

Clinton Parameters

[American president [Bill] Clinton's parameters for a comprehensive agreement between Israelis and Palestinians]

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Speaking to the Israeli Policy Forum in New York on 7 January, President Clinton outlined the "parameters" he had put forward to the two sides as "a guide toward a comprehensive agreement", and which had been accepted, albeit with reservations, by Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat as the basis for further peace efforts; as reported by Reuters and The Jerusalem Post - Internet Edition

1. The establishment of a "sovereign, viable Palestinian State that would accommodate Israel's security requirements and the demographic realities". It would include the Gaza Strip and "the vast majority of the West Bank", while settlement blocks would be incorporated into Israel "with the goal of maximizing the number of settlers in Israel while minimizing the land annex, for Palestine to be viable must be a geographically contiguous State"; some territorial swaps and other arrangements would be needed to make the agreement "durable".
2. A solution for the Palestinian refugees that would allow them to return to a Palestinian State, those who so wished, or find new homes in their current locations or in third countries, including Israel, "consistent with those countries' sovereign decisions". All refugees should receive compensation from the international community for their losses and assistance in building their new lives; the US would take a lead in raising the money necessary to relocate them in the most appropriate manner. One should not expect Israel to acknowledge an unlimited right of return to present-day Israel, as that "would undermine the very foundations of the Israeli State or the whole reason for creating the Palestinian State".
3. An "international presence in Palestine to provide border security along the Jordan Valley and to monitor implementation of the final agreement" as well as "a non-militarized Palestine, a phased Israeli withdrawal, to address Israeli security needs in the Jordan Valley, and other essential arrangements to ensure Israel's ability to defend itself.
4. Four "fair and logical propositions" regarding Jerusalem: (a) It should be an open and undivided city, with assured freedom of access and worship for all, encompassing the internationally recognized capitals of two States, Israel and Palestine, (b) "[W]hat is Arab should be Palestinian" and (c) "what is Jewish should be Israeli", while (d) "what is holy to both requires a special care to meet the needs of all", with "mutual respect for the religious beliefs and holy shrines of Jews, Muslims and Christians".
5. "[A]ny agreement would have to mark the decision to end the conflict, for neither side can afford to make these painful compromises, only to be subjected to further demands". President Clinton said he was using his remaining time in office "to narrow the differences between the parties to the greatest degree possible" and to that end he was sending his envoy Dennis Ross to the region in the coming days.