



Can The Multilateral Middle East Talks Be Revived?

By Joel Peters*

Ehud Barak's election signaled renewed optimism for Israel-Palestinian and Israel-Syrian peace negotiations after three years of strained relations. In light of the new environment, the author assesses whether the multilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks can or should also be revived. Given the difficulties the talks have encountered over the past three years, the author also offers a number of ideas as to how they might be restructured in order to be more effective.

The Arab-Israeli peace process is known primarily for the bilateral talks between the immediate protagonists. However, the 1991 Madrid Conference also set up a series of multilateral talks designed to bring together Israel, its immediate Arab neighbors, and the wider circle of Arab states in the Gulf and Maghreb to discuss issues of mutual concern. (1)

While the bilateral talks between Israel and the Arab states address issues of mutual recognition, peace, territorial withdrawal, border demarcation, security arrangements, and the political rights of the Palestinians--issues at the heart of the conflict, the multilateral talks were meant to provide a forum for the parties to address a range of economic, social, and environmental issues which extend across national boundaries and whose resolution is essential for long-term regional development and security. If the bilaterals deal with problems inherited from the past, then the multilaterals would focus on the future shape of the Middle East.

The thinking behind the multilateral track was outlined by the then U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in his remarks to the January 1992 opening meeting of the multilaterals in Moscow:

It is for these reasons that we have come together – to address those issues that are common to the region and that do not necessarily respect national boundaries or

geographic boundaries. These issues can be best addressed by the concerted efforts of the regional parties together with the support of the international community and the resources and expertise that it can provide. The approach of the multilaterals is grounded in the functionalist thesis of international relations which holds that engaging states in an ever-widening web of economic, technical, and welfare interdependencies will force them to set aside their political and/or ideological rivalries and create a new perception of shared needs. It was hoped that developments on the multilateral level would serve as confidence-building measures that would then facilitate progress at the bilateral level--that is, that functional cooperation would eventually spill over into regional peace.

The establishment of the talks also reflected the emerging concept of cooperative security in the post-Cold War era, with a greater emphasis on tackling the root causes of conflict and promoting confidence, rather than relying primarily on deterrence or containment. (2) Cooperation, it was hoped, would foster a fundamental change in attitude and lead to a convergence of expectations and the institutionalization of norms of behavior.

But, the multilateral talks have effectively been suspended since the end of 1996 at the behest of the Arab world over an

impasse in negotiations on the further redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron. While some activities have taken place over the past three and a half years within the refugee, environment, water and regional economic development working groups, and a number of track-two academic meetings have discussed issues addressed by the arms control and regional security working group, none of the five working groups have met in a full plenary session since May 1996. Indeed, the multilateral talks have effectively disappeared from the agenda of the peace process.

Despite the current situation, and the fact that the talks did not receive much attention even when they were fully functioning, this article will argue that the multilaterals did in fact make an important contribution to the peace process between Israel and the Arab world. In particular, they created an environment in which relations between the two parties could move from conflict to cooperation. They also laid the foundations for long-term regional stability by developing new institutional arrangements and generated ideas for regional economic development and new cooperative security structures. This article will also show why all parties, regional and extra-regional, need to work together to revive and consolidate this important track of the peace process.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MULTILATERAL TALKS

The multilateral talks comprise five working groups: arms control and regional security (ACRS); regional and economic development (REDWG); refugees; water resources; and the environment. Membership of these working groups comprises the conflict's immediate protagonists (Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians) and also Arab states from the Gulf and the Maghreb, as well as a host of

extra-regional participants. Each working group is chaired by an external power; the United States is responsible for ACRS and the water working group, the European Union for REDWG, Japan for the environment, and Canada for refugees. A Steering Group, responsible for overseeing the activities of the five working groups and for effecting any changes in the structure of the multilateral talks, was also created. (3)

Creating the multilaterals was an ambitious undertaking not without risk, for beyond the broader goals of this track, there was little idea of what specific issues the multilaterals would address, how meetings would be conducted, and how the process would be managed. The uncertainty surrounding the project at the outset and the vagueness of its relationship to the bilateral tracks raised serious questions about its value. However, fears that the multilaterals might collapse in acrimony and disarray proved unjustified. The talks quickly established a sense of direction and purpose, and developed a recognizable pattern, structure and set of procedural modalities, generating their own dynamics, language, rules and procedures.

The multilateral talks are often spoken about collectively. In practice, however, the working groups vary with regard to group dynamics, degree of progress made, specific interests of the parties involved, and obstacles encountered. It is also important to note that although none of the working groups has met in a full plenary session since the summer of 1996, the parties have continued to meet to discuss many of the projects identified by the various working groups.

The working group on regional economic development (REDWG), in which the European Union acts as "gavel-holder," (4) is the largest of the five working groups, both in terms of participation and in the number of projects. The purpose of this group reflects most fully the long-term goal

of the multilaterals, namely entwining the states of the region in a new set of mutually beneficial economic relations and effecting real change in the living conditions of peoples of the region.

In June 1994, a monitoring committee was set up to allow the four core regional parties--Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians--to take a more direct role in organizing the activities, developing the priorities, and identifying the future projects of the working group. The specific work of the committee was divided among four sectoral committees, with Egypt taking responsibility for work on finance, Israel on trade, Jordan on promoting regional infrastructure, and the Palestinian Authority on tourism.

The following year, a permanent secretariat staffed by personnel from the region was opened in Amman to support the activities of the working group. In its first year of operation, the secretariat serviced over a hundred meetings and is still operational today, though in a more limited capacity.

The working group on water, coordinated by the United States, has focused on four areas: enhancing data availability, water management and conservation, enhancing the water supply, and developing new concepts for regional cooperation and management. Although the multilaterals were formally suspended more than three years ago, the parties have continued to meet informally and have actually widened the scope of their activities. A new regional desalination research center was set up in Oman at the end of 1996 and is operating in cooperation with Israeli experts. In addition, Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian experts have been working together on a database and computer network related to water issues.

The environment working group's agenda, under Japan's aegis, has concentrated on four themes: the control of

maritime pollution, treatment of waste water, desertification, and environmental management. The European Union has taken on responsibility for a project focussing on the environmental management of the eastern Mediterranean coastal area. Italy is overseeing work on solid waste management, the United States on waste water treatment for small communities, the World Bank on desertification and Jordan on environmental education. At the plenary meeting held in Bahrain in October 1994, the parties signed an Environmental Code of Conduct for the Middle East. This document lays out a set of principles and guidelines underlining the relationship between environmental management and security, and the transnational nature of these problems together with the need for regional co-operation and the development of joint frameworks to tackle these issues.

The Arms Control and Regional Security working group, led jointly by the United States and Russia, has been wrought by the most difficulties and marked by fundamental disagreements between Israel and the Arab states over priorities and approach. The Arab states, led by Egypt, have placed highest priority on the problem of weapons of mass destruction in the region, and want to put the question of Israel's nuclear capability on the agenda. Conversely, the Israeli approach has centered on the need to develop confidence-building measures such as the pre-notification of large-scale military exercises, the development of hotlines, crisis prevention mechanisms, and verification procedures. The group has divided its work between two separate "baskets". The first basket, the "operational basket", deals with a large number of military issues and confidence-building measures, such as pre-notification of military exercises, the creation of a communications network, and joint search and rescue exercises at sea. The second basket, the "conceptual basket",

addresses the long-term objectives of the arms control process. This basket concentrates on drawing up a Declaration of Principles on Arms Control and Regional Security on governing future security relations among the states of the region and a set of guidelines to direct the arms control process. Discussion of the Declaration of Principles has been hampered over the inclusion of a statement on weapons of mass destruction.

The fifth group, the refugee working group, differs from the other four in that it does not deal with the future relationship between Israel and the Arab world, but focuses solely on one aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict, namely the Palestinian refugee problem. While this problem can only be resolved at the bilateral level between Israel and the Palestinians, the creation of this working group is an acknowledgement that the outcome of any agreement reached will touch upon the interests of many other parties in the region, and will require the support of the international community and as such warrants consideration in a multilateral framework.

Led by Canada, the refugee working group has been active in three broad areas: defining the scope of the refugee problem, encouraging dialogue on the issues involved, and mobilizing the resources required to address them. Forming the basis of the group's inter-sessional activities are the following themes: databases (Norway), family reunification (France), human resources development, job creation and vocational training (United States), public health (Italy), child welfare (Sweden), and economic and social infrastructure (European Union). So far, the group has largely skirted around the highly charged political issues that lie at the heart of the refugee question. Most of the group's efforts have been concerned with improving the daily lives of Palestinian refugees and

mobilizing the necessary financial resources to do so. These activities have been undertaken with the explicit acknowledgment that attending to the immediate welfare of the refugee population should not prejudice their political rights or future status in any final settlement reached between Israel and the Palestinians.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MULTILATERALS

The main criticism leveled at the multilateral talks has been that after nearly eight years of meetings, it is difficult to identify specific successes. But, by creating a degree of cooperation between Israel and the Arab world, they have contributed tremendously to the peace process.

It is important to note that the multilateral talks differ from the bilateral negotiations, in that they have not been a forum in which Israel and the Arab states have bargained over issues and mutual concessions. Instead, the multilaterals have offered Israel and the Arab world an alternative diplomatic space to engage in low-risk communication and exchange, to develop new forms of cooperation, and to generate creative solutions and plans for the future--for the first time--on a regional level. They have presented an opportunity for each side to gain insight into the other's goals and intentions, perceptions and anxieties, and flexibility and limits. These meetings have also provided a framework for extra-regional parties to actively promote and support regional cooperation and stability in the Middle East.

Notably, the multilaterals provided a forum for unprecedented bilateral contacts between Israel and some Arab states, such as Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Tunisia, and Morocco, leading to their engagement in the peace process. After the signing of the Oslo Accords, these states hosted some of the plenary sessions, and began to play an active

role in many of the inter-sessional activities. These early contacts led to a series of open bilateral meetings between Israeli ministers and their Arab counterparts, and to the development of diplomatic ties between Israel and the wider Arab world.

But, the real importance of the multilateral track lies in its contribution to the post-settlement phase of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Developing collective long-range concepts for regional economic, social, and cultural relations cannot take place in the context of bilateral negotiations, which are inevitably governed by more pressing concerns.

By breaking down issues into narrowly-defined functional areas, the multilaterals brought together experts from around the region and beyond. As was noted by former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian, in his observations on the Working Group on the Environment: "The mode of operation has been to bring experts--not politicians or diplomats--from the region together at workshops and set them to addressing the problems. What we found was that when we put these experts together they solved problems. Beyond the glare of the political klieg lights, we created an environment where scientists spoke a common language."(5)

In nearly every sector, experts from the region have been engaged in developing projects and studies that address issues of future cooperation and joint ventures. For example, Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian water experts succeeded in producing a detailed plan for the upgrading and standardization of water data collection in the region. Israeli, Egyptian, and Jordanian teams have produced a joint plan for dealing with oil spills in the Gulf of Aqaba. Other issues tackled by regional and extra-regional experts include the problem of desertification and control of natural resource degradation, Middle East transport, and regional trade.(6)

Continuous interaction between specialists from the different countries can, over time, foster a convergence of expectations and the institutionalization of norms of behavior. Through the multilateral process, the states of the Middle East began to develop a set of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures to govern the nature of their future relations. The Working Group on the Environment drew up the Bahrain Environmental Code of Conduct for the Middle East, while the efforts of the parties in the "conceptual basket" of the ACRS working group were engaged in drafting a Declaration of Principles to cover regional security issues.

The multilaterals also began to lay the foundations for a new set of regional institutions, such as the desalinization research center in Oman, environmental training centers in Jordan and Bahrain, and a proposed regional security center in Amman. Of particular significance was the establishment of the REDWG secretariat in Amman three years ago. The creation of this secretariat represented an important, qualitative step in the institutionalization of the multilateral process, and in placing responsibility for driving the process of regional cooperation in the hands of the regional parties themselves. Although embryonic in its nature and functioning, the REDWG secretariat in Amman reflects the first tentative steps towards the fashioning of new common structures of cooperation, coordination, and decisionmaking in the Middle East. It is the first, and remains the only, functioning regional institution generated by the Middle East peace process in which Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian, and Palestinian officials have been working together on a daily basis.

FAILINGS OF THE MULTILATERAL TALKS

Despite its achievements, numerous meetings, and various joint projects under discussion, the demise of the multilateral framework three years ago and the failure to relaunch the talks following the start of final status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians in November 1999, indicate the fragility of this track. Ostensibly, the reason for the multilaterals' collapse during Benjamin Netanyahu's tenure as Israel's prime minister was the breakdown in bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. But, setbacks in the peace process are not sufficient explanation for the talks' demise. Relations between Israel and the Palestinians were far from smooth from 1992-1996, but regardless of the difficulties that arose, at no point were the multilateral talks formally suspended. Furthermore, even prior to their formal suspension in November 1996, the multilaterals had suffered structural and operational weaknesses and had run encountered obstacles, most notably in ACRS over the question of weapons of mass destruction. Accordingly, if one is to consider the future of the multilateral track--how the talks may be revived and operate more effectively--it is necessary to examine their shortcomings and not simply attribute their demise to the vicissitudes of the peace process.

From the outset, the multilaterals were seen as fulfilling a secondary role in the Arab- Israeli peace process. With an undetermined function (beyond serving as a complement to the bilateral track) and no guidelines for their management, the informal, ad-hoc, and low-key meetings made for an unwieldy process, resulting in a duplication of resources and a lack of focus and direction. The Steering Group, created in 1994, was empowered to produce a set of guidelines for the future running of the multilaterals and a paper outlining a shared vision for the future of the region. Yet, such direction was never provided and the guidelines were not drawn up. Indeed, the

last time the Steering Group met was in May 1995.

Early discussions in the multilaterals resembled academic seminars where ideas for future cooperation were raised for debate. The emphasis was deliberately placed on loose frameworks, where bargaining was exploratory and communication relatively free. However, as the desire to reach agreements and implement projects grew, the discussions inevitably became sharper, conflicts of interest emerged, and disagreements arose. Those disagreements--and particularly a perceived rivalry between Israel and Egypt--began to dominate the proceedings and ultimately stifled the working groups' activities.

The multilateral talks suffered from differing expectations from the start. Israel saw the talks as an opportunity to break out of its regional isolation and develop relations with countries from the Gulf and North Africa. Egypt, on the other hand, was set on limiting Israel's influence, and in particular, challenging Israel's nuclear monopoly in the Middle East. The clash between the two countries was most apparent in the Arms Control and Regional Security working group that has not met since June 1995 due to the gridlock between the two countries.

Despite their potential, the multilaterals adopted an approach to regional cooperation and peace-building that was pragmatic and gradual, rather than ambitious and grandiose. The value of this approach was borne out by the experience of the sessions. In a political climate pushing for immediate and tangible results, the lack of identifiable outcomes emerging from the multilaterals led to dissatisfaction and calls for a more high level and public approach, such as the MENA Economic Summit meetings, and a conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East (CSCME), modeled on the CSCE process in Europe.(7)

The Arab-Israeli peace process has suffered paradoxically not from a lack of multilateralism, but from a surfeit. Within the multilaterals themselves, there was considerable overlap in many issues and activities. Additionally, the multilateral talks were not the only framework for the discussion and development of new structures for regional cooperation. The multilaterals gave rise at the end of 1994 to the first Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Summit held in Casablanca and aimed at directly engaging private sector businesses in regional economic development. In October 1995, the European Union launched in Barcelona the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership--the so-called Barcelona Process--aimed at developing a new framework of peaceful and cooperative relations in the Mediterranean region. Though not part of the peace process (in fact deliberately designed to be separate from it), the Barcelona Process incorporated many of the same participants and addressed many of the same issues as the multilaterals. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Western European Union (WEU), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also launched initiatives towards developing a security dialogue with the countries of the southern Mediterranean.

Aside from duplication and overlap, overstretching, and draining limited human and financial resources, the various enterprises led to another problem: the impression of an emerging extra-regional rivalry between the United States (seen as dominating the multilateral talks and MENA summits) and the European Union (which excluded the United States from the Barcelona Process) for the leadership and management of new cooperative security structures in the region and came to be regarded as competing, rather than as complementary, mechanisms for regional

cooperation. (8) These various frameworks led to a dilution rather than a concentration of efforts towards developing regional cooperation.

A final weakness of the multilaterals was that they were too closely tied to the issue of normalization for Israel. The fact that Israel was able to sit down with Arab countries to develop ideas for future cooperation in itself constituted an element of normalization and legitimacy for Israel. The issue of normalization, rather than regional progress, dominated headlines. While the Arab world attacked the multilaterals for offering Israel the rewards of peace before a full political settlement had been reached, Israel also overplayed its hand by sending large, high-profile delegations to the plenary sessions hosted by Gulf and Maghreb Arab states, compounding critics' perceptions. Given the overemphasis on normalization, it is hardly surprising that the multilaterals became hostage to negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

WAYS FORWARD

This paper began by asking two questions: can and should the multilateral talks be revived? And, if so, what steps need to be taken? Now that the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians has been revived and there is talk of renewed negotiations on the Israel-Syria front, more attention should be given to the multilateral track. The three-year hiatus in the talks affords an opportunity to evaluate their future function critically and creatively. The following issues need to be considered:

Decoupling Normalization

While the process of dialogue within the multilaterals offered Israel a degree of normalization and legitimacy, it is important not to overlook the talks' broader

contribution to the peace process. Since the end of the Cold War, regionalism and regional integration have become predominant trends within the international system and global economy. In this respect, the Middle East lags far behind other regions in the world. If the Middle East region is to engage competitively in the global economy, it needs to work as an integrated unit, and cannot wait until resolution of the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict to get started.

Although the pace of implementing regional projects devised at the multilateral level is clearly contingent on, and cannot be expected to outstrip, progress at the bilateral level, especially between Israel and the Palestinians, the will of regional players to plan for the future should not be held hostage to progress in talks between Israel and the Palestinians or the Syrians. Nor should the talks be a barometer of negotiations at the bilateral level.

For Israel, reviving the multilateral talks and reconvening the plenary meetings will be an important boost for its reengagement with the Arab world. Developing regional cooperation figures high on the agenda of prime minister Ehud Barak, who six months ago created a new ministry headed by Shimon Peres specifically for that purpose. (Of course, the exact function of that ministry remains uncertain.) Israel must tread carefully, however, and recognize the importance of a low-key, incremental approach to regional peace-building.

Restructuring the multilaterals

Despite the ad-hoc nature of the talks and the lack of an overall blueprint, the operating structure of the multilaterals had grown to be inflexible. Not only was progress as a whole contingent on the bilateral negotiations, but each working group was expected to move forward at the same pace. Furthermore, the Steering Group,

responsible for overseeing the process, could only convene after all five working groups had met in plenary session, and the working groups could only reconvene after the Steering Group met. Subsequently, stalemate in the ACRS group over weapons of mass destruction held up progress on a number of important socioeconomic issues addressed by the other groups.

Future deliberations of the working groups should be independent of one another. Difficulties encountered in one working group should not be an impediment to the functioning of the other working groups. It makes little sense, for example, that the pace of the Refugee Working Group, which addresses issues pertaining to the resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem at the regional level, be dependent on discussions in the sphere of arms control.

Rationalizing Resources

The multilateral talks produced an impressive and lengthy array of potential regional projects that did not move beyond the planning stage. In many cases, the projects required a greater level of public funding than was readily available. The provision of adequate financial resources for projects developed within the multilateral framework was never, and still has not been, adequately addressed. Involving the private sector in the multilaterals' activities would go a long way to solving the financial stalemate. Furthermore, if the multilaterals are not simply to become a marketplace for ideas, project implementation needs to be a priority. Projects unlikely to receive adequate financing should not be initiated.

Coordinating activities

There was a considerable degree of duplication in many of the activities within the working groups. Furthermore, many important issues, such as education, health, and agriculture, were not given prominence when the multilaterals were devised eight

years ago. The rationalization of future activities, the incorporation of new spheres of action, and the prioritization and funding of projects requires a more systematic degree of management.

The parties should look closely at the experience of the REDWG Secretariat in Amman, which supported and coordinated the activities of that working group by acting as a clearing-house, and providing logistical support in meetings and in the preparation of background documentation. In particular, they should explore ways to build on the Secretariat's activities and to assess in what ways the REDWG's success might be replicated in other working groups, and even consider if this Secretariat could serve as a means of coordinating and rationalizing the work of the multilaterals as a whole.

Engaging Civil Society

The multilaterals were designed to allow the parties to raise issues without much publicity. Indeed, the multilaterals can best be described as an exercise in diplomacy by stealth. Thus, little thought was given to means of including civil society in the proceedings. The lack of public awareness ultimately ran contrary to one of the aims of the multilateral track, namely the creation of a series of confidence-building measures between the peoples of the region. Since knowledge of the multilaterals' activities was limited to the diplomats and elites involved, no confidence-building among the peoples ever took place. Any relaunching of the multilateral track needs to encompass cooperative frameworks linking various elements of civil society, such as health, education, media, etc. Equally, the general public needs to be better informed about specific developments within the working groups as do academic and special interest groups, and especially the private sector and business communities.

Coordination amongs extra-regional parties

An excess of multilateral peace efforts has led to a lack of coordination at the extra-regional level. This was particularly the case within the economic sphere, with the REDWG meetings, the MENA Economic Summits, and the economic dimension of the Barcelona Process. In theory, Israel and the Arab states have much to gain by having multiple multilateral frameworks in which to develop ideas and find ways to overcome their differences. In practice, however, they became a drain on the limited human and financial resources available.

The success of future multilateral efforts requires a greater level of coordination and cooperation among extra-regional parties. This is especially the case regarding the United States and the European Union. Transatlantic competition over leadership of the multilaterals contributes nothing to the process of reconciliation between Israel and the Arab world. Neither the United States nor the European Union alone possesses the capacity to bring about a comprehensive and lasting settlement to the conflict. Likewise, the parties involved have little to gain from making separate appeals to the United States or to Europe to play a more active role in the multilateral framework at the expense or exclusion of the other.

CONCLUSION

With the commencement of final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians, there was a broad expectation in Jerusalem that the multilaterals would be revived. To the deep disappointment of Israel, there has been little movement in this direction. Indeed, the restarting of the multilaterals has become a point of public contention between Egypt and Israel, with Egypt now making the resumption of this

track contingent on the revival of the Israeli-Syria negotiations, effectively delaying the immediate revival of these talks.

The multilaterals offered Israel and the Arab world an alternative diplomatic environment in which to develop a vision of their future relations in a post peace process era and to create new structures to address mutual problems. The multilaterals began to foster the conditions for a comprehensive resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict at the regional level. While attention is now focussed on final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians, it is important not to lose sight of that goal.

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NOTES

1) Invitations to the Moscow meeting were issued to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians (under the aegis of a joint Palestinian/Jordanian delegation, as provided for in the Madrid formula), Israel, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, the European Community (to be represented at the ministerial level by the EC Presidency and the European Commission), Turkey, Canada, Japan and China. These proceedings were boycotted by Syria and Lebanon, who have boycotted the multilateral talks, arguing that the Arab world should not engage in discussions with Israel about regional cooperation before a political settlement at the bilateral level has been reached.

2) See Robert Bowker, *Beyond Peace: the Search for Security in the Middle East* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996).

3) The Steering Group comprises: United States, Russia, Canada, Japan, the European

Union, Israel, Jordan, Egypt, the PLO, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia.

4) The multilateral talks have developed a specific terminology. The Gavel-holder is the term to describe the extra-regional power responsible for the running of the working groups. The term 'Inter-sessional activities' refers to the various meetings, projects and workshops held between the plenary sessions.

5) U.S. Department of State Dispatch, 11 October, 1993, 4, 41, p.698.

6) For details of the projects drawn up by meeting of the multilaterals see Joel Peters *Pathways to Peace; the multilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks* (London; The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996) pp. 16-60.

7) Israel and Jordan in Article 4 of their peace treaty actually commit themselves to the setting up of such a framework.

8) See Joel Peters, "The Arab-Israeli Multilateral Talks and the Barcelona Process: Competition or Convergence?", *International Spectator*, 33, 4, 1998, pp. 63-76.