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## Israel's Quest for Peace

Even before the founding of the state of Israel 60 years ago, the early Zionists sought peace with their Arab neighbors. Israel has remained committed to that goal throughout its history, repeatedly demonstrating its desire to live side-by-side with neighboring states. Israel's willingness to trade parts of its historic homeland for peace has led to peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. Likewise, Israel has proven willing to make bold, painful concessions in order to end the conflict with the Palestinians.

- *1918 - Early Zionists Reach Out to Arabs*  
Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel, leads a mission to Cairo to meet with leading Syrian Arab nationalists, chosen by the British, so Weizmann could express the Jewish peoples desire to live in harmony with the Arabs in Palestine.
- *1947 – U.N. Partition Plan*  
The Jewish Community of Palestine, and of the world, accepts the partition plan that would create a Jewish State in the same land as an Arab State. They accepted this despite it being a truncated, non-contiguous Jewish state, without Jerusalem.
- *1948 – A State is Born*  
Declaring independence, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, says Israel would "extend the hand of peace to all its neighbors" as well as "full and equal citizenship and due representation"
- *1967 – Offer to Withdraw is Rejected*  
Days after defending itself in the Six-Day War, Israel offers to return captured territories in return for peace treaties. Egypt and Syria immediately reject the offer.
- *1978 – Camp David Accords Signed*  
Israel cedes large portions of territory to Egypt in return for a peace agreement. In 1979, Egypt and Israel sign a Treaty of Peace – the first such treaty between Israel and an Arab country.
- *1993 – The Oslo Peace Agreement*  
Israel grants the Palestinians unprecedented autonomy and commences negotiations designed to end the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians in exchange for a Palestinian agreement to recognize Israel and end terrorism.

- *1994 – Peace Accord with Jordan*  
Jordan’s King Hussein and Israel’s Yitzhak Rabin sign a treaty of peace. Jordan becomes the second Arab state to formally come to terms with Israel.
- *2000 – Israel Makes Historic Offer at Camp David*  
Following talks at Camp David, Yasir Arafat rejects Israel’s far-reaching peace offer and the Palestinians launch sustained terrorist attacks. Israel also offers Syria a peace deal in which Israel would withdraw from the Golan Heights, but the deal is rejected.
- *2005 – Israel’s Unilateral Withdrawal from Gaza*  
With U.S. support, Israel took a historic step and unilaterally withdrew from Gaza, and parts of the West Bank, providing the Palestinians with an unprecedented chance to prove their intention to fight terrorism and govern effectively. Unfortunately, the Israeli step has been met by 4,000 rockets fired from Gaza.
- *2006 – Israeli Prime Minister Supports Palestinian State*  
In a major speech, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert backs the creation of a Palestinian State so long as it recognizes Israel and ceases terrorist activities.
- *2007 – Israel Extends Hand in Peace at Annapolis Conference*  
At the U.S.-sponsored Annapolis conference, Israel reiterated its commitment to peaceful negotiations with the Palestinians and Arab states. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he believes “that there is no path other than the path of peace. I believe that there is no just solution other than the solution of two national states for two peoples.”
- *2008 – Israel Continues to Seek Peace Despite Daily Attacks*  
Despite daily Hamas rocket fire and other terrorist attacks against its civilians, Israel continues to remain committed to negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. It also continues to facilitate humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza amid the ongoing violence.

Additional Resources:

[Israel’s Search for Peace \(AIPAC Briefing Book\)](#)

[Guide to the Middle East Peace Process \(Israeli Foreign Ministry website\)](#)