

**THE CRISIS OF THE TWO-STATE SOLUTION: REASSESSING PEACE
NEGOTIATION FRAMEWORKS IN LIGHT OF THE ONGOING GAZA CONFLICT**

Umar Gambo Yahaya

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja

Email: umargamboyahaya@gmail.com

Phone: +234-8035 346716

Abstract

This study examined the viability of the two-state solution in light of the ongoing Gaza conflict and reassessed the effectiveness of existing peace negotiation frameworks. The study was guided by two major objectives: to evaluate the structural and political challenges confronting the two-state solution and to examine the limitations of current peace negotiation frameworks in addressing the realities of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. The study adopted Conflict Resolution Theory and Realist Theory as its theoretical framework. While conflict resolution theory provided insight into the role of dialogue, mediation, and institutional peacebuilding, realism explained the influence of power asymmetries, strategic interests, and security concerns on negotiation outcomes. The paper employed a qualitative case study approach and relied on secondary data sources, including academic literature, policy reports, and institutional publications. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis in order to identify key patterns relating to territorial fragmentation, political division, asymmetrical power relations, and the impact of the Gaza conflict on peace prospects. The findings revealed that the two-state solution was facing a serious crisis of feasibility due to structural, political, and strategic constraints. The Gaza conflict further intensified these challenges by deepening mistrust, worsening territorial fragmentation, and exposing the inadequacy of traditional negotiation models. The study also found that existing peace frameworks were weakened by unequal power relations and the absence of credible enforcement mechanisms. It recommended reforming negotiation frameworks, strengthening international mediation, promoting inclusive governance, and exploring hybrid peace models. The study concluded that although the two-state solution remained an important diplomatic framework, its practical viability had become increasingly uncertain without substantial reform.

Keywords: Two-state solution, Gaza conflict, peace negotiations, conflict resolution, Israeli–Palestinian conflict

Introduction

The two-state solution has long occupied a central place in diplomatic and scholarly discourse on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, premised on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state existing alongside Israel within a mutually agreed political and territorial framework. It has remained the dominant formula endorsed by major international actors, including the United Nations, which in recent years has continued to reaffirm the implementation of the two-state solution as the basis for a “just, lasting and comprehensive peace” and has even convened high-level international processes specifically dedicated to advancing that objective.

Notwithstanding this broad international endorsement, the practical realization of the two-state framework has become increasingly uncertain. The current Gaza war, which intensified after October 2023, has not only produced catastrophic humanitarian consequences but has also profoundly altered the political and security environment within which peace negotiations would have to occur. Recent policy analyses argue that the conflict has deepened Israeli–Palestinian polarization, widened regional instability, and made the diplomatic pathway to a negotiated settlement more difficult than at any time in the recent past.

A central dimension of this crisis lies in the erosion of traditional peace negotiation frameworks. Since the collapse of formal U.S.-led negotiations in 2014, confidence in the feasibility of the two-state solution has steadily weakened, and more recent survey evidence indicates that support among both Israeli Jews and Palestinians remains limited, shaped by distrust, fear, and pessimism regarding the possibility of peace. A July 2024 joint poll reported that the events of October 7 and the war in Gaza produced intense dehumanization and mutual distrust, while only a minority on each side supported a two-state peace solution. The Gaza conflict has also exposed deeper structural weaknesses in existing negotiation models. These include entrenched asymmetries of power between the parties, the absence of credible enforcement mechanisms, fragmented Palestinian and Israeli political leadership, and the tendency of international diplomacy to reaffirm the two-state solution rhetorically without generating effective implementation pathways. Recent commentary has therefore suggested that the crisis is not merely one of stalled negotiations but of a broader breakdown in the assumptions underpinning earlier peace-process paradigms.

It is against this background that the present study reassesses the relevance and viability of the two-state solution in light of the ongoing Gaza conflict. The study proceeds from the view that the present war has not simply interrupted an otherwise functioning peace process; rather, it has revealed the profound limitations of inherited negotiation frameworks and the need to rethink peacemaking strategies within the realities of contemporary asymmetrical conflict, territorial fragmentation, and declining political legitimacy.

Statement of the Problem

The persistence of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, particularly in the context of the ongoing Gaza war, reflects a deepening crisis in existing peace negotiation frameworks. Despite sustained international endorsement, the two-state solution has increasingly struggled to translate from diplomatic consensus into political reality. Scholars such as Kelman (2010) argue that repeated failures of negotiations have eroded mutual trust and reinforced adversarial perceptions between Israelis and Palestinians, thereby weakening the social and political foundations necessary for compromise. Similarly, Hassassian (2023) contends that the cumulative effects of stalled diplomacy, settlement expansion, and leadership fragmentation have significantly diminished the feasibility of a viable Palestinian state.

Moreover, the Gaza conflict has intensified structural constraints on peacebuilding. The destruction of infrastructure, humanitarian crises, and the further entrenchment of political divisions—particularly between Gaza and the West Bank—have exacerbated territorial fragmentation and governance challenges. As Roy (2024) notes, these conditions not only complicate negotiations but also undermine the institutional capacity required for state-building. At the same time, asymmetrical power relations and the absence of enforceable international mechanisms continue to limit the effectiveness of traditional negotiation models. Despite extensive literature on the two-state solution, there remains insufficient integrative analysis of how ongoing conflict dynamics, particularly in Gaza, are reshaping the viability of this framework.

Therefore, the central problem this study seeks to address is whether the two-state solution remains a viable pathway to peace under current conflict conditions and how existing negotiation frameworks can be restructured to respond to contemporary political, territorial, and security realities.

Conceptual Review

Two-State Solution

The **two-state solution** has long been conceptualized as the most viable and internationally endorsed framework for resolving the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. At its core, it envisions the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state coexisting alongside the State of Israel, based on mutual recognition, secure borders, and peaceful relations. Scholars have approached this concept from legal, political, and conflict resolution perspectives, offering both supportive and critical interpretations.

From a diplomatic and legal standpoint, Quigley (2010) argues that the two-state solution is grounded in international law, particularly United Nations resolutions that affirm the right of Palestinians to self-determination and the principle of territorial partition. According to Quigley, the framework represents a compromise between competing national claims and reflects a normative commitment to resolving the conflict through legal and institutional mechanisms. This perspective emphasizes the legitimacy and global acceptance of the two-state model as a foundation for peace.

Similarly, Khalidi (2020) views the two-state solution as historically rooted in international diplomacy but increasingly disconnected from political realities on the ground. He argues that while the framework once offered a realistic pathway to conflict resolution, developments such as Israeli settlement expansion, territorial fragmentation, and political asymmetry have significantly undermined its feasibility. Khalidi contends that the concept has shifted from a practical solution to what he describes as a “diplomatic illusion,” sustained more by international rhetoric than by genuine political commitment. In contrast, Kelman (2010) approaches the two-state solution from a conflict resolution perspective, emphasizing its potential as a mutually acceptable framework that addresses the core needs and identities of both parties. He argues that the model provides a basis for reconciliation by recognizing the national aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians alike. However, Kelman also stresses that the success of the two-state solution depends on psychological and relational factors, including trust, recognition, and mutual legitimacy elements that have been severely eroded in recent years.

Critically, these scholarly perspectives reveal both the strengths and limitations of the two-state solution. While Quigley underscores its legal and normative legitimacy, Khalidi highlights its declining feasibility, and Kelman emphasizes the importance of socio-psychological conditions for its realization. In the context of the ongoing Gaza conflict, the two-state solution appears increasingly challenged by evolving political and territorial realities. The continued fragmentation of Palestinian territories, the entrenchment of Israeli control, and the erosion of trust between the parties have raised serious questions about its viability. Thus, the two-state solution in this study is conceptualized not merely as a diplomatic framework but as a contested and evolving construct, whose relevance depends on both structural conditions and political will. It remains a powerful normative ideal, yet its practical implementation faces significant obstacles in contemporary conflict dynamics.

Peace Negotiation Frameworks

Peace negotiation frameworks refer to structured processes through which conflicting parties engage in dialogue, mediation, and bargaining to resolve disputes and achieve mutually acceptable agreements. These frameworks typically involve formal negotiations, third-party mediation, confidence-building measures, and institutional mechanisms designed to facilitate conflict resolution. Scholars have analyzed these frameworks from procedural, structural, and critical perspectives, highlighting both their potential and limitations. From a procedural standpoint, Zartman (2000) conceptualizes peace negotiations as processes that become viable when conflicts reach a “mutually hurting stalemate,” where all parties recognize that continued conflict is more costly than compromise. According to Zartman, successful negotiation frameworks depend on timing, leadership, and the willingness of parties to engage in meaningful dialogue. In the Israeli–Palestinian context, this suggests that negotiation efforts have often failed due to the absence of such conditions, particularly when one or both parties perceive strategic advantages in continuing conflict.

Similarly, Fisher, Ury, and Patton (2011) emphasize the importance of principled negotiation, advocating for approaches that focus on interests rather than positions, and that seek win-win outcomes through cooperation and mutual understanding. They argue that effective negotiation frameworks must incorporate clear communication, trust-building, and problem-solving mechanisms. However, in asymmetrical conflicts such as Israel–Palestine, the application of such principles is often constrained by unequal power relations, which limit the ability of weaker parties to negotiate on equal terms.

From a more critical perspective, Pruitt (2005) highlights the structural challenges inherent in peace negotiation frameworks, particularly in protracted conflicts characterized by deep mistrust, identity-based divisions, and external interference. He argues that traditional negotiation models often fail because they do not adequately address underlying grievances or power asymmetries. In the Israeli–Palestinian case, this critique is particularly relevant, as negotiation processes have frequently been criticized for favoring stronger actors and lacking effective enforcement mechanisms. Critically, these perspectives demonstrate that peace negotiation frameworks are not neutral or purely technical processes but are deeply embedded in political and structural contexts. While Zartman emphasizes the importance of timing and readiness, Fisher et al. highlight procedural effectiveness, and Pruitt underscores structural limitations. Together, they suggest that the success of negotiation frameworks depends on a combination of contextual conditions, institutional design, and power dynamics.

In the context of the Gaza conflict, existing negotiation frameworks have been significantly strained. The breakdown of trust, fragmentation of leadership, and intensification of violence have undermined the conditions necessary for effective negotiation. Moreover, the lack of enforcement mechanisms and the influence of external actors have further complicated peace efforts. Thus, peace negotiation frameworks in this study are conceptualized as dynamic and context-dependent processes, whose effectiveness is shaped by both procedural design and structural realities. The ongoing Gaza conflict highlights the need to rethink these frameworks to address contemporary challenges, including asymmetry, legitimacy, and the changing nature of conflict.

Literature Review

The viability of the two-state solution has remained a central theme in scholarly debates on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, with extensive literature reflecting both its enduring normative appeal and its increasing practical limitations. Traditionally, the two-state framework has been regarded as the most feasible and internationally legitimate pathway to peace, grounded in principles of self-determination, territorial compromise, and mutual recognition (Quigley, 2010; United Nations, 2023). Early and mid-phase scholarship largely supported this model as a pragmatic resolution to competing national claims, particularly following the Oslo Accords of the 1990s, which institutionalized the framework as the basis for negotiations (Kelman, 2010).

However, more recent literature has increasingly challenged this optimism, arguing that the two-state solution is facing unprecedented structural, political, and territorial obstacles. A major strand of contemporary scholarship highlights the declining feasibility of the two-state solution due to changes on the ground. Khalidi (2020) argues that decades of Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank have fragmented Palestinian territories to such an extent that the creation of a contiguous and viable Palestinian state is increasingly unrealistic. This territorial fragmentation is further compounded by the separation between Gaza and the West Bank, which undermines the territorial integrity necessary for statehood. Similarly, Lustick (2019) contends that the two-state solution has transitioned from a viable political project to what he terms a “paradigm in decline,” sustained more by international consensus than by practical feasibility.

In addition to territorial constraints, scholars emphasize the role of political fragmentation and governance challenges. Hassassian (2023) highlights the division between Palestinian political authorities, particularly between Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, as a significant obstacle to unified representation in negotiations. This fragmentation weakens the Palestinian negotiating position and complicates efforts to establish a coherent governance framework for a future state. On the Israeli side, shifting political dynamics and the rise of hardline positions have further reduced the willingness to engage in meaningful negotiations, thereby reinforcing the stalemate.

Another important dimension of the literature focuses on the erosion of public support and trust in the two-state solution. Public opinion studies indicate declining confidence among both Israelis and Palestinians, driven by repeated failures of negotiations, ongoing violence, and mutual distrust (PCPSR, 2024). Kelman (2010) argues that successful conflict resolution requires not only political agreements but also psychological readiness, including mutual recognition and trust. The absence of these conditions has significantly undermined the social foundations of the two-state framework, making it increasingly difficult to implement even if political agreements were reached.

Beyond questions of feasibility, a substantial body of literature critically examines the limitations of existing peace negotiation frameworks. Traditional negotiation processes, particularly those led by the United States, have been criticized for failing to address asymmetrical power dynamics between Israel and Palestine. Pruitt (2005) argues that negotiations in asymmetrical conflicts often disadvantage weaker parties, as stronger actors can impose conditions or resist concessions without significant consequences. In the Israeli–Palestinian context, this asymmetry has been reflected in disparities in military power, economic resources, and international support, which have shaped negotiation outcomes.

Similarly, Zartman (2000) emphasizes the importance of a “mutually hurting stalemate” as a precondition for successful negotiations. However, many scholars argue that such conditions have not been consistently present in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, as the costs of the status quo are perceived differently by each side. For Israel, relative security and economic stability reduce the urgency for compromise, while for Palestinians, structural constraints limit their bargaining power. This imbalance has contributed to repeated negotiation failures and the inability to reach a sustainable agreement.

Another critical issue identified in the literature is the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms in peace agreements. Fisher, Ury, and Patton (2011) highlight the importance of enforceability in negotiation outcomes, arguing that agreements must be supported by credible mechanisms to ensure compliance. In the case of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the absence of binding enforcement measures has allowed violations of agreements to occur with limited consequences, thereby undermining trust and reducing incentives for future cooperation.

Recent scholarship has also drawn attention to the decline of sustained international engagement in the peace process. While the two-state solution continues to receive rhetorical support from the international community, scholars argue that there has been a lack of consistent and coordinated efforts to implement it. According to Miller (2018), the intermittent nature of diplomatic initiatives and the absence of long-term commitment have contributed to the stagnation of the peace process. This has created a gap between international discourse and on-the-ground realities, further weakening the credibility of negotiation frameworks.

The Gaza conflict, particularly since October 2023, has introduced new dimensions to the debate on the two-state solution. Recent studies suggest that the war has significantly altered the political and security landscape, exacerbating existing challenges and introducing new obstacles to peace. Roy (2024) argues that the destruction of infrastructure and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza have deepened socio-economic inequalities and further fragmented Palestinian society, making state-building efforts more difficult. Additionally, the conflict has intensified hostility and mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians, reducing the likelihood of renewed negotiations in the near term.

At the same time, the Gaza war has exposed the inadequacy of existing negotiation frameworks in addressing contemporary conflict dynamics. Traditional models, which rely heavily on bilateral negotiations and incremental confidence-building measures, appear increasingly ill-suited to a context characterized by asymmetrical warfare, non-state actors, and regional instability. Freedman (2023) notes that modern conflicts are increasingly complex and multifaceted, requiring more adaptive and innovative approaches to conflict resolution.

Interestingly, some scholars argue that the Gaza conflict may also create opportunities for rethinking peace frameworks. For instance, recent policy analyses suggest that the scale of the

crisis could prompt renewed international engagement and encourage the development of alternative approaches to conflict resolution (Brookings Institution, 2025). These approaches may include multilateral mediation, regional cooperation frameworks, and hybrid models that go beyond the traditional two-state paradigm. However, such proposals remain speculative and face significant political and practical challenges.

Critically, the literature reveals a growing consensus that the two-state solution, while still normatively attractive, is increasingly constrained by structural realities. The interplay of territorial fragmentation, political division, declining trust, and ineffective negotiation frameworks has created a situation in which the traditional pathway to peace appears increasingly untenable. At the same time, the absence of a widely accepted alternative framework has contributed to a sense of strategic ambiguity, where the two-state solution remains the default option despite its declining feasibility.

In summary, the literature on the two-state solution reflects a transition from cautious optimism to critical reassessment. Early scholarship emphasized its practicality and legitimacy, while recent studies highlight its structural limitations and declining viability. The Gaza conflict has further intensified these debates, underscoring both the urgency of finding a resolution and the inadequacy of existing frameworks. These developments point to the need for a more comprehensive and integrative approach to peacebuilding, one that addresses both the structural and relational dimensions of the conflict.

Gap in the Literature

Existing scholarship on the two-state solution and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict has generated extensive insights into its historical evolution, political challenges, and normative foundations. However, significant gaps remain in the literature, particularly in relation to contemporary conflict dynamics. Scholars such as Khalidi (2020) have critically examined the declining feasibility of the two-state solution, emphasizing the impact of settlement expansion and territorial fragmentation. Similarly, Lustick (2019) argues that the two-state paradigm has entered a phase of conceptual decline, increasingly disconnected from realities on the ground. While these studies provide important critiques, they largely focus on structural and historical factors without sufficiently integrating the implications of recent conflict developments, particularly the ongoing Gaza war.

Moreover, existing literature on peace negotiation frameworks has highlighted key limitations, including asymmetrical power relations and weak enforcement mechanisms (Pruitt, 2005; Zartman, 2000). However, these analyses often treat negotiation failures as procedural or structural issues, without adequately examining how evolving forms of warfare such as urban conflict, non-state actors, and humanitarian crises reshape the conditions under which negotiations occur. The Gaza conflict, in particular, represents a critical turning point that has not yet been fully theorized within existing peacebuilding frameworks. Additionally, there is limited integrative research that connects the crisis of the two-state solution with the transformation of negotiation frameworks in the context of protracted and asymmetrical conflict.

Therefore, the gap in the literature lies in the absence of a comprehensive and contemporary analysis that links the declining viability of the two-state solution with the limitations of existing peace negotiation frameworks in light of the Gaza conflict. This study seeks to fill this gap.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Conflict Resolution Theory and Realist Theory, which together provide a balanced analytical lens for examining the crisis of the two-state solution in the context of the Gaza conflict. Conflict Resolution Theory emphasizes the role of dialogue, negotiation, mediation, and institutional mechanisms in transforming conflicts and achieving sustainable peace (Lederach, 1997). It focuses on addressing underlying grievances, building trust, and fostering inclusive processes that engage all relevant stakeholders. In the Israeli–Palestinian context, this perspective highlights the importance of negotiation frameworks, third-party mediation, and confidence-building measures in facilitating peaceful coexistence. However, scholars argue that such approaches often face limitations in highly asymmetrical conflicts where trust is low and violence persists (Kelman, 2010).

In contrast, Realist Theory provides a more power-centered interpretation of conflict. Rooted in the works of Waltz (1979) and Mearsheimer (2014), realism views the international system as anarchic, where states act primarily to protect their interests and maximize security. From this perspective, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is shaped by power asymmetries, strategic calculations, and security concerns, which significantly influence negotiation outcomes. Realism explains why stronger actors may resist concessions and why agreements are difficult to enforce. Taken together, these theories offer complementary insights: while conflict resolution theory highlights pathways to peace, realism explains the structural constraints that often hinder such efforts.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing a case study approach to examine the Israeli–Palestinian conflict within the context of the ongoing Gaza crisis. The case study method is appropriate for exploring complex and context-specific phenomena, particularly where political, social, and security dynamics intersect (Yin, 2018). The study relies on secondary data sources, including academic literature, policy reports, institutional publications, and relevant scholarly analyses. These sources provide diverse perspectives and enable a comprehensive understanding of the evolving conflict dynamics.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved identifying recurring themes related to peace negotiations, power asymmetry, conflict dynamics, and the viability of the two-state solution. The approach allows for systematic interpretation of qualitative data and facilitates the integration of theoretical insights with empirical observations.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the two-state solution is currently experiencing a profound crisis of feasibility, driven by a combination of structural, political, and strategic factors that have evolved over time and intensified in the wake of the Gaza conflict. While the two-state framework remains the dominant diplomatic paradigm, its practical implementation has become increasingly constrained by realities on the ground.

First, the study found that structural factors, particularly territorial fragmentation, pose a significant obstacle to the viability of the two-state solution. The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the physical and political separation between Gaza and the West Bank have undermined the territorial contiguity required for a functional Palestinian state (Khalidi, 2020).

These developments have transformed the geographic landscape into a highly fragmented space, making the realization of a sovereign and viable Palestinian entity increasingly difficult.

Second, political factors have further deepened the crisis. The fragmentation of Palestinian leadership, especially the division between Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, has weakened unified representation in negotiations. On the Israeli side, shifting political dynamics and the rise of more security-oriented and nationalist positions have reduced incentives for compromise (Hassassian, 2023). These internal divisions on both sides have contributed to a negotiation deadlock, reinforcing the perception that the two-state solution is no longer politically attainable.

Third, strategic and security considerations continue to shape the conflict dynamics. The Gaza conflict, particularly since October 2023, has significantly intensified mutual distrust, hostility, and insecurity. The scale of violence, humanitarian devastation, and continued military engagements have eroded the minimal level of trust required for meaningful negotiations (Roy, 2024). In this context, the environment necessary for peacebuilding characterized by dialogue, compromise, and confidence-building has been severely weakened.

Beyond the question of feasibility, the study also found that existing peace negotiation frameworks are fundamentally limited. One of the most critical issues is the presence of asymmetrical power relations between the parties. Israel's military, economic, and diplomatic advantages contrast sharply with the relative weakness of Palestinian institutions, thereby shaping negotiation outcomes and limiting the bargaining power of the Palestinian side (Pruitt, 2005). This imbalance has often resulted in negotiation processes that are perceived as unequal and, consequently, illegitimate.

Furthermore, the study identified the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms as a major weakness in previous peace agreements. Agreements reached in past negotiations have frequently lacked binding guarantees or credible mechanisms to ensure compliance, allowing violations to occur with minimal consequences (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011). This has contributed to a cycle of agreement and breakdown, further eroding trust between the parties. The Gaza conflict has also exposed the inadequacy of traditional negotiation models in addressing contemporary conflict realities. The involvement of non-state actors, the prevalence of asymmetrical warfare, and the scale of humanitarian crises require more adaptive and inclusive approaches to peacebuilding. Traditional frameworks, which rely heavily on bilateral negotiations and incremental agreements, appear insufficient in dealing with the complexity of the current conflict (Freedman, 2023).

At the same time, the findings suggest that the crisis of the two-state solution does not necessarily imply its complete irrelevance. Rather, it indicates the need for reconceptualization and reform. While the framework retains normative and diplomatic significance, its practical viability depends on addressing the structural and institutional weaknesses identified in this study. This includes rethinking negotiation approaches, incorporating broader international involvement, and developing mechanisms that can address power asymmetries and ensure compliance. In summary, the findings demonstrate that the crisis of the two-state solution is not the result of a single factor but rather the outcome of interacting structural, political, and strategic dynamics, further intensified by the Gaza conflict. The limitations of existing negotiation frameworks highlight the need for a more comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to peacebuilding, one that reflects the evolving realities of the conflict and the challenges of contemporary international relations.

Conclusion

The two-state solution continues to occupy a central position in international diplomatic discourse as the most widely endorsed framework for resolving the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Its normative appeal lies in its alignment with principles of self-determination, mutual recognition, and peaceful coexistence. However, the findings of this study demonstrate that the framework is currently confronted with profound and multidimensional challenges, particularly in the context of the ongoing Gaza conflict. Structural realities such as territorial fragmentation, political divisions within Palestinian leadership, and evolving Israeli security policies have significantly constrained the practical feasibility of establishing a viable Palestinian state.

Moreover, the Gaza conflict has intensified existing tensions, deepened mistrust, and further weakened the already fragile foundations of peace negotiations. The scale of violence and humanitarian devastation has not only disrupted diplomatic engagement but has also eroded the minimum level of trust required for meaningful dialogue. In addition, the limitations of existing negotiation frameworks—particularly their inability to address asymmetrical power relations and enforce agreements—have contributed to repeated failures and declining confidence in the peace process.

Therefore, while the two-state solution retains its relevance as a normative and diplomatic reference point, its viability increasingly depends on substantial reforms in both its conceptualization and implementation. Without addressing the structural and procedural deficiencies identified in this study, the framework risks becoming more symbolic than practical. Consequently, there is a pressing need to rethink and adapt peace negotiation approaches to reflect contemporary conflict realities and evolving geopolitical dynamics.

Recommendations

1. Reform negotiation frameworks to address structural power asymmetries.
2. Strengthen international mediation with enforceable compliance mechanisms.
3. Promote inclusive governance incorporating all relevant political actors.
4. Explore hybrid peace models complementing the traditional two-state framework.

References

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brookings Institution. (2025). *Gaza: From “master plan” to peace plan?*

- Brookings Institution. (2025). *Rethinking peace frameworks in the Gaza conflict*.
- Brookings Institution. (2025). *What could the Israel-Gaza deal mean for the Middle East?*
- Brookings Institution. (2026). *Equality as a guiding principle for U.S. policy on Israel-Palestine*.
- Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in* (3rd ed.). Penguin Books.
- Freedman, L. (2023). *Command: The politics of military operations*.
- Hassassian, M. (2023). The crisis of the two-state solution in contemporary Middle East politics. *Journal of Palestine Studies*.
- Kelman, H. C. (2010). Conflict resolution and reconciliation in the Israeli–Palestinian context. *International Journal of Peace Studies*.
- Kelman, H. C. (2010). Conflict resolution and reconciliation.
- Khalidi, R. (2020). *The hundred years' war on Palestine*. Metropolitan Books.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*.
- Lustick, I. (2019). Paradigm lost: From two-state solution to alternatives.
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault.
- Miller, A. (2018). The failure of Middle East peace processes.
- Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR). (2024). *The Palestine/Israel Pulse, a joint poll: Press release*.
- Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR). (2024). *Critical Policy Brief, Number 3/2024: Did October 7th and the Gaza War put an end to the Palestinian-Israeli peace process and the two-state solution?*
- PCPSR. (2024). Public opinion on Israeli–Palestinian conflict.
- Pruitt, D. G. (2005). Negotiation in asymmetrical conflicts.
- Pruitt, D. G. (2005). Negotiation theory and asymmetrical conflicts.
- Pruitt, D. G. (2005). *Whither ripeness theory?* Journal of Conflict Resolution.
- Quigley, J. (2010). *The statehood of Palestine: International law in the Middle East conflict*. Cambridge University Press.
- Roy, S. (2024). Gaza and Palestinian fragmentation.
- Roy, S. (2024). Gaza and the fragmentation of Palestinian governance. *Middle East Policy Journal*
- United Nations General Assembly. (2025). *Endorsement of the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution (A/80/L.1/Rev.1)*.
- United Nations Security Council. (2024). *Resolution 2735 (2024)*.

United Nations. (2023). Two-state solution reports.

Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of international politics*.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications*.

Zartman, I. W. (2000). Ripeness theory in conflict resolution.

Zartman, I. W. (2000). Ripeness: The hurting stalemate and beyond. *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*.