regional approach was focused on further strengthening the economic and social relationship between the EU and the region, as well as develop (political) institutions in the region (EU Commission, 23-10-1995: 1-7). The Dutch contribution to this development program was substantial. Over 1995, only Sweden and France contributed more to the EU fund for Palestinian development aid (EU Commission, 23-10-1995: 12).

Meanwhile, Dutch political leaders were strongly divided concerning the Dutch policy towards the conflict. On the one hand, the Netherlands had become one of the main financial supporters of the PA and supported reforms of the Palestinian economy and the construction of a democratic political system. Furthermore, the Dutch acknowledged the PLO as official representatives of the Palestinian people in 1995 and agreed on an EU AA on trade and economic development with the PA in 1997 (Soeterik, 2012: 36-37). Moreover, the Dutch government was sometimes strict in its condemnation of Israeli policies. For example, in 1993 the Dutch Minister of Justice Hirsch Ballin postponed a visit to Israel out of protest against an Israeli decision to banish a group of Palestinians from Israel and the Palestinian territories (Het Parool, 11-01-1993). These kind of stronger measures opposed the kind of soft power executed by the Dutch on most international matters.

In retro perspective, the Dutch approach at the time of the Oslo Accords can be seen as conflicted. On one hand, the Dutch strongly supported Israel, while at the same time fully committed themselves to protecting human rights and building up a viable Palestinian state. The Dutch and other EU states were largely ignored by the US and Israel during the peace talks. Therefore the Dutch were eager to support newly established EU policies for the region. Emerging themselves in EU policies enabled the Dutch to avoid criticism on their dual allegiance to both the PA and Israel (Grünfeld, 2008: 682). It gave them the possibility of maintaining their human rights orientated foreign policy on EU level, while also increasing their political, economic and cultural relationship with Israel.

### **2.2.3. The EU response to the Oslo Accords**

In response to the Oslo Accords, the EU Commission stated that besides strengthening economic relations, supporting Palestinians in obtaining autonomy should be an urgent guidance in its policy. This was followed by pointing out that all surrounding countries, both Israel and Arab countries should benefit from the peace talks (EU Commission, 29-09-1993: 2-3). The EU Commission did not elaborate in how exactly Arab countries should benefit. However, it is safe to say this involves regional political stability and increased economic growth, as these goals are also part of the EU's BP. Safety issues are scarcely named by the EU Commission, which is mainly focusing on improving human right conditions and economic

growth. In another document, the EU Commission stated that the process to achieve sustainable cooperation in the Middle East should be led by an outsider, while underlining the importance of the EU as a broker in the conflict (EU Commission, 08-09-1993: 4). This clearly shows the EU's ambition to contribute to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state by holding on to their regional economic vision for the conflict. This policy can also be explained by the fact that EU countries were largely ignored during the Oslo negotiations by both the US and Israel. By initiating their own peace plan for the region, while supporting the US led peace process at the same time, they could regain influence in the actual peace process. EU countries had to balance their policies very careful or they would risk disturbing the US led peace process.

However, the EU's own initiative, the BP, proved to be much less effective in promoting peace and prosperity than expected or even hoped. The EU wanted to break out of their role as bystander in the MEPP. The BP was meant to be complementary to the MEPP, by creating a multilateral network of states in the region (Voltolini, 2016: 52). However, resilience within both Israeli and Palestinian societies towards the outcome of the Oslo Accords increased. The assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin in 1995 by an extreme Israeli nationalist resulted in increased tensions. All optimism about the Oslo Accords disappeared and further negotiations were stalled (Grinberg, 2010: 78-79). These development slowed down the BP, as states in the region were becoming more suspicious of each other. However, the EU had no choice but to try to push the BP forward, as direct influence in the MEPP was out of the question.

On the other hand, the bilateral relationship with Israel improved. EU-Israeli trade increased significantly. An EU-Israeli AA was planned to be implemented in 1995, but because of many criticism on the Israeli policies in the occupied Palestinian Territories, the agreement came into force no sooner than 2000. This AA further enabled economic and scientific cooperation between the EU and Israel (Soeterik, 2012: 36). The Netherlands were, despite their support for the PA, a state that supported Israel in many (social-economic) areas. Furthermore, the Dutch always supported Israel in their standpoint that rejected the return of all Palestinian refugees, which still is a demand of the PA during peace talks. According to

the Dutch, this was not a realistic option in view of establishing two states that should live in peaceful coexistence. The Dutch-Israeli cooperation was further underlined by the first official Dutch state visit to Israel by Queen Beatrix in 1995 (Grünfeld, 2008: 680-681).

## 2.3. Towards the Camp David negotiations

### 2.3.1 Changing circumstances

After the assassination of Rabin, the right-wing Likud party won the Israeli elections in 1996, marking the first period of Netanyahu as Prime Minister of Israel. The new Likud led government was highly critical of the Oslo Accords, what led to further delay of the peace process and distrust between both sides (Byman, 2011: 85-86). Besides Israeli political turmoil, the Palestinians were divided as well. Popular support for Hamas increased over time, as a final peace agreement was not in sight (Byman, 2011: 102). This also had its effects on the European regional approach. Without trust between involved actors, the BP got stuck. This led to the EU Parliament adopting a resolution on the peace process in 1998. In this resolution, the EU underlines Israel should respect the Oslo Accords by removing illegal settlements and fully recognize Palestinian civil rights (EU Parliament, 06-07-1998: 1-2). The EU Parliament is not the most powerful EU institution, and their resolution might not have had much effect on the actually policy. However, for the first time, safety concerns are prominently named by the EU, showing that the EU's priorities are changing from the bottom-up. *"Whereas that the peace process in the Middle East is a fundamental part for guaranteeing peace and security in the whole Mediterranean area."* (EU Parliament, 06-07-1998: 2). Instead of focusing on the regional stability as they did before, the EU Parliament started to see the ongoing violence as a security risk, threatening security in the region and at its own borders.

### 2.3.2. Continuing Dutch and EU policies

In the years prior to the Camp David negotiations, the EU slowly started to change the basics of its MEPP policy. However, this did not mean the original policy was abandoned. The main Dutch political parties showed increased concerns about the safety situation, but nevertheless maintained predominantly positive about the approach they took. In 1997, Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Van Mierlo reaffirmed the importance of economically developing the Gaza strip and the West Bank. According to Van Mierlo, the EU had been able

to largely prevent that the turmoil in the region influenced the BP (HTK, 23432, nr. 16, 1997: 2-4). In 1998, both Foreign Affairs Minister Van Mierlo and Development Cooperation Minister Pronk underlined the vital importance of human rights and economic development for bringing stability to the region. They both called on Israel to respect international conventions (HTK, 23432, nr. 18. 1998: 2-8) (HTK, 23432, nr. 17. 1998: 2-3).

At this point, the Dutch had invested heavily in their current policy, and were involved in many development projects in the region. First of all, the Dutch had invested heavily in a sea port in Gaza, which was planned to massively improve the Palestinian economic connection with the region and Europe. However, since the Netanyahu/Likud government came into power in 1996, the Israeli blockade of the Gaza strip intensified, resulting in further delays (HTK, 23432, nr. 17. 1998: 2). Nonetheless, the Dutch increased their contribution for local NGO's and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), as well as continuing multiple other projects like a Palestinian police training facility (HTK, 23432, nr. 18. 1998: 4-5).

When local circumstances worsened because of increased tensions and conflict between the Israeli and the Palestinians, the promises of the Oslo Accords showed empty. The Dutch still tried to push the current peace process forward. From 1994 till 2002, the Dutch government coalition consisted of PvdA (Social Democrats), VVD (Liberals) and D66 (Social Liberals). The VVD preferred a more distant approach, following the US lead, while both the PvdA and D66 opted for a much more active independent EU policy towards the MEPP and continuation of the current regional EU approach (HTK, 23432, nr. 20. 1998: 1-6). This resulted in a Dutch initiative as EU Chairman in 1998 to issue an annual EU report on the human rights conditions in both Israel and the Palestinian territories. The Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Van Aartsen stated the Dutch would use the results of these investigations to discuss human rights issues with the Israeli government (HTK, 23432, nr. 20. 1998: 7-8). This initiative shows the Dutch resilience to hold on to their development policy, as well as addressing Israeli human rights violations. In a letter to parliament after a visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories in 1999, Van Aartsen stated that Israeli safety is a key issue, but must be achieved without human rights violations. What is more important, Van Aartsen promoted a more bilateral

approach. According to Van Aartsen, a closer relationship with Israel would lead to improving the chances of successfully contributing to the peace process. The minister hinted that a more bilateral approach would contribute to Israeli cooperation concerning the construction of the sea port in Gaza (HTK, 23432, nr. 26, 1999: 4-8). The recommendation of Van Aartsen to expand bilateral relations besides the regional approach can be seen as a important sign of changing policy.

### **2.3.3. New negotiations without the EU**

The US started the Camp David negotiations in early 2000. These negotiations were mostly bilateral, only consisting of Israeli and Palestinian representatives. The negotiations were a failure, as both sides lacked any trust after the failure of the Oslo Accords. Both Israeli and Palestinian hardliners refused to give in on fundamental issues like the status of Jerusalem and the right of return for Palestinian refugees (Faure, 2012: 47-50).

In anticipation of the Camp David negotiations, the EU opted for a more active role in the peace process by taking more initiatives to facilitate talks between Israeli and Palestinian representatives (EU Center of North Carolina, 2008: 1). Van Aartsen stated a more pro-active Dutch and EU role in the peace process was desirable (HTK, 23432, nr. 26, 1999: 5). In 1999, the EU issued the Berlin Statement, in which the EU called for “a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian state” (EU Center of North Carolina, 2008: 1). This statement proves that at the start of the Camp David negotiations, the EU was still holding onto their basic principles of self-determination, justice and human rights for the Palestinian people. It is fair to say this statement might have contributed to the fact that the EU were once again locked out of the main negotiations for being too outspokenly pro-Palestinian. This resulted in the EU, despite all their ambition, being sidelined at the Camp David negotiations, while the US once again led the peace talks. All the EU and the Dutch could do was watch how the negotiations failed, what resulted into the start of the Second Intifada (EU Center of North Carolina, 2008: 3).

## 2.4. Concluding remarks

After the initial success of the Oslo Accords, both the EU and the Dutch saw an opportunity to upgrade their involvement in the MEPP. A more connected EU formulated a common policy that entangled many investments into the Palestinian economy and state building. This was done with the regional BP, trying to connect surrounding countries into closer relationships. The Dutch invested heavily in this plan, and kept underlining the importance of a functioning Palestinian society for the MEPP. After years of investments, the Dutch and the EU tried again to obtain a more prominent role at the peace talks. However, their strong support for the Palestinian cause, their ongoing criticism on Israeli human rights violations and erupting violence in the region prevented this. When the US did an ultimate attempt at the Camp David negotiations to turn the tie, the EU was sidelined once again. The Dutch and the EU as a whole did already show some policy changes in anticipation of the Camp David negotiations. They did admit the regional approach should be complemented with better bilateral relations between the EU and Israel. Moreover, the EU stated the ongoing conflict might provide a security threat to the whole Mediterranean Sea region.



## 3. The impact of the Second Intifada

### 3.1. Introduction

On September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. By visiting this holy Islamic site, he hoped to discredit the Israeli Prime Minister Barak in anticipation of the elections. The plan of Sharon, one of the main architects of the settlement expansions, succeeded as he won the elections with a large majority over Labor Prime Minister Barak. However, his visit proved to be the deathblow to the Camp David negotiations and more importantly, the start of the Second Intifada. With his visit, Sharon disturbed the precarious arrangement between the Israeli and the Palestinians, which arranged both parties not to enter each other holy sites. The visit of Sharon was therefore explained as an act of aggression and denial of Palestinian sovereignty (Smith, 2013: 498). This chapter will discuss the Dutch and EU responses and their policy changes during this period of extreme violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. First, the initial responses to the outbreak of violence will be discussed. This does not only includes the Temple Mount visit, but other significant resolutions and statements in relation to a changing Dutch/EU policy as well. Another focus is the change of the BP into a new EU foreign policy concerning the Mediterranean region. Subsequently, the developments during the years of the Second Intifada will be discussed. Finally, the establishment of the Middle East Quartet will be discussed.

### 3.2. Erupting violence

#### 3.2.1. A retracted EU

The Dutch and the EU were completely set aside during the Camp David negotiations. At the start of the year 2000, the EU Parliament adopted a resolution in which they underlined their trust in the US led negotiations. Furthermore, this resolution stated that the large financial EU contribution should also lead to a more active future role of the EU in the MEPP. The BP process is named as an important instrument to reach this goal (EU Parliament, 20-01-2000: 1-2). Both the EU and the Dutch were receiving contradictory information regarding the progress of the peace talks. Dutch Prime Minister Kok visited Israel and the Palestinian

territories in April 2000. During his visit, he met with both Barak and Arafat. Barak told Kok some real progress had been realized in the peace talks, while Arafat was far less optimistic and told Kok negotiations were going slowly without any substantial progress (HTK, 26800-3, nr. 11, 2000: 2). Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister van Aartsen stated on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2000 that the EU should start to make arrangements for their 'post-peace' policies regarding Israel and Palestine (HTK, 21501-02, nr. 348, 2000: 2). Van Aartsen further supported this viewpoint by stating towards other EU officials that the EU should support the final part of the negotiations by maintaining good economic and political relationships with surrounding Arab countries, in anticipation of the post peace situation (HTK, 21501-02, nr. 349, 2000: 3). This is a clear sign of the BP policy continuance of the EU, in which regional cooperation with Arab countries was of major importance for bringing stability in the region. The EU encountered multiple setbacks in implementing the BP, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, the BP was still the most viable option for the EU to increase their influence in the MEPP. These statements, issued just two weeks before the outbreak of the Second Intifada, show how much the Dutch and the EU were bystanders during the Camp David negotiations. They did not know the troubles of the negotiations that would soon show to be a failure.

In June 2000, the European Council agreed on a new common foreign affairs policy regarding the Mediterranean area. This policy can be viewed as an update to the BP, and builds upon its principles of regional cooperation and economic development. However, strengthening bilateral relations is much more underlined than in previous BP documents. According to this new policy, EU member states were more independent to promote the EU's viewpoints in bilateral relations with countries in the Mediterranean area (EU Council, 19-07-2000: 2-3). This gave individual member more space to implement the common EU policy within the framework of their own views and policies. On the MEPP, the document clearly suggests a supportive role for the EU, stating the EU should *"provide its expertise, submit ideas and make available its good offices and assistance to the core parties of the Peace Process in order to facilitate the conclusion of peace agreements and help prepare the 'post peace era' in the Middle East."* (EU Council, 19-07-2000: 3). Two important facts can be derived from this text. First, the EU finally acknowledged they were not a core party within the MEPP, and tempered this ambition. This differs from previous documents in that it is less ambitious about

the pro-active role the EU should play in resolving the conflict. Instead of stating the EU should be more involved where and whenever possible, they seem to have abandoned this idea at this point. And second, the EU still maintains good hopes that a final agreement will be reached soon. This is underlined multiple times in the remainder of the document, stating the EU should provide good economic structures for a post-peace era (EU Council, 19-07-2000: 2-4). This EU common policy is clearly a sign that the EU tried to reinvent their approach to overcome the problems of the first BP approach. First, the EU let go of their ambition to be a main actor in the peace process, something that earlier EU MEPP documents underlined. Second, the EU tries to deal with the many different viewpoints of its member states. Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Van Aartsen stated in September 2000 that further EU policy integration was providing the EU with a challenge. The EU would have to find a way to formulate a strong common policy and at the same time respecting the many differences between individual member states on many issues (HTK, 23432, nr. 32, 2000: 13). The EU Council tried to overcome mutual differences by giving individual member states more responsibility to carry out the EU viewpoints in bilateral relations with countries in the region. Furthermore, the new EU common policy focused mainly on economic relations, and far less on political/human rights issues. This shows the EU member states were unable to formulate a common policy on political sensitive issues. This perplexity is one of the main reasons the BP was unsuccessful. Because of the strong emphasis on economic relations and trade, most political relations between the EU and Israel proved to be bilateral ones between individual states and Israel, with only a facilitating role for the EU. This way, a regional political network was not accomplished. The BP was increasing economic ties, but had far less effects on improving diplomatic relations. Without the willingness of the EU member states to unite their diplomatic powers, the BP was failing in its promise (Rabi, 2010: 148-149).

### **3.2.2. Excessive violence: the international responses**

From the outbreak of violence on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September till the end of 2000, an estimated 365 people were killed, of which 325 were Palestinians and 36 Israeli citizens. Another 10 600 Palestinians got injured, compared to 362 Israeli (Smith, 2013: 498). In the first month alone, the Israeli army fired over 1.3 million bullets, which created an atmosphere of war (Bregman, 2014: 250). The sudden outbreak of violence led to a series of resolutions

and condemnations by national parliaments as well as international political bodies. A non-binding UN General Assembly resolution on the erupted violence condemned the “*excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians.*” (UN General Assembly, 20-10-2000: 53). This strong emphasis on Israeli wrongdoings divided the European countries. None of the EU countries contributed to the debate during the session, and the voting was utterly divided. A number of EU countries like France, Ireland and Belgium supported the resolution, while many others, including the Netherlands abstained. (UN General Assembly, 20-10-2000: 53). This is another painful moment for the EU, in which the EU could not agree on one single EU standpoint regarding the situation. While African, Asian and American countries elaborated extensively on their viewpoints and their call for peace, the EU kept quiet. These kind of critical failures of the EU symbolize the impotency of the EU to act on their strong views of self-determination and justice for the Palestinians.

The internal division of the EU was one of the main reasons the Arab countries put little faith in the EU as an important broker within the peace process. The EU was not unified on the topic and therefore willing to really pressure Israel in committing themselves to the peace process (Bindi & Angelescu, 2012: 205-206). The EU Parliament adopted a similar resolution as the UN on the fifth of October. In this resolution, the EU rejects the provocative behavior of Sharon at the Temple Mount and the out of proportion use of violence by the Israeli army against Palestinian civilians (EU Parliament, 05-10-2000: 1-2). The EU Parliament however, as stated before, holds no executive power within the EU. Therefore, this resolution is more symbolic than anything else. In relation to the MEPP, the EU Parliament did often criticize the viewpoints of the EU Commission. According to the EU Parliament, the EU Commission lacks the strength to do justice to their core policy values of human rights and democracy while at the same time they are focusing on pursuing economic and geopolitical interest in the region (Voltolini, 2016: 61).

### **3.2.3. The Dutch involvement**

At this time, the Netherlands was also a temporary member of the UN Security Council (UNSC). On the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, the Dutch supported a resolution of the Security Council that condemned the excessive use of violence against Palestinian citizens and called on all actors

to end the violence and return to the negotiation tables (HTK, 23432, nr. 31, 2000: 1-2). With an abstention of the US in the UNSC, who did not use their usual veto on matters concerning Israel, the resolution was adopted with support of all European countries that were part of the UNSC at that moment. This Dutch support for the UNSC resolution was received with criticism by Dutch conservative Christian parties (SGP, ChristenUnie and CDA), who felt the resolution was only condemning the violence executed by Israel and called the resolution “unbalanced” (HTK 2000-2001, Appendix 151, 2000: 1-2). The same conservative Christian parties criticized Dutch Prime Minister Kok for not meeting with Shimon Peres at an EU top in Biarritz to discuss the unrest (Het Parool, 14-10-2000). However, a majority of the parliament supported the Dutch government stance. This parliament support did have strict limits though, as the Dutch were still supportive of Israel and valued especially their trade and economic relation. Only the greens (GroenLinks) and socialists (SP) supported a motion that opted for a complete EU arms embargo on Israel and the Occupied Territories (HTK 2000-2001, 1409: 2-3).

Not only outsiders criticized the lack of progress of the BP. Van Aartsen stated that the BP process was stagnated. Furthermore, according to Van Aartsen, investments were minimal and a new BP policy accord for the period 2001-2006 was still not signed (HTK, 26800V, nr. 102, 2000: 41). This shows the Dutch were critical on the EU’s inability to act when necessary. This can be explained by the fact the Dutch were by then heavily invested in the European project and saw the EU as a way to increase their influence in international politics (Baehr et al., 2002: 224). This was further underlined by Van Aartsen during a debate in the Dutch national parliament following the events at the Temple Mount. The minister underlined the Dutch supported the EU conviction of the excessive violence used by the Israeli’s and stated the Dutch and the EU were willing to play a role in reconciliation and peace talks. Furthermore, the Dutch supported an independent investigation to the excessive violence that followed Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount. However, the Dutch endorsed the EU policy of not taking initiative by supporting the US led talks and only interfere if requested by the main actors in the MEPP (HTK 2000-2001, 359: 2-4).

This Dutch/EU policy was not completely followed. At the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, US Foreign Affairs Minister Albright, French President Chirac, Arafat and Barak met in Paris to negotiate a cease fire and a return to the negotiation table. During direct talks between Arafat, Barak and Albright, Arafat had, under huge US and Israeli pressure, finally given up his demand for an international independent inquiry. Instead, the US would lead a fact-finding committee. Later that day the parties were meeting Chirac in the Elysee Palace where they were to report on their ceasefire agreement. However, Chirac had invited many UN and EU leaders to continue negotiations. When Arafat heard the French and other EU and UN officials supported his claim for an independent international research, he refused to sign the earlier established ceasefire agreement and the summit failed to reach any kind of consensus (Bregman, 2014: 252-253). The refusal of the French to be sidelined and follow the US lead might partly be due to a misunderstanding concerning the fact an agreement was already reached. However, Chirac was not the type of man that would let himself be sidelined at a summit in his own palace. This showed the EU approach was still fundamentally different than the US policies and the EU was prepared to voice those viewpoints during negotiations if they were involved. This failed summit led to a further Israeli distrust in the EU as a reliable partner in the MEPP, while the Palestinians were now even more focused on involving the EU in the peace process (Bregman, 2014: 251).

The erupting violence came as quite an unwelcome surprise to both the Dutch and the EU. The Dutch proved to be rather critical regarding the Israeli 'provocation' at the Temple Mount. They supported resolutions of the UN General Assembly, the UNSC and the EU Parliament that underlined the human rights violations towards Palestinian civilians, which further endangered the two-state solution. The Dutch were eager to support the common EU approach and play a supportive role (HTK 2000-2001, Appendix 151: 1). However, Van Aartsen showed frustration regarding the lack of progress of the BP, which was clearly being obstructed by the increased violence (HTK, 23432, nr. 31, 2000: 2-3). During this period, the Dutch and the EU did not yet underline the danger of a worsened security situation in the region and at the European borders. They both prioritized the importance of the EU's traditional pillars concerning the conflict, namely the two-state solution and respecting international human rights and laws.

### 3.3. Ongoing conflict

#### 3.3.1 International developments

In the last month of his presidency, Clinton tried to force a set of all-inclusive parameters for the peace process on Barak and Arafat. However, Arafat refused the proposal. Consequently, Clinton left office and was replaced by George W. Bush, while Barak lost the elections by a large margin to Sharon, who proved to be a hardliner on the ongoing violence of the Intifada. He responded to every suicide attack by Palestinians with large retaliation missions, while blaming Arafat for the ongoing violence (Votolini, 2016: 263-269).

The US approach was characterized by solving all issues, including the status of Jerusalem, refugees et cetera. According to the US, the Oslo Accords failed because the most important issues were left unresolved. However, the Dutch and the EU favored a step-by-step approach. According to Van Aartsen, the violence had to end before final status issues could be discussed. A return to stability and regaining trust should be the main focus points. Furthermore, Van Aartsen stated both the EU and the US should abstain from intervening in the MEPP during this period, and let Israel and the PA initiate the first steps towards renewed negotiations. Van Aartsen praised EU Foreign Affairs High Representative Solana for conveying this policy during meetings with involved actors (HTK, 23432, nr. 36, 2001: 5-6). These statements by Van Aartsen are contrary to earlier EU policies that prioritized an all-inclusive two-state solution peace agreement, defending human rights and acknowledging the US led peace process. This is notable and a sign the Dutch were slowly changing their original viewpoints on the MEPP towards a more security driven policy. Instead of trying to influence the Israeli and the Palestinians to respect human rights and international law, the Dutch now opted for maintaining their distance out of fear of worsening the instability/security situation in the region.

As the violence continued in 2001, the EU Parliament and Council issued multiple statements and resolutions, calling for an end to the violence. However, these statements were too general and did not promise any hard measures if the recommendations were not met by Israel and the PA. At the same time, the EU member states showed once again to be unwilling to damage their relation with Israel, as none of the EU member states supported an

UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) resolution that condemned the extrajudicial violence used in the Occupied Territories (UNHRC, 27-04-2001: 34). The Netherlands was at that time not a member of the Commission, but would likely have joined the other EU member states in abstaining on the vote. These international resolutions proved powerless, as Israeli forces continued to carry out large retribution raids in Gaza and the West Bank every time a Palestinian attacked Israeli soldiers or citizens. In January 2001, Israel stopped supporting an US led fact-finding commission which investigated the outbreak of the Intifada. This was a hard blow for the EU, who regarded this international commission as the leading force to reinstate the peace talks. Moreover because EU High Representative Solana was part of this commission and therefore the EU's representative in the conflict solution (HTK, 23432, nr. 36, 2001: 4).

### **3.3.2. From BP to ENP**

As stated before, the BP proved difficult to implement while violence increased and trust between actors deteriorated. The BP process tried to combine a human rights policy with a policy that was focused on trade and politics. These two pillars showed to be incompatible with each other. Both pillars are ambitious in their own right. Combining them is even more challenging. According to Michelle Pace of the University of Birmingham, the wish to insert human rights in a mainly economic relationship policy works counterproductive, and only harms the economic relations if the human rights that are preached cannot be conveyed into actions (Pace, 2007: 671). Pursuing two agenda's at the same time with one policy works paralyzing to both pillars, which has been a characteristic of the BP policy (Pace, 2007: 671). To face the problems of a stagnated BP, the EU launched the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) in 2003. This policy focused more on bilateral relations instead of preferring the regional approach of the BP. This enabled EU member countries to take their own viewpoints towards the MEPP into account as well. Large EU member states, notably France, Germany and Great Britain, now had the option to implement the EU parameters into their own policy as they pleased. Furthermore, economic ties between EU member states and Israel were intensified with many agreements in different industries like agriculture and fishery (Voltolini, 2016: 57-59). The different viewpoints of the large nations in the EU concerning the conflict were paralyzing the EU's common policy towards the MEPP. Even before the official start of the ENP



in 2003, this focus on bilateral relations increased significantly. For the Dutch, Minister Van Aartsen often underlined that the Dutch were holding many bilateral talks with both the Israeli and Palestinian governments to urge for an end to the violence of the Intifada (HTK 2000-2001, 359, 2-5) (HTK, 23432, nr. 36, 2001: 5). This is a clear shift in policy, as before the Camp David negotiations and the outbreak of the Intifada, Van Aartsen underlined the importance of speaking and acting as a single EU entity concerning the MEPP (HTK, 26800V, nr. 102, 2000: 27-28).

### 3.3.3. Maintaining the dialogue

The EU and the Dutch maintained a critical view on Israeli actions, but only supported this with words and little with actual actions. With deepened economic relations between the EU and Israel as a result of the EU-Israeli AA, the EU had increased measures to pressure Israel. Imposing conditionality on trade agreements with Israel could have been an important policy tool to influence the MEPP. However, the EU chose to separate the MEPP and the ENP. This led to a policy of *'positive engagement and dialogue'* between the EU and Israel (Voltolini, 2016: 58). According to the EU, maintaining good partnership increased the odds of positively influencing the MEPP. Implementing conditionality would hurt another policy goal of the EU in the region, namely boosting economic relations. Van Aartsen did criticize Israel, stating its actions are contradictory to the human rights agreements of the AA between the EU and Israel (HTK, 23432, nr. 38, 2001: 8). However, he as well was not willing to implement conditionality demands on the intensified Dutch-Israeli economic relationship.

In 2002, the Israeli army started Operation Defensive Shield to stop the Palestinian uprising indefinitely. This operation involved many raids into Palestinian territories, with the loss of many civilian lives. The EU criticized Israel for this approach. The EU Parliament voted on a non-binding resolution that called for an arms export ban on both Israel and the PA, and even opted for economic sanctions. *"The military escalation pursued by the Sharon government ... violates international and humanitarian law and will provide no effective solution to the terrorist attacks,"* stated the resolution (Agence France Presse, 10-04-2002). The EU was further offended by Israel's refusal to let the EU representative Solana enter the region to initiate peace talks. The resolution passed with a small majority (269 to 208 with 22

abstentions), but failed to materialize on EU executive level (The Jerusalem Post, 11-04-2002). The Netherlands, together with Great-Britain and Germany, immediately rejected the policy recommendations. Van Aartsen stated all sanctions, including freezing the EU-Israeli AA, were not effective at that time and no actions should be undertaken without UNSC approval under the leadership of the US. Furthermore, the minister stated there was not sufficient EU member state support to implement any of these measures suggested by the EU Parliament. Van Aartsen did summon the Israeli ambassador to his Ministry to explain the situation. This hard diplomatic measure is seldom used by the Dutch. It is a prime example of the Dutch perseverance on human rights while at the same time always continue the political dialogue (HTK, 23432, nr.53, 2002: 8-9). And so once again, the EU and individual member states (including the Netherlands) voiced their criticism regarding the ongoing violence, but were unable and unwilling to act strongly and unanimously.

### **3.3.4 Changing Dutch politics**

Meanwhile, 2002 proved to be a troubling year for Dutch politics. After eight steady coalition years of the social democrats (PVDA), liberals (VVD) and social liberals (D66), new political entities were on the rise. After the murder of Pim Fortuyn, political leader of the populist right-wing LPF, his party gained massive support on Election Day. This resulted in a conservative right-wing coalition between the Christian democrats (CDA), liberals (VVD) and the LPF. This new coalition was much more Eurosceptic than the previous governments. In the coalition agreement, the parties underlined the direct Dutch interests were the main priority for the Dutch-EU relationship. Furthermore, the document stated the expansion of the EU should be reconsidered, while the EU should reduce costs and increase efficiency to succeed in solving transboundary issues like fighting terrorism. The NATO is named as the cornerstone of the new Dutch international security and defense policy. (Strategic Accord, 2002: 28-29).

The 2002 annual Dutch report on the Dutch-EU relationship gives a clear indication of a shift of policy. This can be viewed as a result of both the ongoing violence of the Intifada as well as the more Eurosceptic Dutch government coalition. In the report, security is often named as the most important issue of the common EU foreign policy. In the chapter named "Peace and Security", only short-term security issues are discussed, while long term peace

plans are completely ignored. By increasing efficiency and cooperation in defense and security areas, the EU should improve its military capacity to guarantee its own security against threats at its borders (The State of the European Union, 2002: 29). This view is also present in the chapter “Development Cooperation”, in which the importance of improving the social economic situation and protecting human rights in developing countries is not named even a single time. *“In relation to the European development policy, the Netherlands will continue to work for better quality and effectiveness.”* (The State of the European Union, 2002: 29). The report states that by increasing efficiency, the Dutch and the EU can maintain their minimal targets of promised aid. EU cooperation is at first a way of reducing costs, instead of supporting justice and development, proves the following quote. *“... creating a win-win situation by reforming the policy, in which developing countries do also profit.”* (The State of the European Union, 2002: 30). In a subchapter concerning the MEPP, a two-state solution that honors civil and human rights, as well as international law, is not mentioned at all. Instead, the danger of the continuous violence is named as the main factor that prohibits new negotiations. With this move, the new Dutch government presents the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a security issue, and renounces the two traditional EU pillars concerning the conflict. However, it is mentioned the EU should still be an important broker within the conflict, but within the framework of the newly established Quartet consisting of the US, Russia, the UN and the EU. (The State of the European Union, 2002: 35).

This shift of the Dutch government concerning the role of the EU was during a time of new EU expansion and integration. Next to the ascension of new member states to the EU, the Euro had just been introduced as the new currency in a substantial part of the EU. In December 2002, the EU Council reaffirmed its position concerning the MEPP. It extended the mandate of the special EU representative for the MEPP, Moratinos, and underlined the importance of the two-state solution and respecting human rights and international law (EU Council, 10-12-2002: 1-3). Furthermore, the EU Council states only a final and comprehensive accord will suffice, while less than a year before, Van Aartsen promoted the step-by-step approach.

While violence intensified and continued, the EU showed a more steady approach concerning the conflict, while national governments show some changes in tone and policy. A change of government changed the Dutch approach significantly to a more Eurosceptic approach focused on security. This new focus on security is also present within the EU framework. An EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting report proves security became integrated in the BP, previously a social-economic stronghold. *“Intensifying the Euro-Mediterranean political dialogue, political relations and security cooperation”* and *“Process of Barcelona and cooperation in battling terrorism”* (EU Foreign Affairs Council report, 11-04-2002: 3-4) are two prominent titles in the report which clearly shows the new connection between the EU’s Middle-East policy and new security issues.

### **3.3.5. Towards a new roadmap**

To counter the massive outbreak of violence, the international community came together to put pressure on both parties to re-enter official peace negotiations. A cooperation between the US, Russia, the EU and the UN (the Quartet) led to the realization of the ‘Road Map to Peace’. The EU was given the duty to present a first draft. This was a tremendous opportunity for the EU to finally be involved in the actual peace process. However, the first draft, which was never published, was not acceptable for the US (and therefore Israel), which led to President Bush issuing a new US version (Institute for Palestine, 2003: 85). The Roadmap ended up being a ‘performance based’ document of three phases. Both sides had to meet the requirements (which were non-negotiable) of each phase before the peace process could proceed to the next phase (Website US State Department Archive, 2003). There were no clear solutions presented to complicated matters like the refugees or the status of Jerusalem, only a timetable on which date certain phases should be completed (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2003: 88). Furthermore, Israel did not accept a settlement expansion stop and even started constructing the ‘Security Fence’ or ‘Separation Wall’, which provided a new impediment to a two-state solution. On the Palestinian side, the PA partly collapsed and faced charges of corruption and embezzlement, as years of violence left the PA weakened and disorganized. Arafat was forced by the US to resign his post what led to the appointment of Mahmoud Abbas as new Prime Minister of the PA (Bregman: 2014: 282-284).

The EU were on paper an equal partner in the Quartet, but in reality, the US were the leading force. The EU did voice strong criticism on both the PA and Israeli government, but were unwilling issue trade restrictions by suspending the EU-Israeli AA. According to both the Dutch and EU leadership, the US were able to influence Israeli policies much more effectively. Therefore, the EU member states did not issue any sanctions to force both parties back to the negotiation table. According to the new Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, De Hoop Scheffer, the Dutch did ask the EU AA Council to discuss the human rights/international law issues with the Israeli, but other EU member states did not agree (HTK, 23432, nr. 130, 2003: 6-7).

### 3.5. Concluding remarks

In this chapter, the impact of the second Intifada was the main focus. Just before the outbreak of the Intifada, both the Dutch and the EU were hopeful about the Clinton led Camp David negotiations. But this soon proved to be misleading, as Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount lightened a new period of bloodshed. While violence grew worse over the years, the EU were both unable and unwilling to take a more leading role. The EU showed to be too divided on their stance on the conflict to act as an important broker. The Dutch contributed to this problem as well. The new right-wing Dutch government that took office in 2002 proved to be much more pro-Israel and Eurosceptic than the previous one. Furthermore, the EU and the Dutch, who relied heavily on international trade, were unwilling to risk their economic interest in the region to pressure both Israel and the PA to return to the negotiation table. Therefore, they persevered in their attitude of continuing talks, meanwhile hoping the parties would listen eventually.

Both the Dutch and the EU's stance changed during this period, underlining the importance of a seizure of violence, because of the threat this posed to stability and peace in the region. With the situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories worsening over time, while not having the political influence to improve conditions on the ground, the EU and the Dutch struggled to implement effective policy. Military intervention was out of the question, and the EU member states were unwilling to risk their economic interest in the region by implementing conditionality on their trade deals.

The EU's former core values on the conflict, the two-state solution and international law/human rights, were slightly but importantly changed. International law was still a main focus, as both the Dutch and the EU underlined the importance of international missions/committees/reports. But the human rights approach changed. Many human rights were violated during the Intifada, and the EU continued to criticize both parties. However, the motives of policy makers, notably the Dutch government and the EU Commission, proved to be more linked to regional stability than anything else. The fear of the conflict sparking an all-out war in the nearby Middle East grew larger as the US invaded both Afghanistan and Iraq. Human rights issues were mainly voiced by the Dutch opposition parties and the EU Parliament, both of which were not able to really influence the official policies. The EU tried to counter the shortcomings of the regional BP by implementing the ENP, which focused on bilateral relations. But by giving individual member states more initiative, the common EU policy weakened even further, marginalizing the potential role of the EU as an important broker in the MEPP.

This left the US in charge of the MEPP, which became further marginalized as the US proved to be even more pro-Israel than before. Though President Bush supported a viable sovereign Palestinian state, the 9/11 attacks left the US more vulnerable for arguments of countering Islamic terrorist attacks. In this light, Bush accepted many Israeli demands for further negotiations, like the building of the wall and the expansion of Israeli settlements (Smith, 2013: 506-509). In the next chapter, these troubles concerning restarting the MEPP will be discussed, what will give an inside in the results and changes of the Dutch and EU policies during the Intifada.

## 4. From physical violence to political disarray

### 4.1. Introduction

Years of violence during the Intifada left the peace process completely paralyzed. The distrust and hate between Israeli and Palestinians reached a new low point. The formation of the Middle East Peace Quartet started a series of new efforts to restart the peace process. After international pressure, Israel agreed to remove all Jewish settlers from the Gaza strip in 2005. Nevertheless, settlement activity in the West Bank increased and the peace process was not improving. This chapter and thereby this research will conclude with the impact of the 2006 Palestinian elections, which saw Hamas gaining a large majority. The Hamas victory at the ballot box resulted in a seizure of all existing peace talks. The Dutch and the EU were faced with new challenges during this period. Were they able to maintain their balanced policy of the two-state solution and human rights, or did they even further adjust their policy towards safety/stability concerns?

### 4.2. International efforts

#### 4.2.1. The Dutch and EU stance on new peace initiatives

Multiple (unofficial) peace initiatives had been set up since the start of the Roadmap in 2003. Sometimes, the negotiators reached an agreement on some core issues, like the borders of the potential Palestinian state. One of these initiatives, the Geneva Initiative, became a very popular option for many Israeli's and Palestinians. Many core issues were arranged. Land swaps should solve some core settlement issues, and the Palestinian state would be demilitarized, but with a strong security force. The Dutch and the EU welcomed the initiative, and hoped it could be complimentary to the Roadmap (HTK, 23432, nr. 142, 2003: 1). But the Geneva Initiative was not part of official top-level negotiations, and political leaders of both parties were not involved. Moreover, years of violence left Israeli and Palestinian politics utterly divided. Both Israeli and Palestinian political parties would lose significant support if they agreed on any concessions. Therefore, these informal peace negotiations were quickly dissolved by both the Israeli and Palestinian leadership (Smith, 2013: 509-511). Especially Sharon sharply pressured the Bush administration to relieve Israel from their

Roadmap duty to abandon the large majority of West Bank settlements. The US agreed on many of the Israeli demands. The US issued a statement saying it would not be realistic to expect Israel to dissolve all West Bank communities in favor of returning to the pre-1967 borders. In return, as stated before, Israel would retreat all Jewish settlements from Gaza in 2005 (Bregman, 2014: 291-299). This proved to be a massive change in US policy, which ensured Israel they could expand their settlement policies in the West Bank.

At the same time, the EU was officially an equal partner of the Quartet, but in reality, without the US pressuring Israel, the EU had little influence on the peace process. Meanwhile, Dutch politics calmed down. Without the LPF in the government, the Dutch showed to be much less Eurosceptic. Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister De Hoop Scheffer acknowledged the fact the EU could not have its own peace initiatives. The EU had no choice than to follow the US lead in the Quartet and hope for the best. *“There is currently no alternative, no plan B for the Roadmap which is supported by the Quartet”* according to De Hoop Scheffer (HTK, 23432, nr. 130, 2003: 6-8). The Dutch minister further acknowledged the Dutch and EU viewpoints were at this point very similar. For example, the Dutch supported the EU’s call on Israel to reverse the settlement policies and even called for the removal of the security barrier. Furthermore, the Dutch government stated the implementation of the first phase of the Roadmap had already proven to be a failure, and without renewed Israeli and PA commitment, the Roadmap was dead (HTK, 23432, nr. 130, 2003: 8).

The EU and the Dutch did consent on the Road Map, but their viewpoints differed quite a lot from those of the US. Where the Bush administration, under Israeli influence, tolerated the Israeli settlements policies and the construction of the security fence, the EU took a much stronger (verbal) stance against the Israeli policies. However, both the EU and the Dutch were not willing to implement any hard measures like sanctions.

#### **4.2.2. Shifting priorities**

The tone of the EU and the Dutch concerning the conflict did change. Stability/security had become a new main pillar in their approach. Resolving the ongoing violence is named much more often in responses by Dutch and EU officials instead of self-determination and



human rights. This becomes very clear in the yearly Dutch government report 'The State of the European Union (SEU) 2003', in which the MEPP is only named in the chapter concerning common security policies, next to the war in Iraq (HTK, 29201, nr. 1, 2003: 24). This is continued into the SEU 2004 report, in which the Israel-Palestine conflict is named as the largest impediment to peace and stability in the region. Furthermore, the report only called on involved parties to end the violence without suggesting a relevant peace plan. The report suggested to continue cooperation within the Quartet without setting clear goals (HTK, 29803, nr. 1, 2004: 58). If these two reports are compared with the SEU report of 1999, there is a clear difference. The 1999 report did not mention security issues at all but focused on the important role the EU should have taken in the MEPP (HTK, 26580, nr. 2, 1999: 38).

This same trend is visible when the statements of Dutch and EU officials before and after the Intifada are compared. During the 1990's, social economic problems are named as a key issue, while the post-Intifada period is characterized by security risks. In 1995, the Dutch Foreign Affairs Minister Van Mierlo called the social-economic situation of the Palestinian population the largest impediment for reaching a peace treaty. Only at the end of his statement, security and stability in the region is mentioned (HTK, 23432, nr.6, 1995: 1-3). This is reaffirmed with another Dutch government letter to parliament in the next year. According to Prime Minister Kok and Minister Van Mierlo, respecting human rights and international law is of major importance for the peace process. Furthermore, extending social and economic relations between the Israeli and the Palestinian are deemed vital to bring both parties together (HTK, 23432, nr. 9. 1996: 5-6). Two years later in 1998, the MEPP situation was not improved, but the Dutch stance was very similar. The Dutch government stated in multiple reports and letters to be deeply concerned about the human rights situation and rejected the settlement policies of the Israeli which were labeled as an impediment to both international law and a viable two-state solution. The Dutch reaffirmed the social-economic development of the Palestinian Territories is of great importance to Israel as well (HTK, 23432, nr. 19, 1998: 2) (HTK, 23432, nr. 20, 1998: 6-7). In another letter to parliament by Development Cooperation Minister Pronk, security issues are not even named a single time. The minister focused on the social-economic development, without demanding any security measures to be taken simultaneously (HTK, 23432, nr. 17. 1998: 2-9).

Dutch government statements concerning the MEPP have completely changed during the Intifada. Numerous statements by ministers were now focusing on security. Ending the violence is named as the top priority for any attempt to restart the MEPP. A continuation of a fair two-state solution is no longer named as the main drive of the Dutch to end the conflict (HTK, 29201, nr. 1, 2003: 21-24). Many of the statements are directed towards the risks of new violence that could potentially restart an armed conflict (HTK, 23432, nr. 161, 2004: 1-2) (HTK, 23432, nr. 170, 2004: 10-11). In a policy proposal, the Dutch underlined the large role of EU security in both their internal and external policies (HTK, 29803, nr. 1, 2004: 35). The focus has clearly shifted towards security in Dutch MEPP policies.

This same pattern is visible on EU level. EU documents in the 1990's are promoting regional cooperation and financial development aid, but in return demand all involved parties to respect international law and human rights (EU Parliament, 10-06-1996: 1-2) (EU Parliament, 02-12-1996: 1-3). Security and stability is most certainly of importance, but ongoing human rights and international law violations are viewed as a more urgent issue. In similar resolutions and statements of the EU in 2003-2004, this has changed drastically. In 2003, the Road Map was just released and the EU called on all parties to follow the recommendations provided by the Quartet. This return to the negotiation table should lead to a stabilization of the entire region and secure borders between two viable states. The emphasis on security both in the region and at the EU's own borders is a clear sign the priorities have changed for the EU (EU Parliament, 23-10-2003: 2-5). A 2004 EU Parliament resolution is underlining the importance of breaking the spiral of violence and terrorism in the region in order to stabilize the region. Human rights for the local population are not named at all. International law is named, but in a supporting role to end the violence (EU Parliament, 29-04-2004: 6).

### **4.3. The Palestinian elections**

The Israeli retreat from Gaza in 2005 did not result in less violence. A full Israeli blockade of Gaza by air, water and land, and Israeli bombings on Gaza infrastructure led to a heavily impoverished and demoralized Gaza population. The number of impoverished people in Gaza rose from 30% in 2000 to as high as 70% in 2005 after the Israeli retreat (Bregman,

2013: 302-303). Arafat passed away in 2005, resulting in Abbas acceding to the position of President. However, by this time the Fatah party was weak as it was seen by many Palestinians as being more corrupt than Hamas. Therefore, when Bush pushed for democratic elections in the Palestinian Territories, Hamas won the 2006 with a large majority. After violent conflicts with pro-Fatah police forces, Hamas set up a new government in Gaza (Bregman, 2013: 303).

The Hamas victory and the clash between Hamas and Fatah sealed the fate of the Palestinian democracy. The Abbas led government refused to acknowledge the election results and the sharp division between the two parties expanded. Furthermore, the US and Israel immediately rejected the outcome. The US convinced the EU to halt all funding to the PA. This was a huge step for the EU, who were the largest financial contributor to the PA's budget since the Oslo Accords (Smith, 2013: 514). Also, both the Dutch government and parliament supported this policy change, stating the Dutch would never support a Palestinian government that does not acknowledge the state of Israel and continues to attack Israel (HTK, 2005-2006, 2829: 2-5).

In a letter to the Dutch parliament, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Bot underlined the Dutch and EU viewpoints concerning the MEPP. According to Bot, the Jordan valley is of great importance for the viability of a Palestinian state. He stated the EU would not accept any alterations to the 1948 borders, unless by mutually agreement. Furthermore, Bot called on Israel to abide the Roadmap and stated the EU would continue to discuss Israeli actions during AA meetings (HTK, 23432, nr. 198, 2006: 1-2). These standpoints differed from the US approach, who, by that time, accepted alterations to the original borders. This statement by the Dutch also shows the Dutch commitment to continue to discuss the topic with Israeli officials. During the years of the Intifada, the Dutch did lobby for implementing political subjects during AA meetings with Israel. However, as mentioned earlier in this research, the Dutch did not receive EU support for this initiative. The refusal of the Dutch to adjust their MEPP policy in favor of Israel after the Palestinian elections is striking for the changing Dutch and EU policies. On one hand, security and stability were now a top priority, proved by the hard measures the Dutch and EU opposed on the PA after the Palestinian elections. On the

other hand, both the Dutch and the EU refused to concede on any of their two traditional pillars concerning the MEPP.

#### **4.4. Concluding remarks**

This chapter discussed the unravelling of the Second Intifada as new political realities took shape. Both Israeli and Palestinian society and politics became utterly divided, in which political hardliners rose to power. Sharon's government, with support from the US, further endangered any political solution by expanding settlement activity, building a security fence and executing regular military raids which resulted in the death of many Palestinian citizens. On the other hand, popular support for Hamas rose, as Fatah fell apart because of continuous charges of corruption, the death of Arafat and not achieving any progress in the MEPP. The Roadmap, which was heavily supported by the EU quickly lost its influence, when especially Israeli leadership was unwilling to fully commit to the demands of the plan. Other international peace plans like the Geneva Initiative were also blocked by the leaderships of both sides. This left the EU sidelined once again. The Dutch and the EU both admitted that without increased US pressure on both parties, progress could not be made.

Where the US were willing to give in to Israeli demands concerning future peace talks, both the Dutch and the EU were holding on to their previous viewpoint concerning what steps were necessary to create a viable democratic Palestinian state. However, just like the US, security became a much more prioritized issue for the EU and the Dutch. In all policy documents from this period, the importance of a security and stability is underlined. This has been a significant change compared to the 1990's, during which only a two-state solution and human rights/international law were named as the main pillars of the EU and Dutch policies.

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

### 5.1. A recap of the results

During this research, the changes in Dutch and EU policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been discussed. Often, the Dutch viewpoints and policies were closely linked to those of the EU. Especially in chapter two, it became evident that the Dutch foreign policies became further integrated in those of the EU, as the European Community became further united and established a common foreign policy. The Dutch and the EU embraced the results of the Oslo Accords, and saw this as a new opportunity to increase their role in the MEPP. The EU, with a large Dutch contribution, became the number one financial contributor to the newly established PA. This new EU engagement led to renewed hopes within the EU they could achieve their two main MEPP policy components, namely a viable two-state solution while respecting human rights and implementing international law. These two pillars were the main focus of the Dutch and EU approach during the 1990's. There was optimism within the EU that the conflict would be solved and the EU approach, which was supported by the Dutch, would be a large contributor. To further extend their influence in the region, the Dutch fully supported the BP to implement a regional economic and political network in the Middle East. However, all these measures proved to be inefficient due to renewed violence in the region. This approach may have worked if the Oslo Accords were fully implemented and a final peace agreement was within reach. However, the failure of not reaching any final status agreement and increased violence between Israeli's and Palestinians meant a huge swift in the MEPP to which the EU was not able to adapt. This left the EU sidelined once again, as the US was the main broker during the Camp David negotiations. The Dutch were eager to be involved, but accepted a supportive role, while continue to provide extensive development aid to the Palestinian Territories.

Chapter three provided this research with a series of events during the Intifada that proved vital for the new EU approach regarding the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The outbreak of the intifada divided the EU as it did divide Dutch politicians. Parliaments were strongly convicting the violence, and underlined the excessive use of violence by Israel and their

provocation at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. But both the Dutch government and the EU Commission refused to really pressure any involved actor back to the negotiation table by for example cutting financial aid or issuing trade restrictions. Economic ties were hugely important for the struggling BP and were left completely untouched. To face this impasse, the EU adopted a policy of continuing dialogue, which was supported by the Dutch. Dutch politics also changed fundamentally during the years of the Intifada. First, Minister Van Aartsen adopted a fairly balanced policy. The far more right-wing government that followed resulted in a Eurosceptic and more pro-Israel policy in which security proved to be the number one issue. Consequently, Foreign Affairs Minister Bot maintained a more balanced policy in the next Dutch government, but security was now of major importance in the Dutch view on the conflict.

On EU level, the BP proved unsuccessful and the ongoing conflict in the Palestinian Territories prevented the EU aid from being successfully implemented. Their solution was the ENP, which focused more on bilateral relationships. This should have given EU member states more individual freedom to promote EU viewpoint within their own framework. However, the main means of pressuring parties, especially Israel, was by suspending the EU-Israeli AA. The Dutch did scarcely suggest to discuss the political realities within the framework of the AA, but this was not supported by a majority of EU member states. Overall, this was not a main modus operandi of the Dutch, who very much followed EU guidelines and increased wherever possible the Dutch-Israeli economic relations. The EU acknowledged the US was needed to really pressure both sides, and they were not willing to risk economic relationships if the US did not support this. Meanwhile, the US led wars in the Middle East as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks increased the role of security and stability in many policies, including that of the Dutch government and the EU.

Chapter four showed that Israeli and Palestinian hardliners were getting increased popular support that blocked all major international peace initiatives. The US did allow Israel to violate the Roadmap, resulting in the EU losing its influence on the peace process once more. The victory of Hamas in the Palestinian elections further marginalized the EU's chances of building a viable Palestinian state. Maintaining security and stability was now the main

focus of the Dutch and the EU. This is proven by comparing multiple policy reports and statements by the Dutch government and the EU. After years of violence and political unrest, the EU and the Dutch acknowledged all new peace talks would be useless if they were not fully supported by the US and both the Israeli's and the Palestinians.

## 5.2. Research question answered

During the introduction of this research, one research question was given, namely:

*To which extent did both the Dutch and the EU undergo a swift transition towards a security/stability driven policy concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 2000?*

This research can conclude that both the Dutch and the EU underwent a quick change in policy towards a more security/stability driven policy. The statement of Peters that the EU underwent a swift transition can be labeled as true on basis of the information provided in this research. Moreover, the Dutch were supportive of these common EU policies. Whereas the 1990's can be characterized as a period of optimism, initiative and increased involvement in the MEPP, the events of the Intifada changed this significantly. Security issues were now a top priority that had to be addressed before any progress in the MEPP could be achieved. Overall, the Dutch were supportive of the EU common policy, as this was an important instrument for the Dutch to enlarge their influence in international politics. There were seldom times the Dutch openly criticized the EU policies concerning the conflict between Israel and Palestinians. Even when EU policy differed from official Dutch viewpoints, Foreign Affairs ministers defended the EU policies, underlining the strength and importance of a common EU policy. Clearly, the Dutch as a medium sized EU member state, were prepared to accept changes to their own policies to increase their international influence thru EU integration. Even when the BP was severely struggling, the Dutch spoke out to keep the common EU policies in place. The BP was an important tool for the Dutch to enlarge influence and expand trade relationships in the region.

Both the Dutch and the EU were holding on to their two central pillars of human rights and international law during the initial phase of the Intifada. Human rights concerns and

especially international law issues were still explicitly voiced, but mostly by the Dutch and European parliaments, and less by the Dutch government and European Commission. The rise of the security/stability driven policy is significant. Due to the outcome of the Dutch parliament elections of 2002, the Dutch focus on security and stability increased significantly during a relatively short period of time. Statements from the new Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs De Hoop Scheffer proved to be an omen for the new EU line that would be initiated not long after. This way, the Dutch significantly contributed to the change in EU policy and attitude towards the peace process. Due to the ENP, individual member states were granted much more individual space to implement their own policies in bilateral relations with both the Israeli and the Palestinians. This enabled the Dutch to voice their human rights concerns, while maintaining their economic ties with both actors. However, from this moment on, human rights were mainly discussed by opposition parties and in bilateral relations behind closed doors. The official government policies adopted the more critical view that was largely suspicious of any direct involvement in the conflict and accepted security/stability as a new main pillar in their policy.

### **5.3. Discussion**

Any research regarding the MEPP will eventually face issues regarding the scale of the research. So many different actors are of importance, and the conflict is often connected to other developments in international politics. Therefore, any individual research of this size cannot comprehend all involved factors. This research focused on the Dutch and EU policies regarding the MEPP. However, like this research mentioned multiple times, national developments and politics can have a tremendous impact on a government's position. This research did note the new right wing government in the Netherlands during the height of the Intifada, but is unable to further elaborate on these developments and their effects on the Dutch general viewpoints.

Another important note to make is that this research is using the method of explaining a normative discourse of the Dutch and the EU by investigating speeches, policy papers, statements et cetera. This method is effective to reveal a trend in politics over an extended period of time, as policy changes can be derived from the statements of involved actors.





However, the drawback of this method is words are not always representative for the actual actions actors choose. Therefore, bolt statements must always be accepted with a lot of caution. Checking the effects of all statements and if they are representative for the policy that is derived from it, requires extensive research, that could not be completely executed in this limited research. With a sensitive issue like the Israel-Palestinian conflict, many statements may not provide the full story, and this could be a capacious research on its own.

Furthermore, international political developments could not be extensively discussed in this research but were of great influence on the security driven international politics as a whole. The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US, as well as the following wars in Afghanistan and Iraq left the (western) world in a new state of fear and uncertainty. These developments had an even bigger effect on the US policies concerning Israel. With wars raging in the Middle East, the US were even more focused on strengthening their partnerships in the Middle East against the threat of terrorism. This left US President Bush very vulnerable to adjust his policies towards the MEPP in favor of the Israeli's. Because the US was, and still is the largest broker in the peace process, their domestic political situation is crucial to understand the development of the international peace process. Especially when the EU is so dependent of the US leadership, and acknowledges that without US support the peace process cannot proceed. This research is part of a larger puzzle concerning the troubles of the MEPP throughout the years, which can be complemented by new research that will focus on other relevant developments during the same time period. Concluding, this document should be placed in a series of research that is focusing on the issues that important international actors faced over the years in solving the lingering Israel-Palestinian conflict.

## Literature

---

### Books

Baehr, P. & Castermans-Holleman, M. & Grunfeld, F. (2002) *Human Rights in the Foreign Policy of the Netherlands*. Intersentia: Antwerp.

Soetendorp, R.B. (1982) *Dutch policy with regard to the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1977*. Groningen University.

Hellema, D. & Wiebes, C. & Witte, G. (2004) *The Netherlands and the Oil Crisis: Business As Usual*. Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam.

Schout, A. & Rood, J. (2013) *The Netherlands as an EU member: awkward or loyal partner?* Eleven International Publishing: The Hague.

Byman D. (2010) *A High Price: The Triumphs And Failures Of Israeli Counterterrorism*. Oxford University Press: New York.

Faure, G. (2012) *Studies in Security and International Affairs: Unfinished Business: Why International Negotiations Fail*. University of Georgia Press, Athens.

Voltolini, B. (2016) *Lobbying in the EU Foreign Policy-making, The case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Routledge: London.

Bregman, A. (2014) *Cursed Victory, Israel and the Occupied Territories: A History*. Pegasus Books: New York.

Smith, C.D. (2013) *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, a history with documents* (Eight Edition). Bedford/St. Martin's: Boston.

Rabi, U. (2010) *International Intervention in Local Conflicts: Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution Since the Cold War*. I.B.Tauris.



Bindi, F. & Angelescu, I. (2012) *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe's Role in the World*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington.

Grinberg, L.L. (2009) *Politics and Violence in Israel/Palestine: Democracy Versus Military Rule*. Routledge: London.

Wassenberg, B. & Faleg, G. (2012) *Europe And The Middle East: The Hour Of The EU*. Peter Lang AG: New York.

Schweiss, C. & Johnson, M. & Adamski, J. (2006) *Old Europe, New Security: Evolution For A Complex World*. Ashgate: Aldershot.

Mérand, F. & Foucault, M. & Irondelle, B. (2011) *European Security Since The Fall Of The Berlin Wall*. University of Toronto Press: Toronto.

### **Scientific articles**

Gianniou, M. (2006) Working paper: *The European Union's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: an active paradigm of European foreign policy?* European Consortium for Political Research. Vol 3.

Grünfeld, F. (2008) *Sixty years Netherlands-Israel*. International Spectator. Vol. 62 (12), pp. 680-683).

*The Road Map* (2003) Journal of Palestine Studies Vol. 32 (4), pp. 83-99.

Tocci, N. (2009) *Firm in Reticence, Comprising in Reality: The EU in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Ethnopolitics. Vol 8 (3), pp. 387-401.

Pace, M. (2007) *Norm shifting from EMP to ENP: the EU as a norm entrepreneur in the south?* Cambridge Review of International Affairs. Vol. 20 (7), pp. 659-675.

Peters, J. (2010) *Europe and the Israel-Palestinian peace process: the urgency of now*. European Security, Vol. 19 (3), pp. 511-529.

Pijpers, A. (2002) Working paper: *A new European engagement in the Middle East? Side notes at a troubled relationship*. Netherlands Institute for International Relations Clingendael.

Pijpers, A. (2007) Working paper: *The EU and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict: The Limits of the CFSP*. Netherlands Institute for International Relations Clingendael.

Van Schaik, L. (2012) Working paper: *The European External Action Service fails to impress the Dutch, but may bring added influence*. Netherlands Institute for International Relations Clingendael.

## Newspaper articles

Het Parool, 11-01-1993: *Een gemiste kans voor minister Kooijmans*.

Trouw, 10-09-1993: *Nederland hoeft de PLO niet te erkennen*.

NRC, 11-09-1993: *Ook Den Haag was ooit betrokken bij overleg tussen Israel en PLO*.

Trouw, 8-09-2000: *Onderhandelingen stroef, veel problemen*.

ANP, 2-10-2000: *EU veroordeeld Sharon provocatie*.

Het Parool, 14-10-2000: *Agenda van Kok te vol voor Peres*.

Agence France Presse, 10-04-2002: *EU Parliament calls for sanctions against Israel*.

The Jerusalem Post, 11-04-2002: *Thursday EU to reevaluate trade relations with Israel*.

## Reports

EU Center of North Carolina. *Europe's role in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict*. March 2008.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/HynJ7y>

EU Commission. *Future relation and cooperation with Middle East*. 08-09-1993.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/efDJVt>

EU Commission. *EU Middle East Peace Process support*. 29-09-1993.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/EzJcXW>

EU Commission. *Future economic aid of the EU to the Westbank and Gaza*. 23-10-1995.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/kmRTJP>

EU Social-Economic Committee. *Advice on EU Mediterranean region policy*. 13-11-1995.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/sjBLIR>

EU Parliament. *Resolution on EU financial aid to West Bank and Gaza*. 10-06-1996.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/nxD6ZQ>

EU Parliament. *Resolution on Middle East Peace Process*. 02-12-1996.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/hs2AXg>

EU Parliament. *Resolution on situation in Middle East*. 06-07-1998.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/WZDPoC>

EU Parliament. *Resolution regarding Middle East Peace Process*. 20-01-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/ArFwvK>

EU Council. *Common Strategy Paper for Mediterranean Region*. 19-07-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/8700I9>

EU Parliament. *Resolution on Middle East situation*. 05-10-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/JI8AL>

EU Commission. *Annual MEDA program report 1999*. 07-11-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/cyO7q9>

EU Commission. *Report on promoting human rights and democracy in foreign policy 1996-1999*. 14-11-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/HRW7EN>

EU Parliament. *Resolution on EU common policy regarding Mediterranean region*. 15-11-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/DpZRGX>

EU Council. *Common policy appointment EU special representative to Middle East Peace Process*. 14-12-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/JDbI8r>

EU Parliament. *Resolution on BP meeting*. 11-04-2002.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/ra5LcQ>

EU Council. *Policy report on expansion mandate EU special representative to Middle East Peace Process*. EU Publication Paper. 10-12-2002.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/ymdGc6>

EU Parliament. *Peace and Dignity in the Middle East*. 23-10-2003.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/H1tgm9>

EU Commission. *EU Trend Rapport 2004*. 10-02-2004.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/vdskZm>

EU Parliament. *Middle East Amendment*. 29-04-2004.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/qDS1L3>

HTK, 23432, nr. 6. *Letter of minister of Foreign Affairs*. 02-05-1995.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/NG3ys5>

HTK, 24337, nr. 14. *Revision of foreign policy*. 24-11-1995.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/bRcRSv>

HTK, 23432, nr. 9. *Letter of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs*. 08-02-1996.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/YUOGca>

HTK, 23432, nr. 12. *Situation in Middle East report*. 01-05-1996.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/xkpaQb>

HTK, 23432, nr. 16. *Situation in Middle East report*. 25-02-1997.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/pl6pBt>

HTK, 23432, nr. 17. *Letter of Minister of Development Cooperation*. 03-04-1998.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/63Dcxs>

HTK, 23432, nr. 18. *Situation in Middle East report*. 05-06-1998.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/owz6lY>

HTK, 23432, nr. 19. *Letter of Minister of Foreign Affairs*. 28-08-1998.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/ikfy7H>

HTK, 23432, nr. 20. *Report on General Consultation*. 01-10-1998.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/wBHDhj>

HTK, 23432, nr. 20. *Situation in the Middle East report*. 01-10-1998.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/9kCZri>

HTK, 23432, nr. 21. *Gaza Port construction*. 11-11-1998.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/aiZ57a>

HTK, 23432, nr. 26. *Report on visit Israel and Palestinian Territories*. 03-09-1999.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/UGLJil>

HTK, 26580, nr. 2. *The State of the European Union*. 24-09-1999.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/c7yoXi>

HTK, 26800-3, nr.11. *Report on visit Israel and Palestinian Territories*. 26-05-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/v9f62S>

HTK, 26800V, nr. 102. *Budget of Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000 report*. 29-05-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/SqKWL4>

HTK, 23432, nr. 32. *The situation in the Middle East*. 05-09-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/MAbIMK>

HTK, 21501-02, nr. 348. *Foreign Affairs Committee Agenda*. 11-09-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/NRTg3R>

HTK, 21501-02, nr. 349. *EU Foreign Affairs Council report*. 13-09-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/np3YKj>

HTK, 27407, nr. 1. *The State of the European Union*. 19-09-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/9UTjU2>

HTK 2000-2001, 359. *Parliament questions regarding unrest in Israel and Palestinian Territories*. 03-10-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/nbwbt4>

HTK 2000-2001, 359. *Questions to Minister concerning Dutch viewpoint regarding riots in Israel and the security forces responses*. 03-10-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/nbwbt4>

HTK, 23432, nr. 31. *Result of Sharm-el-Sheikh meeting*. 20-10-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/pA3fo6>

HTK 2000-2001, Appendix 151. *Parliament questions and answers by government*. 06-11-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/gWp6Rn>

HTK 2000-2001, 1409. *Dutch Parliament Voting Report*. 07-11-2000.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/KM0UQu>



HTK, 23432, nr. 36. *The situation in the Middle East*. 25-04-2001.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/KpSk0t>

HTK, 23432, nr. 38. *Middle East situation general consultation report*. 08-07-2001.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/6stp53>

HTK, 23432, nr.53. *Middle East situation general consultation report*. 13-05-2002.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/iRcmsD>

HTK, 28603, nr. 1. *The State of the European Union*. 17-09-2002.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/4ughjp>

HTK, 29201, nr. 1. *The State of the European Union*. 16-09-2003.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/iysG6u>

HTK, 23432, nr. 130. *The situation in the Middle East*. 21-10-2003.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/MCK6Zg>

HTK, 23432, nr. 142. *Letter concerning Geneva Accord*. 12-12-2003.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/VQAXQM>

HTK, 23432, nr. 161. *Letter of Minister of Foreign Affairs*. 19-05-2004.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/Co9BAu>

HTK, 23432, nr. 170. *Report on General Consultation*. 17-07-2004.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/kQHMKw>

HTK, 29803, nr. 1. *The State of the European Union*. 21-09-2004.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/FTK3yV>

HTK 2005-2006, 2829. *Debate concerning Palestinian Elections*. 31-01-2006.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/Gchoam>

HTK, 23432, nr. 198. *Situation in Middle East report*. 22-02-2006.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/nS2gr8>

UN General Assembly. *Report on special session regarding Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. 20-10-2000.

Available at: [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/ES-10/PV.14](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/ES-10/PV.14)

United Nation Commission on Human Rights. *Report of the fifty seventh Session*. 27-04-2001.

Available at: <http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/docs/2001/e2001-23partII.pdf>

## Websites

*EU-Israeli Association Agreement*. Dutch government. 20-11-1995.

Available at: <http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBV0001302/2010-01-01>

*EU Barcelona Process Declaration*. European Union. 28-11-1995.

Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/NL/TXT/?uri=uriserv:r15001>

*EU-Mediterranean Association Agreements overview*. European Union.

Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/NL/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ar14104>

*Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East: Israeli/Palestinian Reciprocal Action, Quartet Support*.

US Department of State Archive.

Available at: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/22520.htm>

Soeterik, R. *Europe and Palestine*. Nederlands Palestina Komitee. 21-10-2012.

Available at: <https://goo.gl/aBGXJs>

*Strategic Accord* (Government Balkenende 1 Coalition Accord). Dutch parliament. 03-07-2002.

Available at: [https://www.parlement.com/9291000/d/tk28375\\_5.pdf](https://www.parlement.com/9291000/d/tk28375_5.pdf)