

## **UC Davis**

### **Recent Work**

#### **Title**

Another Viewpoint (AVP)

#### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6xj7m4j5>

#### **Author**

Tuma, Elias H

#### **Publication Date**

2011-10-26

**ANOTHER VIEWPOINT  
(AVP)**

**By**

**Elias H. Tuma and Others**

**CALIFORNIA DIGITAL LIBRARY  
2011**

## Table of Contents

**Preface 1**

**Preface 2**

**Glossary**

**Volume II, February 1996**

**Volume I, September 1987**

### **Volume II, February 1996 –June 2011**

June 2011	The Arab Spring: A Fourth Arab Awakening?
January 2011	Ending the Occupation is the Objective
December 2010	Myth and Reality in the Arab Israeli Conflict
December 2009	Will Naranyahu Government Make Progress Toward Peace?
December 2008	Freedom and Independence for Afghanistan
November 2008	US Elections are a Message to Israel
March 2008	How Many Generations of Palestinians are Expendable?
January 2008	President Bush and Peace Between Palestine and Israel
November 2007	A Peace Conference at Annapolis
October 2007	A Middle East Free of Nuclear Weapons
July 2007	Political Economy of Three Wars in the Middle East: Sudan, Iraq, and Israel/Palestine
June 2007	A Non-Partisan Approach to Iraq
September 2006	The Myth of Hizbullah's Triumph Revisited
August 2006	Fear, Arrogance, and Misjudgment Guide Israel's Policy
July 2006	Crises in the Arab World and Hopes for the Future!
June 2006	Israel: Jewish and Democracy, Is that Possible?
May 2006	Enduring Obstacles to an Arab-Israeli Peace
April 2006	Not by Firearms Alone!
March 2006	The Palestinians and Democracy
February 2006	The Legacy of President George W. Bush and the Arab Israeli Conflict
January 2006	Conflict in the Holy Land: Any Reason to be Optimistic?
December 2005	Between Image and Reality: The United States Flounders
November 2005	President Bush and Democracy in the Middle East: Contradictions and Chaos!
October 2005	Natural and People-Made Hurricanes
September 2005	Israel's Evacuation of Settlements: Historic and Illustrative
August 2005	The United States and Its Allies Can and Should Withdraw from Iraq: Sooner Rather than Later
July 2005	An Arc for the Success of the State of Palestine
June 2005	World Economic Forum in Jordan
May 2005	Arab Human Development Report '04 A Call for Freedom and Democracy
April 2005	Winds of Change in the Middle East, Which Way do they Blow?
March 2005	Does Iran Need Nuclear Weapons?
February 2005	The Long Wait for Peace and Stability, Palestine and Iraq
January 2005	If and When Turkey Joins and European Union
December 2004	Arafat's Legacy and the Peace Process
November 2004	The United States Elections and the Arab Israeli Conflict
October 2004	United States Policy in the Middle East: Stabilizer or Destabilizer?
September 2004	Multiplicity and Confusion in Palestine
August 2004	Why Israel Should Withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, Completely
July 2004	Insecurity, Paranoia, or Harassment? An Open Letter to the President and People of Israel
June 2004	The United States and the Arab World, One Step Forward and Several Backward
May 2004	The United States Shocked at the Unexpected in Iraq
April 2004	Bravery and Heroism of the Israelis and Palestinians
March 2004	The Palestinian's Long Wait for Peace
February 2004	Peace Between Syria and Israel: Is It Imminent
January 2004	Unilateral Separation Between Israel and Palestine
December 2003	Democracy in the Middle East: A Vision of President George W. Bush
November 2003	The United States Sows Seeds of Instability in Iraq
October 2003	It Takes Both to Reach an Agreement: The Leaders of Palestine and Israel
September 2003	Israel and the Rights of its Citizens
August 2003	The Palestinian Israeli Peace Process: Why Cautious Optimism is Warranted!
July 2003	Science, Technology, and Industrialization are the Key to Arab Independence

June 2003	Does Israel Really Want Peace?
May 2003	Winners and Losers in the Iraq War: Is there a Silver Lining?
April 2003	President George W. Bush Goes to War: Arrogance of Power or Degraded Morality?
March 2003	The Draft Constitution for a State of Palestine II
February 2003	The Draft Constitution of a State of Palestine
January 2003	George Bush and Saddam Hussein: Do As We Say, Not As We Do.
December 2002	Lessons to be Learned: The Israeli Palestinian Conflict and the Road Map to Peace
November 2002	President Bush and the Mounting Challenges
October 2002	The Arabs and Muslims Ask: Why is America Against Us
September 2002	The Various Faces of Terror
August 2002	United States Defense Against Terrorism: What about its Prevention?
July 2002	The Arab World Looks One Way and the US Congress Looks the Other Way
June 2002	*The Myth of Jenin, by Haseeb Shehadeh
May 2002	“It’s Darkest Before Dawn”: May be so in Israeli Palestinian Relations
April 2002	Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Ashcroft: An Axis of Concern
March 2002	Can a Non-Violence Approach Resolve the Palestinian Israeli Conflict? Why Not Try?
February 2002	*Seize the Opportunity: A Palestinian State Now. by E. Kaufman and M. Awad
January 2002	The Poverty of Diplomacy and Statesmanship in Palestine and Israel
December 2001	The Threat to Civil Liberty in America: Insecurity or Paranoia
November 2001	The United States and the Middle East After September 11, 2001
October 2001	Peacemaking and the Immoral War Arabs and Jews in the Middle East
September 2001	Egypt’s Economy Will Take Off, but only by Revolution
August 2001	The Myth of Hizbullah’s Triumph and its Legacy of Destruction in Lebanon and Palestine
July 2001	The Death Penalty in the United States: A McVeigh Legacy?
June 2001	An Open Letter to the Government and People of Israel
May 2001	Who Advises Yasser Arafat, or Does he Accept Advice from Anybody?
April 2001	Arab Economic and Technological Development: Syria Can Lead the Way
March 2001	Greed and Instability or Peace and Security: Israel Must Decide
February 2001	Clinton’s Parameters for a Palestinian-Israeli Compromise Settlement: It is Time to Say YES
January 2001	The Palestinian and the Israeli Elections
December 2000	Israel and the Palestinians: Time to Rethink their Strategies and Tactics
November 2000	Israel and its Arab Citizens: Force and Discrimination do not Make Loyal Citizens
October 2000	Faith and Religion in National Politics: The Lieberman Controversy
September 2000	Jerusalem: A Key to Peace or What?
August 2000	Challenges of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century in the Middle East
July 2000	The Legacy of Hafez Al-Asad of Syria
June 2000	United States Policies in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Biased, Predictable, Effective And Indispensable
May 2000	United States Policies in the Middle East: Time for Redirection
April 2000	General Principles for the Final Settlement between Israel and the Palestinians
March 2000	To Break the Impasse in Peace Negotiations: Realism, Creative Reasoning and Guts
February 2000	The Death Penalty in the United States: A Web of Contradictions
January 2000	Religion, Politics, and Peace in the Holy Land
December 1999	To Separate or Not to Separate from Israel?
November 1999	Who is a Palestinian and Who Wants to Know
October 1999	Human and Economic Development in the Arab Countries
September 1999	The Palestinian Refugees: Time to Move On?
August 1999	A Syrian-Israeli Peace and the Palestinians
July 1999	Ehud Barak and the Palestinians
June 1999	NATO, Yugoslavia, and Conflict Resolution
May 1999	“Israeli Arabs” or “Arabs in Israel!”
April 1999	Does Jordan Need a King?
March 1999	Earnings Inequality and Poverty in the Middle East
February 1999	To Declare or Not to Declare a Palestinian State, Unilaterally?
January 1999	The Drama and Tragedy of US Politics
December 1998	Palestine and Israel: The Permanent Solution—at Last
November 1998	The Arab League Can Do a Lot More
October 1998	The Israelis do not Execute Palestinians, The Palestinians Execute their Own
September	Sudan: Wherefrom and Whereto? The Arab Countries Might Ask
August 1998	*The Search for Foreign Policy in the Middle East, by M.Morris
July 1998	The Palestinians: Half a Century Later!
June 1998	*Will Israel Come to Terms with its Recent History, by E. Haddad
May 1998	New Directions in the Search for a M.E. Peace

April 1998	Winners and Losers in the Recent Gulf Crisis
March 1998	The Arabs in Israel: Half a Century Later
February 1998	Organization of the Islamic Conference: Potential and Reality
January 1998	The Cost and Benefits of Immediate Negotiations of a Final Solution Israel and Palestine
December 1997	Iraq, its People, and the World
November 1997	Profile of Human Development of Palestine, 1996-97, Review Essay
October 1997	Protest, Violence, and Terror in the Middle East
September 1997	Century of Ethnic Nationalism, Arabs and Jews in Palestine
August 1997	At Home Away From Home (Reprint)
July 1997	Problems and Solutions in Palestine
June 1997	The Peace Process: The Waiting Game and its Consequences
May 1997	Recognizing Reality: Better Late than Never
April 1997	Israel's Security, Palestinian Rights, or Ethic Discrimination
March 1997	Land for Peace or Expansionism in Disguise
February 1997	Hebron Agreement and Final Solutions Lessons to be Learned
January 1997	Palestinian Higher Education and Future
December 1996	Economic Cooperation in the Middle East
November 1996	The Struggle for Economic Development in Palestine
October 1996	The Amir and the Fly
September 1996	Structural Reform, Privatization and Development in the Middle East
August 1996	Education and Economic Development in the Middle East, A critical Something is Missing
July 1996	Natanyahu, Arab Summitry, and Peace
June 1996	The Elephant and the Mouse
May 1996	Israel and Lebanon: A Showdown or the Beginning of a Solution?
April 1996	The Palestinian Refugees: Will Peace Bring a Solution?
March 1996	Israel and Palestine: Alternatives to Violence
February 1996	Discrimination, Affirmative Action and Civil Rights

#### **Volume I: September 1987-September 1993**

September 1993	*Palestinian refugees and Peace in the Middle East, by Don Peretz
August 1993	*Is there Need for a Breakthrough in the Middle East Peace Talks? By H. Adelman
July 1993	Bosnia and Somalia: Inconsistances of the New World Order
June 1993	Middle East Peace: Between Optimism and Pessimism
May 1993	Israel Seals the Occupied Territories: Is there a Silver Lining?
April 1993	The Palestinians Must Decide: To Go or Not to Go to Washington
March 1993	The Cold War is Over: Are We Better Off?
February 1993	Plans and Objectives in Palestinian Affairs
January 1993	Religious Fundamentalism: Rights and Obligations. The Case of Islamic Movements
December 1992	United States Elections and Middle East Peace
November 1992	Hunger in Sudan and Somalia: What is to be done?
October 1992	The Arab-Israeli Peace Process
September 1992	Segregation in the United States
August 1992	California can Set a Better Example in Public Education for the Nation and the World
July 1992	Dissolution of the Soviet Empire: Lesson for Israel and the Arabs
June 1992	Poverty in Israel and the United States
May 1992	The United States, Israel, and Peace in the Middle East
April 1992	*The Art of Middle East Politics, by J. Green
March 1992	Who is Afraid of Soviet Migration to Israel?
February 1992	Algeria: Democracy or Theocracy is not the Question. How to Solve the Problem Is
January 1992	Stability and Peace in the Middle East, New Dynamics and Expectations
December 1991	Women and Children in the Middle East, Victims of Poverty
November 1991	*The Coming Arms Race in the Middle East, by A. Qazzaz
October 1991	Thinking the Unthinkable, Peace in the Holy Land
September 1991	Peace in the Middle East, The Arabs Say Yes, Will Israel See the Light?
August 1991	The Arab World and the New World Order
July 1991	Peace Initiatives in the Middle East Revisited, Form Dominates Substance
June 1991	*US Policy on Palestinian States in Quotes, by M. Laughlin
May 1991	Questions of Ethics and Morality in America and the Middle East
April 1991	If Peace There Shall be, Let it Begin Now
March 1991	The War Outside and the War Inside the United States
February 1991	The War, Its Impact, and What Comes Next

January 1991	The Poverty of US Diplomacy in the Middle East
December 1990	*The Arab Israeli Conflict and the Gulf Crisis, by D. Peretz
November 1990	*Ethnic Diversity and Economic Development in Indonesia, by B. Glassburner
October 1990	The Gulf Crisis, the United Nations and Peace
September 1990	The Gulf Crisis and the Palestinians
August 1990	Saddam Hussein Faces the World
July 1990	If it is not a Racist Society, Why Can't Israel Prove its Innocence
June 1990	Ethnic Minorities and Women are Discriminated Against in the Middle East
May 1990	Islam Can be a Vibrant Force of Positive Change
April 1990	Al'Uruba wal Islam or Arab Nationalism and Islam
March 1990	Why a Breakthrough in the Palestinian Israeli Conflict May be Around the Corner
February 1990	Food Security in the Middle East
January 1990	Palestinians and Israelis: A Way out of the Impasse
December 1989	Glasnost, Perestroika, and Live Happily Ever After
November 1989	At Home Away From Home
October 1989	Human Transfer and the Fate of Human Rights
September 1989	Tragedy of Lebanon of the Civilized World
August 1989	Syria: A Strategic Player in the Middle East Peace Process
July 1989	The Tide for the Palestinians May be Changing, But they Must Play the Role
June 1989	*Between the Intifadah and Israel, by Sami Geraisy
May 1989	Unsung Heroes in Middle East Society
April 1989	Individual Freedom and Human Rights in the Middle East: Time for Self Evaluation
March 1989	A State of Palestine Can be Economically Viable
February 1989	Secularism: A Missing Force in Middle East Affairs
January 1989	*The Middle East: Water Crisis and International Cooperation, by J. Starr
December 1988	Israel's Election Results and the Silver Lining
November 1988	*Needed: An Alternative Road to Peace, by D. Shaham
October 1988	Toxic Waste and Modern Technology
September 1988	*The Palestinians and the Israeli Elections, by E. Kaufman
August 1988	The Palestinians: Refugees or Citizens
July 1988	The Palestinian Intifadah: A sign of Hope and a Time to Act
June 1988	Economics of Occupation: Israel and the Occupied Territories
May 1988	Palestinians and Israelis For a Negotiated Settlement
April 1988	Stereotypes in California: Education and Ethnic and Racial Prejudice
March 1988	Closure of the PLO offices and Peace in the Middle East
February 1988	The Arabs and the Israelis: They Create their Own Image and they Can Change it
January 1988	Two Weeks of Bloodshed in the Occupied Territories
December 1987	Working from Within: Arab Initiatives in the United States and in the Middle East
November 1987	The Palestine Liberation Organization's Search for Peace, It is Time for Redirection
October 1987	Israel 's Search for Peace: Time for Redirection
September 1987	International Peace Conference on the Middle East, A Road to Take or Not to Take

## **ANOTHER VIEWPOINT**

Preface 1--1987

Dear reader,

ANOTHER VIEWPOINT (AVP) is my way to express my commitment to positive thinking, constructive thinking and creative ideas as an aid in the resolution of conflict in the Middle East with a special focus on the welfare and goals of the people of the Middle East.

To be non-partisan is not easy. One is quickly placed in a pigeonhole on the basis of the publication in which an article appears, assuming it is allowed to appear in the first place. To be partisan is certainly understandable, but it does limit one's perspective. While partisanship promotes the party's platform, it also attacks those of other parties, even though their platforms may be equally constructive and positive. Much is lost in such an encounter. In AVP, I will concentrate on the positive regardless of party.

Finally, much of the analysis of Middle East issues is conducted through the eyes of the superpowers and their allies within the region. However, there are issues that need to be treated primarily from the standpoint of the people of the Middle East. For example, it may be more significant to achieve peace in the region, rather than to realize a victory for one superpower or the other. AVP will have this focus.

I hope that AVP will stimulate discussion and draw attention to this and other viewpoints that may help in resolving conflict in the Middle East and elsewhere.

## Preface 2—2011

This is a preface to the collected AVPs in book form. I started issuing AVPs in September 1987 and explained in Preface I my reasons for issuing a monthly commentary. That effort lasted six years without interruption. Others contributed as shown where that applies. Some readers had thought it was a news bulletin, but that was never my intention. I just wanted to share my views with others. In August 1993 the last issue came out because I had reached a point of disappointment for the lack of success in influencing the issues I wrote about. I simply was tired and let go, but not forever. I could not stay away from commenting on the problems facing us, especially in the Middle East countries. I restarted in February 1996 and kept it going for 10 years without interruption. After that I issued an occasional AVP. The last one came out in January 2011 and it addressed the Arab Spring. I appreciated the contribution of others to the series and they are identified at the bottom of their contribution, as they have written it. The collection has gone through copyediting, but the substance and the style of the author were protected as the authors had submitted it. I had requested the contributors to: stay as close to 1500 words as possible, avoid unsuitable language, and try to make a contribution to a possible solution of the problem you are dealing with. The collected AVPs will be available to the public on the Internet. They can be downloaded free of charge at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6xj7m4j5>

I hope there will be many lessons in the 16-years plus effort to those who look for solutions to the political, economic, and social issues we have addressed in this Book. I wish to thank Lori Aoun who was my Associate Editor for Volume I. She was a great inspiration and help. Christie Gallager collected the individual AVPs into book form and did some editing. I am grateful to her for both jobs. Carly Haase helped with editing the final version and for that I thank her. I am also grateful to Dory, my wife, who read every AVP issue and made many corrections and thus saved me time and embarrassment. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not involve the University of California in any way.

Dedicated to the Arabs and Jews and Others who try to promote peace and cooperation in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Elias H. Tuma  
Professor Emeritus of Economics  
University of California, Davis

## Glossary

ADL: Anti-Defamation League  
AEC: Arms Exporting Countries  
AI: Amnesty International  
AHOR: Arab Human Development Report  
AL: Arab League  
EU: European Union  
IBM: Inshallah (God Willing), Bukra (Tomorrow), Ma'alesh (Does not matter)  
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency  
HDI: Human Development Index  
ME: Middle East  
Knesset: Parliament in Israel  
MENA: Middle East & North Africa  
NGO: Non-governmental Organization  
NPT: Non-proliferation Treaty  
NOW: NEW WORLD ORDER  
OAPEC: Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries  
OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries OT: Occupied Territories  
PA: Palestinian Authority  
PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization  
PNA: Palestinian National Authority  
PNC: Palestine National Council  
Quartet: EUROPEAN UNION, RUSSIA, UN, US, seeking peace between Israel and  
Palestine;  
ROAD MAP: Suggested Plan for Peace by Quartet  
SC: Security Council  
UN: United Nations  
UNA: United Nations Association  
UNDP: United Nations Development Program  
UNRWA: United Nations Rehabilitation and Work Agency  
UNSCOM: UN special commission (inspectors in Iraq)  
US: United States  
WEF: World Economic Forum  
WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction

**INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST:  
A ROAD TO TAKE OR NOT TO TAKE  
September 1987**

Many countries, including the Arab countries, are calling for an international peace conference. The Palestinians, as represented by the PLO, on one hand, and Israel, as represented by a divided government, on the other, also seem to want the same thing, though only half-heartedly. But why should any of the directly concerned parties want it? Or, who stands to win and who stands to lose in this forum?

An international peace conference in which the permanent members of the Security Council and the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict participate can only have a minor impact towards a solution of the conflict. The only way in which it can lead to a solution is if it promotes mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinians, and if it results in direct negotiations between the warring parties. The Palestinians may benefit if, as a result, the PLO will begin to count as one of the "state governments" in the region; if the PLO will be recognized by "all" members of the Security Council as an equal party; if participation occurs without the precondition of unilateral recognition of Israel by the PLO; if such participation will help to cement a little more solidly the backing of the PLO by the Soviet Union; and if participation will calm down any internal criticism of the PLO by different Palestinian factions who oppose contact with Israel.

Against these potential benefits, the PLO is bound to suffer some costs. An international conference may serve mainly to diffuse the responsibilities and reduce the Palestinians to being one of many parties, even though they are a principal party, especially so if the PLO representatives were to participate as members of a Jordanian delegation: the international conference may increase their dependence on the outside. Palestinians depend on the permanent members of the Security Council, even though the permanent members can only veto resolutions, not impose or enforce them. The conference may subject the Palestinians to high pressure to make premature compromises toward Israel and thus offset any potential advantages they may hope for, to regain some balance in their favor. The conference may strengthen Jordan's position as the principal party, which can only be at the expense of the Palestinians; it also may tie even more tightly the fate of the Palestinians to the global conflict whose solution can hardly be considered on the horizon. Finally, the international conference may simply drive the Palestinians into a trap of an intra-Israel political struggle from which they can hardly benefit, but which can easily push the prospects of a solution farther into the future.

In contrast, Israel may benefit from such a conference, despite the apparent reluctance to endorse it by the Government of Israel. Indeed, it is possible that the clamor for or against an international conference, respectively by Shimon Perez or Izhak Shamir, is a tactic to avoid solutions that may require Israel to make a genuine compromise. If Mr. Perez wanted a conference, he would not stipulate the impossible as preconditions. Mr. Perez stipulates that,

the USSR must allow its Jewish population to emigrate and must re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel; a representative Palestinian organization having no links with the PLO must suddenly come into being, accept UN Security Council Resolution 242 (which completely disregards any notion of Palestinian identity), and join the Jordanian delegation; the People's Republic of China must establish diplomatic relations with

Israel; the US must consent to take part in an international conference as an equal of the USSR; all the powers must consent to take part and to meet stiff Israeli requirements, and all those attending the conference must agree on rules of procedure for an international conference.

If Mr. Shamir does not want a conference, he should not leave the door open and make participation seem possible by setting conditions, even though his conditions are impossible to meet. Mr. Shamir's conditions, in addition to those of Mr. Perez, stipulate that there will be no Palestinian State, no PLO participation, and no removal of settlements from the Occupied Territories; he leaves nothing to be negotiated at the conference. Given these conditions, the conference is unlikely to materialize. Israel nevertheless, will be able to blame others for the failure, continue the occupation of Palestinian territory, and exploit the opportunity to establish more settlements. In the meantime the Arab countries, which argue for a conference, seem to have no agreed-upon target. And while they continue to try to heal their internal conflicts, they help in wasting time and distracting attention from the Palestinian Israeli conflict by calling for a conference that has little use for any of them, with the exception of Jordan. Jordan is bound to be a potential winner at the conference if it succeeds in carrying the responsibility of a principal party, at the expense of the Palestinians; it is a winner if it manages to institutionalize agreements of coexistence with Israel, which seem to be already in force; and it is a winner if by such action it heals its rift with the United States since the sale of arms to Iran became known.

Yet the international conference idea should not be dismissed as useless. The two superpowers have agreed to participate, in different degrees of commitment. The USSR is willing to participate, probably to reaffirm its involvement in the Middle East, to cement its relations with its allies in the region, and to revive its relations with Israel, to which it was one of the first countries in the world to give formal recognition.

The US, though not fully committed to a conference as yet, may be willing to participate if the conference will serve the cause of Israel, if it exposes the USSR involvement in the region, and if it strengthens the position of Jordan as a principal party. Nevertheless, more participation of the superpowers and other members of the Security Council would bring the conflict back to the table and rekindle the peace efforts, which seem to have been dormant for a long time.

As far as a resolution of the Palestinian Israeli conflict is concerned, a better road to take is to conduct direct negotiations between the principal parties, Israel and the PLO. These are the two parties most directly affected, and their country, Palestine, is the territory that is in dispute. It should be evident by now that a peaceful settlement of the conflict is contingent upon recognition by both parties of their mutual rights to self-determination and national sovereignty, and to secure coexistence within internationally recognized boundaries. It has also become evident that international conferences and intermediary parties have had little success in bringing about positive results. By contrast, direct negotiations have led to peaceful agreements within the region and outside it.

However, if the direct negotiations road does not seem feasible, and if the international conference road is to be taken, it should be emphasized that the conference will be helpful to the extent to which it identifies the Palestinians and the Israelis as the

principal parties to the conflict, and to the extent to which it makes direct negotiations between them more probable.

## **ISRAEL'S SEARCH FOR PEACE: TIME FOR REDIRECTION**

### **October 1987**

I am convinced that Israel wants peace. I am equally convinced that Israel has been following the wrong approach to achieve that goal, as evident in the fact that peace has so far remained a dream. Some critics will question putting the responsibility on Israel for this failure. Others will question whether Israel genuinely wants peace. I admit that the opponents of Israel must carry some of the responsibility, but not all of it. I also suggest that the logic of Israel's existence leaves little doubt that peace must be a high priority objective for the Israeli policy makers. It is true that the Israeli terms for peace are not clear and that they keep changing, but most such terms are negotiable and reconcilable. Why then have the "peace" attempts by the Israeli government failed so far?

First, it should be stated clearly that the "enemies" of Israel have not been cooperative in the peace making process. They have rarely made their demands clear. They have rarely presented a unified feasible platform for reaching a settlement with Israel. However, it is equally true that Israel has not made it seem logical or justifiable for such cooperation to be forthcoming. Israel's policies and actions have generally inspired less, rather than more cooperation, even by a country which has opted for peace, such as Egypt.

To say that the behavior of Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict has not invited cooperation is to put it mildly. Israel has continued to occupy Arab territory for more than 20 years; it has subjected over one and one-half million Palestinians to oppression, cruelty, and incitement; it has failed to acknowledge the basic right of the Palestinians to a national home in Palestine; it has continued to insist on dealing with the wrong parties in the conflict, all in an attempt to obliterate the identity and basic rights of Palestinians, the primary legitimate party to the conflict. Israel has also set a poor example of cooperation in the treatment of its Arab citizens, whether in education, the labor market, or the development of the economy. These Israeli policies have no doubt aggravated the conflict and made peace a more difficult objective to achieve. It may be easy to rationalize Israel's behavior, given the deep feelings of insecurity the Israeli people suffer, and realistically so. But it would be far from easy to justify or rationalize Israel's failure to seek other avenues for dealing with the conflict, which could invite cooperation and increase the probability of reaching a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians and other Arabs. Israel knows that the occupation policy has been a failure, and it is threatening the moral fiber on which the Israeli society was established. Oppression of the occupied Arab people has not silenced them; on the contrary, it has hardened them and strengthened their resistance. Israel's refusal to recognize the basic rights of the Palestinians has not diminished their solidarity or compromised their identity; on the contrary it has mobilized support and recognition of these rights by many nations. The internal conflict within the Palestinian liberation movement centers on strategies and tactics, not on the identity or objectives of the Palestinian people. Israel's treatment of its

Arab citizens has failed to promote their assimilation in the Israeli society, has failed to isolate them intellectually and culturally from the larger Arab society, and has failed to mobilize them as a bridge for reconciliation with the Palestinian leadership at large. Finally, while Israel continues to enjoy blind support from its major backers such as the US, the U.K., and implicitly the Soviet Union, it has failed to recruit new supporters around the world. Why does Israel persist in these counter-productive policies?

Though Israel's policies have failed so far to bring it closer to a peace settlement, the policies of its opponents have not been more successful either, whether by reducing Israel's power in the Middle East, or by rendering a peaceful settlement closer at hand. In other words, a stalemate has developed, but Israel has maintained its earlier gains and position of power. From this standpoint, Israel has had no compelling reasons to change its policies, whether because of mounting military pressure by its opponents, or because of moral pressure by its supporters. Another argument against changing the policy by Israel is the sustained hope of achieving peace on its own terms, with as little compromise as possible. This hope has frequently been reinforced by the inability of the Arabs to raise the costs to Israel of continuing its current policies, and by the continued moral and material support of Israel by at least three of the five permanent members of the Security Council, regardless of the policy implemented. Finally, given the fragmentation of the electorate in the Israeli society, it may have been a safe policy to avoid a showdown by postponing any new policies as long as the government is under little pressure to do so.

All these arguments suggest that Israeli policies may have been less of a failure than implied above, at least in the short run. Yet one can hardly avoid the main questions of whether Israel has come closer to a peace settlement and whether it can afford to ignore its primary objective of creating a secure and peaceful existence for its people. These are long term and long standing objectives that cannot be traded for short term ones. On the other hand, Israel can hardly postpone reaching a settlement with the Palestinians much longer. Not only are the economic burdens becoming heavier and the resistance becoming stronger, but also the skepticism of the Israeli people and of Jews around the world toward these policies has been mounting. The Israelis and other Jews know that the longer the conflict lasts, the more difficult it becomes to resolve it.

Israel still can and must redirect its policies if it desires to enhance the prospects of peace in the Middle East. Israel can begin by recognizing that the conflict with the Palestinians will not go away by waiting because the Palestinians themselves will not go away. Israel must also begin to acknowledge that by recognizing the rights of the Palestinians to a secure national home in Palestine, similar to a secure national home for the Jews in Israel, the closer at hand a peace settlement will be, and the sooner these rights are recognized, the more secure Israel itself will be. At the same time, the sooner Israel modifies its policies towards the people of the Occupied Territories, in favor of reconciliation and cooperation, the easier it becomes to resolve the larger conflict. Finally, the sooner Israel recognizes that equalization between Israeli citizens, Arabs and Jews alike, a critical step toward a solution, the closer to realization its attempts to bring about peace will be.

Several years ago, I had an interview with an Israeli cabinet minister. At one point he bluntly stated that he had followed the career of Yasir Arafat for the last 14 years and that if he had been in his place, he would have probably behaved in the same way.

On the other hand, I have talked with many Palestinians who have stated that they would have behaved in the same way as the Israeli policy makers have behaved, had they been in their place. Both parties made these statements not only as experts in strategy, but also as empathizers with each other. Both parties would advance the cause of peace if they would turn such empathy into action. Speaking of empathy as a moral issue, Israel has earned much deserved admiration by not having a death penalty, even against Palestinians convicted of “terrorism” against Israeli Jews; this is a good example to follow.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is bound to be resolved someday. To agree in principle to a just and peaceful settlement will not only expedite the conflict resolution, but it will also help to make better neighbors in the future. I shall deal with the responsibility of the Palestinians in the next AVP; here I want to emphasize that Israel may be more successful in assuring its security by reconciling its own existence with the legitimate rights and security of the Palestinian people.

In 1975 Mattityahu Peled and I suggested a four-step sequence of action and reaction as a challenge to the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization to implement prior to the then-pending Geneva Conference. These steps are:

“First, the Government of Israel and the PLO should issue declarations by which they denounce war and territorial expansionism by force and commit themselves to the principle that all territorial war gains are returnable.

“Second, the Government of Israel should issue a declaration by which it recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to form a state of their own west of the River Jordan within internationally recognized boundaries.

“Third, the PLO should reciprocate by issuing a declaration recognizing the right of the Israeli people to live in their own state peacefully and securely.

“Fourth, the Government of Israel should declare itself ready to negotiate with the PLO, directly, as the representative of the Palestinian people, on all future relationships between their two states.”

These steps are still valid today and timely, to be implemented before or in lieu of the prospective International Conference. Mutual recognition and direct negotiation are the shortest cut to a peaceful and just settlement.

**THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION'S SEARCH FOR PEACE:  
IT IS TIME FOR REDIRECTION  
November 1987**

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has, by most standards, come of age as a national liberation movement, as the representative of the Palestinian people, and as a force to contend with, in policymaking regarding the Arab - Israeli conflict and the Middle East region at large. But the PLO has realized little success in gaining recognition by its primary opponent, Israel, or in bringing a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict closer to realization. It may be that two decades have been too short a period to realize such results, but there are few indications that time has been the critical element. It is more likely that the policies of the PLO have reached a point of diminishing returns and therefore need to be redirected in more positive and fruitful ways.

The PLO has faced one crisis after another during the last two decades. It has had to cope with the Jordanian authorities, and Black September is a reminder. It has had to face various Lebanese factions, Syrian forces, and the Israeli forces in Lebanon and elsewhere; it has survived. It has had to evacuate Beirut and suffer dispersal to ten different countries, but it has recovered. And it has had to deal with internal friction, but it has succeeded to reunite at the 1987 Palestine National Council in Algeria. The PLO has also continued to provide aid to the Palestinian people in various economic and social forms. Finally, the PLO has gained diplomatic recognition as an observer at the United Nations and almost as a sovereign authority by many nations. These are important accomplishments. Yet they fall short of the target, namely to resolve the conflict with Israel and exercise the right of self-determination in a part of Palestine, as originally recommended by the United Nations. The PLO has also not succeeded in mobilizing solid genuine support for its cause even from the Arab States or from countries that recognize it diplomatically, the rhetorical support it enjoys notwithstanding. Why then does it continue to pursue those same policies, which obviously have not succeeded in realizing the objectives?

Several explanations may be offered, such as the limited options it has had and the preoccupation with other peripheral objectives. The PLO has had few options that seem viable and feasible and therefore conducive to change the policy. For example, it has limited military power of its own and even less military backing by others. Therefore the military option has been ruled out. Yet the PLO has not been able to mobilize sufficient support of a superpower to negate the military option and pursue other means fruitfully. The United States continues to be an adversary. The USSR plays the role of a supporter but only to block certain actions, rather than to initiate or enforce favorable policies or actions. At the same time, the PLO has not been able to generate enough pressure, military or otherwise, to induce Israel to modify its own policies and thus justify new policies by the PLO itself. The PLO may also have had to utilize its time and effort

to recover from the military disaster and dispersal from Lebanon and therefore has not had the chance to reassess its policies.

While these explanations may justify holding on to old policies, it is possible that a major explanation is the preoccupation of the leadership with more grandiose objectives. The leaders, for example, have involved themselves as mediators between nations, as international ambassadors for certain ideologies or organizations, and as defenders of national and global causes. Such involvement has no doubt left an impression of success which, in turn, has induced the leaders to accelerate their movement from one capital to another in pursuit of material or moral support, but not enough of either to induce a change of policy by Israel or to realize the Palestinians' objectives. Another preoccupation of the PLO, which falls under the grandiose types of objectives, is the identification with various regional, ideological, and religious groups or countries regardless of how close their causes are to the cause of the Palestinians. Identification with the Third World, with the Organization of African Countries, and with the Organization of Muslim Countries may have mobilized moral and material support with the PLO, but evidently not enough to make a difference. It may in fact have had counterproductive effects. On one hand, it has preoccupied the leadership with "peripheral" matters at the expense of the main objectives of the liberation movement. On the other, it has burdened the movement with commitments and implications that are contrary to the ideal objectives of the PLO. A case in point is the strong identification with the Organization of Muslim Countries, which is contrary to the ideal of establishing a secular democratic state in Palestine. Another is the identification with revolutionary Iran, only to find out that Iran has been cooperating with Israel.

While the PLO has continued to pursue these tested but not very successful policies, it has also allowed some of its actions to drift into avenues that have had negative effects on the struggle. For example, the PLO seems to have allowed the guerilla war (against the military) to move from liberation and drift into terrorism (against civilians). Denying responsibility for terrorism or charging that all civilian Israelis are also in the military have not succeeded to offset the negative impact such actions have left on world opinion and on the ability of the PLO to gain sufficient support for its policies to achieve its targets.

It is evident, at least to me, that there is a need for the redirection of policy. On one hand, there has been little success in achieving the targets, and on the other, a stalemate seems to have developed which leaves Israel with the upper hand and the chance to go on building settlements in the Occupied Territories at the expense of Arab land and the future of the Palestinians. The need to change policy is also evident in the fact that time has not been a friend of the Palestinians; every time they postpone action or reject a proposition they end up as the loser. In the meantime, millions of Palestinians continue to suffer in their diaspora, while Israel enjoys the power and benefits of occupation. In fact the need for change requires that the change be in a specific direction. While various directions may be considered, I suggest the following as a point of departure:

1. There is a need for clarification of and focus on the objectives of a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict in light of the changes that have taken place since 1947. Most of the platforms in existence are either vague or outdated, or both. A clear statement of feasible objectives would help the Palestinians to rethink and help others to

appreciate the position of the Palestinians as people and of the PLO as their liberation movement.

2. There is a need to reassess the nature of the relationships with Arab countries on an individual basis, and to concentrate on promoting relationships with those countries that can be most helpful in resolving the conflict. At this point two countries seem most important, Syria and Egypt. Syria is indispensable because of its proximity and territorial involvement; Egypt is indispensable because of its peace relations with Israel and its status as leader of the Arab world.

3. There is a need to reassess the value of involvement in the affairs of the other countries in the region and outside it; a case in point is the Palestinian involvement in the local quarrels between the feudalistic leaders of Lebanon. It is true that at some point the Palestinians had no option in the matter, but more efforts can be expended to avoid such counterproductive involvement.

4. There is a need to put more focus on the struggle for liberation from within the Occupied Territories, including the encouragement of local leadership to carry the responsibility. There is little doubt that the solution must come from within, as long as the military option from the outside has been excluded.

5. There is a dire need to abandon violence and to upgrade the non-violent struggle for liberation and conflict resolution. The world knows that the Palestinians exist as a people; Israel is now convinced of that and many Israelis are fighting to help establish the identity of the Palestinians as a people, with full rights to sovereignty and independence. Violence has become counterproductive and should be abandoned.

6. There is a need to give clear signals to Israel that the peaceful coexistence of Palestinians and Israelis is a primary objective of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Secret messages by third parties or implicit expressions of opinion are inadequate. Israel may be put on the defensive by facing it with a clear statement of these objectives. Indeed, I would go as far as to suggest that the PLO should secure a major diplomatic and moral victory and facilitate the achievement of its objectives by offering to recognize Israel unilaterally and meet directly with its leaders to negotiate a resolution of the conflict at any time, with no preset conditions.

The redirection of policy is not easy, but it is essential, and the more positive the new direction of policy is, the more likely it will be to realize the objectives to which the PLO has dedicated itself.

**WORKING FROM WITHIN: ARAB INITIATIVES IN THE  
UNITED STATES AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
December 1987**

Two recent experiences in the United States and two in the Occupied Territories of Palestine have something in common and deserve special attention. The two US experiences are the Arab American Democrat's Club of the 39th Assembly District in Los Angeles, California's GRASS ROOTS PLATFORM, and the Council of Arab American Organization's involvement in the Mayor's election campaign in San Francisco, California. The former deals with national politics from the local scene, while the latter deals with local politics but with an eye on the larger picture of Arab Americans.

The two Palestinian experiences in the Occupied Territories include the attempt by Hanna Senior, Editor of the Arabic daily Al Fair, to run in the Municipal elections in Jerusalem, and the campaign by Mubarak Awad of Jerusalem to resist Israeli occupation through passive resistance and non-violent means. Again, one of these experiences deals with local affairs with wide implications, while the other deals with national affairs from a grass roots position. All four experiences however, indicate awareness of the hostility of existing conditions towards a minority and a readiness of the constituents to challenge that hostility and try to overcome it by working from within. They indicate also that the Arabs in America and the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have discovered the futility of fighting from the outside or of just complaining about their state of affairs. They have found that they themselves must be the main defendants of their rights and that they can defend them best by working from within, and by taking responsibilities and emphasizing the positive in their beliefs, capabilities, and expectations. It is evident that in all four situations the dominant or challenged party has taken notice.

There are however, major differences between the experiences in the US and those in the Occupied Territories. The Arab American community in the US supports the efforts of the leaders in the 39th Assembly District in San Francisco. In the Occupied Territories Hanna Siniora and Mubarak Awad stand virtually alone in their efforts to combat discrimination and subjugation to Israel. The Palestinian Arabs tend to consider participation in municipal elections in Jerusalem as recognition of the annexation of the city by Israel and therefore oppose participating. And they consider passive resistance or nonviolence as too idealistic to succeed and therefore oppose those as well. Yet, a little deeper consideration of these four situations would highlight the similarity between all four experiences, the potential viability of all four of them, and the enormity of the gains that may be realized if these experiences were carried through to their logical conclusions.

The Arab-American Democrats of the 39th Assembly District have embarked on a multipurpose program. They have undertaken a program of self-education in democratic government. They have also signaled to the rest of the community that they exist and have rights, that they care and are ready to participate, and that they have something positive to offer, not only to guarantee their own rights, but also to make the system work better for all the constituents. The Arab-American Democrats of the 39th Assembly District have expressed these objectives by formulating and presenting a GRASS ROOTS PLATFORM that is clear, comprehensive, and feasible. It also shows the concern of the Arab-American for the welfare of others in the community. Furthermore, it is highly consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Democratic Party to which they belong. Given their sizeable number and their good organization, it is inevitable that the Democratic Party will take notice and try to integrate the Arab-American Democrat's platform into the larger, more general platform of the Democratic Party.

Last month the Council of Arab Organizations of San Francisco took steps to become involved in the Mayor's election in the city, including direct contact with the candidates to evaluate their positions on the relevant issues before endorsing any of them for mayor. An important feature of their assessment of the candidates was the decision to separate the city affairs from other (international) affairs. Given that candidates may have favorable views on local affairs but not so favorable ones on international affairs, the Council decided to free itself from prejudices that could have counterproductive and alienating effects on them. There is little doubt that the Council's efforts, like those of the Arab-American Club of Los Angeles, show that similar experiences are taking place elsewhere in the United States, which deserves to be recognized and emulated, just as the Los Angeles and San Francisco experiences are being appreciated and recommended for emulation.

In contrast to these experiences, Hanna Siniora, a Palestinian leader in East Jerusalem suffers from discrimination and bias against the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem, which he attributes in part to the fact that the Palestinians boycott city elections and therefore are not represented on the municipal council. Efforts to correct the bias and give the Palestinians equal benefits within the city have not succeeded, partly because these efforts come in the form of attacks on city policies, or in the form of petitions and requests by a constituency that is not represented on the council. Mr. Siniora, therefore, has considered the possibility of running for a seat on the council in order to fight for the missing rights from within. Apparently he is getting some encouragement from certain Jewish groups but much discouragement from the Arab population in the city. The Palestinian Arabs are critical of her initiative on this score because they are afraid that their participation in the city elections could be interpreted as formal Arab recognition of the annexation of Jerusalem by the Israeli government.

There is some truth in these fears but also some misunderstanding. There is no doubt that the Israeli government will use participation in the municipal elections to its advantage in the political conflict with the Arabs. However, the Israeli government can gain little additional advantage since it has virtually ignored all other parties and acted as if Jerusalem is legally unified and annexed. Furthermore, participation in the local elections and representation on the city council relate only to civic affairs and any reinterpretation of this function will have little effect on the political status of the city, or

on the relations between the Israeli government and the Arab governments or the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Finally, it is to be expected that any platform on which Mr. Siniora runs would explicitly disclaim any political recognition of annexation by Israel. However, by denying support to Mr. Siniora, the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories and the PLO condemn the Arab residents of the city of Jerusalem to continued discrimination and deprivation. They also deprive them of the power of working from within to achieve their objectives, an approach which has proved to be one of the most effective in fighting prejudice, discrimination, and bias. Hanna Siniora should be congratulated for his thoughtful endeavors and dedicated efforts, which deserve full Palestinian encouragement and support, as well as emulation in every similar situation.

The experience of Mubarak Awad, the passive resistance fighter against Israeli occupation is a little different. The Arabs oppose it, or at least do not support it, because they consider it too idealistic to bring about any tangible results. The Jews in Israel, except for the progressive peace groups, oppose Awad's movement because it is a powerful force against the occupation; it is appealing to the peace groups, it is embarrassing to the occupiers, and it is a blow to the Israeli claims that the Palestinians are terrorists. The movement is also a major force in international public opinion against Israeli oppressive policies and against continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The government of Israel has openly shown its displeasure with Awad's pacifist approach by refusing to extend his stay in the Occupied Territories, even though Palestine is his native home, and he is a United States citizen who needs no visa to travel to Israel. Israel is against any movement that uses non-violent means and which works from within against its oppressive and colonial policies in the Occupied Territories.

However, it is much less understandable why the Arabs fail to support Awad's movement. Efforts to criticize occupation and attack it by various means, including violence, have failed to bring about any positive results. They have failed to stop the building of settlements; they have failed to stop oppressive measures against the Arab inhabitants; and they have failed to convince the Israeli government that the Occupation must be ended. In contrast, in a short period of time Awad's movement has begun to make a difference, as indicated by the behavior of the government of Israel. The Palestinian Arabs would do well to heed Awad's call for passive resistance and a non-violent struggle to achieve the end of occupation.

## **TWO WEEKS OF BLOODSHED IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

### **January 1988**

Unrest in the Occupied Territories can hardly be considered news. However, the intensity of the disturbances, their apparently spontaneous character, their ability to gain sympathy among the Palestinian Arabs within Israel and around the world, and the harsh reaction of the Israeli occupation authorities, including the use of live ammunition, have made this episode rather unusual. There has been rock throwing by the Palestinians and counter actions by the authorities ever since the occupation started twenty years ago. However, the continuity of these disturbances and the killing of more than twenty five Palestinians, the injury of more than 200, and the arrest of a thousand people in that short period must suggest new developments in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians or the Arabs at large. Several new actions have been pointed out. Israel has resorted to shooting more quickly and more frequently than before. Israeli authorities have also been reported to have "tied blindfolded Palestinian boys to the hoods of their jeeps and 'used them as a shield'...against stone-throwing in the camps." The Arabs in Israel conducted a highly successful general strike whose impact was felt in the Israeli economy. Egypt, the only Arab country at peace with Israel, placed strong protests against the Israeli harsh behavior. The Security Council of the United Nations condemned the Israeli action and for the first time the United States did not block the resolution with its veto power. And for the first time, the United States has taken a major step by publicly criticizing the use of live ammunition by Israel and its generally harsh treatment of the demonstrators. The United States has also gone on record to condemn the Israeli policy of deporting some Palestinians as punishment for their participation or leadership in the demonstrations. And for the first time, a newspaper in the United States has published a partial map of the Middle East with Israel renamed "South Africa." Finally, the Palestine Liberation Organization, (PLO) has announced, quite belatedly, that it is considering the establishment of a Government in Exile "to lay claim to the Israeli Occupied West Bank and Gaza strip."

After two bloody weeks the Occupied Territories seem calm. At the same time, the Israeli military has doubled or tripled its force in the Territories, and has embarked on its military court action against those who have been arrested. In the meantime, the Arab countries, except Egypt, have continued to pronounce their condemnation of Israel, but their main preoccupation has continued to be the Gulf War and the oil prices. If one follows the course of events between Israel and the Palestinians, one might easily reach the conclusion that they are back to normal, namely to the protracted conflict with the periodic seasoning of harsh action and counteraction by one party or the other. But there ought to be some lessons that we may learn from the two bloody weeks of December 1987:

1. A period of calm in the Occupied Territories can easily be misleading. Dissatisfaction, frustration, and outburst into violence are dormant characteristics of the relationship between the occupied and the occupiers. These are symptoms of the underlying deep conflict regarding the national identity of the Palestinians, their rights in the territory of Palestine, and their claim to sovereignty in a state of their own. Whatever Israel and the outside world do to prevent an outburst or to restore calm are measures that deal only with the symptoms; the roots of the problem are rather hardened by the focus on the symptoms and by the passage of time, which make the problem more chronic and its roots more difficult to pull out. Hence, a viable solution must address the basic conflict so that the symptoms may be remedied.

2. Resolution of the problem must come from within. The Arab countries and the outside world can help, but only the Palestinians and the Israelis can deal with their chronic antagonism and mutually exclusive claims to the disputed territory. The outside world can also help, not by condemnation and rhetoric, but by withholding military aid and the sale of weapons to the combating parties in order to induce them to resort to political and non-violent approaches to the resolution of the conflict. In the meantime, the Arab countries have raised protests and called for condemnation of the Israeli behavior, but in actuality their major preoccupation has continued to be the Gulf War and the oil prices. Therefore, it should be evident by now that neither the Arab countries nor the rest of the world are ready to take such actions and will continue to maintain alliances and provide the resources that will sustain the conflict and feed the protracted war until the Palestinians and the Israelis themselves say "No More."

3. The two bloody weeks of December brought no gains to either the Palestinians or the Israelis; they have brought losses to both, even though there are groups on both sides which have claimed gains as a result. On the Palestinian side, there are claims of unity, new initiatives, and more sympathy from the outside world. These are important gains, but not important enough or substantive enough to make a difference as far as the basic issues are concerned. On the other hand, they alone stand to suffer the losses in human life, the injuries and maiming of those who suffered casualties, the destruction of property, the loss of incomes, and the evidently heavy sentences imposed on those arrested and detained. Some have even raised the issue of a new conflict within the Palestinian ranks as a result. The argument is that the emergence of unity and new leadership in the Occupied Territories may have been a threat to the leadership of the PLO, which may explain their serious consideration of establishing a government in exile at this time.

On the Israeli side, they have gained little if any, other than to emphasize once again that they cannot be pushed out of the Occupied Territories by force. Certain groups however, may have gained, namely the settlers in the Occupied Territories who now can feel more secure because the Israeli army contingent placed in the Territories has been enlarged to their satisfaction. However, these "gains" are not costless. Israel has had to deploy more of its standing army, thereby further depressing its economy, has had to face work interruptions, and has had to explain to its citizens the suffering or injuries by its army personnel. Thus, while the country suffers, the settlers and extremists celebrate the gains they have achieved by default.

4. The Palestinians will not go away, nor will the Israelis, nor will the conflict, which keeps them at each other's throat. Their coexistence is a reality, but the conditions

of this coexistence are what need to be worked on to make it equal, secure, and peaceful for both of them. There are few options for a final solution that satisfy the conditions for an equal, secure, and peaceful coexistence. Mutual recognition and equal but separate sovereignties established through direct negotiations are the only stable and permanent solution. While these conditions require time and patience, certain steps may be taken at this time to help pave the way for those more crucial steps that should follow. A measure of goodwill would go a long way toward meaningful negotiations. Israel, for instance would make a major contribution toward peace by declaring amnesty to all those arrested or sentenced as a result of the December disturbances. Israel would make another major contribution by offering to help the families of those killed in these disturbances. On their part, the Palestinians would gain much and help to smooth the way toward negotiations by declaring a moratorium on demonstrations, rock throwing, or other violent action for six months (or more) in return for amnesty. In the meantime, both parties would designate leaders on both sides to explore ways of initiating direct negotiations based on mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence.

**THE ARABS AND THE ISRAELIS: THEY CREATE THEIR  
OWN IMAGE, AND THEY CAN CHANGE IT  
February 1988**

The Arabs and the Israelis are concerned about how their images are being perceived around the world. The Arabs do not like to have an image as terrorists, totalitarians, or being undemocratic. The Israelis do not like an image as racists and colonialists, or to share the same image with Apartheid South Africa or Nazi Germany. Both groups are right to be concerned, and both think they are justified in expressing grievances against those who stigmatize them with these insulting images, but it is not enough to be concerned or to express grievances. It is more important to make sure that these horrible images have no basis in reality; that the Arabs and the Israelis do not behave in such a way that the bad images and reality become the same. Both Arabs and Israelis have expressed their concerns and grievances, but they have yet to modify their behavior such that the reality will truly defy the bad images and eliminate them.

A political or national terrorist is one who, in the name of politics or nationalism, inflicts harm on civilians and strikes terror among them, regardless of how helpless or uninvolved they may be. The terrorist may be an individual, group, or government. The Arabs and the Israelis have yet to show that their behavior against civilians, within and without their national boundaries, is free from terrorist actions. Whether it is the nationalist factions, "feudal" militias, or sovereign states in the region, they have yet to prove that they are not involved in kidnapping civilians, assassinating political enemies, or creating terror among noncombatants to advance their causes. Attacking civilians with bombs, bullets, rocks, or sticks is terrorism. Hijacking commercial planes and vessels is terrorism. It may be true that certain nationalist movements have been ignored for so long that terrorism has been the only means by which they could gain attention and be heard. Even so, the end does not justify the means, for the price of terrorism includes the unwanted image. To refrain from terrorism may be very difficult, but the political and diplomatic payoff from conducting a nationalist struggle free from terrorism can be substantial. The payoff would even be greater for sovereign governments in the region if they would shake off the stigma of being sponsors of terrorism. But when governments, either directly or indirectly, sponsor terrorist acts or condone them, they not only undermine the rule of law within their own countries, but they also help to create and nourish the image they so deeply grieve against.

State terrorism however, seems to have become a common currency in the Middle East. The championship for state terrorism is highly contested with several countries trying as frontrunners for the title. Open attacks against civilians even in war zones, well financed assassination squads, highly developed private armies, and splinter groups of fanatics acting on behalf of one state or another are common features of state terrorism in

the region. Amnesty International and the United Nations have virtually identified these contestants and have tried to put moral pressure on them to refrain from such behavior. Yet these states seem more interested in altering their image than with mending their own behavior; they still strike terror among civilians thereby helping to cement the image they so deeply despise. Political observers and the media might exaggerate the involvement of these states and groups in terrorism, especially if some among them harbor prejudice against one or another of the Middle Eastern people, but even the exaggeration will no longer be possible if the actual behavior does not provide the ammunition for it.

Some countries in the Middle East are concerned about their image as totalitarian and undemocratic, and rightly so. Yet they alone can change that image, by making sure that the reality of their actions defies it. For how can a government that does not permit all of its citizens' freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of movement avoid being branded undemocratic? How can a government that controls the whole society from above and stays in power by depending on force, suppression, blind loyalties, and corruption avoid being branded totalitarian and undemocratic?

And how can a government that does not tolerate criticism and scrutiny of its policies by its own constituents avoid being branded totalitarian and undemocratic? Or, how can a government that prohibits holders of its own passports from entering or leaving the country avoid being called undemocratic and totalitarian? These images may be exaggerated and unwarranted, but the governments in the Middle East have the responsibility and the capability of removing them by their own behavior.

Israel, on the other hand, is concerned not only with its image as a state terrorist, but also as a racist, colonialist, and fascist country. Israel is seen as a country that applies multiple standards to people under its rule purely on the basis of the ethnic origins of the individual or the group (the term racial does not apply in this case since Arabs and Jews are of the same racial origin). How can a country escape being called terrorist when it sends its planes and tanks to attack civilians in refugee camps and villages? How can a country escape being called terrorist when it sends its soldiers to homes and shops to beat up the inhabitants, without a charge, trial, or jury? How can a country escape being called terrorist when its cabinet ministers give orders to "just beat anybody" and break the bones of civilians with their sticks, even when those civilians are not actively fighting against the soldiers or the state? How can a country escape being branded racist when it uses thousands of workers from territories under its rule to sustain its economy but will not let them spend the night close to their place of work just because of their ethnic origin?

Israel is probably more worried about its image as a racist country. Yet observers cannot but wonder: is it not racist to allow civilians of one ethnic group to carry arms and use them to terrorize civilians of another ethnic group under its own jurisdiction? Is it not racist for a country to confiscate the land and water resources of one ethnic group and deliver them to another ethnic group arbitrarily? Is it not racist when the educational, health, and welfare policies of the state discriminate against some of its own citizens purely on the basis of their ethnic origin? The policies of the state must be racist when even its most ardent supporters in the international media find it possible to compare those policies with policies of Apartheid South Africa against the blacks and of Nazi Germany against the Jews.

Israel cannot escape the image it has created through its own policies except by putting an end to its terrorist-, racist-, and fascist-like actions that sustain that image. To change its image Israel has to stop applying multiple standards of law and order within its state boundaries and in the Occupied Territories; it has to either stop deportation of Arabs, regardless of the reason, or apply deportation to Jews as well; it has to either stop beating up Arabs in the name of law and order, or apply the same system of beating to Jews as well. It also has to stop confiscating and handing over Arab lands to Jewish settlers who establish colonies purely as a way of displacing Arabs from their own homes and farmlands.

The Arabs and the Israelis can change the ugly images they have helped to create for themselves simply by changing the behaviors that are the reality on which these images feed and flourish. They may try to mitigate the impact of these actions by lobbying, using high-powered propaganda, and spending lavishly, but political observers, the media, and the people who suffer the effects of these behaviors will not allow such mitigation. Only when the Arabs and the Israelis have changed their behavior and complied with international conventions will they clear themselves of the images they do not want and should not deserve.

## **CLOSURE OF THE PLO OFFICES AND PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **March 1988**

Conflict and war in the Middle East may be regarded as normal features of the region. It is also normal to find efforts continuously being expended to resolve these conflicts and wars. The most recent such efforts are those of the President and Secretary of State of the United States. Their efforts are especially important because of both their timeliness and potential impact on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Success however, would no doubt depend on the cooperation of the conflicting parties and their willingness to compromise in order to find reasonable and acceptable solutions. It is important, therefore, for the parties that are keen on promoting peace to help create conditions that would enhance cooperation and promote the willingness of the conflicting parties to compromise and accommodate each other. The two most relevant parties in this conflict are the Palestinians and the Israelis, and the cooperation of both is equally essential for the success of the new peace efforts. Yet, it seems at this time that cooperation of the Palestinians can hardly be counted on, for various reasons.

First, the United States has expended little effort to help improve the vastly deteriorating situation of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. The repressive policies of terrorizing, beating, and shooting civilians have continued with hardly any pressure put on Israel to modify its policies and improve its treatment of the occupied people. The United States has continued to use the veto on behalf of Israel, even when violations of human rights are evident and have been attested to by Israeli high officials. Yet the United States has not hesitated to condemn any actions by the Palestinians that may have anything to do with violence as acts of terrorism. The Palestinians cannot understand why they are subjected to this double standard.

Second, the present initiative for peace between the Palestinians and Israel seems to focus on the United States' contacts with all parties other than the Palestinians and their representatives. Palestinians everywhere feel as if they are being intentionally slighted by the United States in a matter that concerns them most, regardless of their behavior in the conflict.

Third, the present initiative certainly needs cooperation of the Palestinians for it to succeed; yet it is hard to imagine such cooperation forthcoming when the PLO, their legal representative, is being expelled from the United States by unilateral action. Closure of the Information Office of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington, and the pending closure of their office at the United Nations can hardly be considered inducements for cooperation. This policy of closure deserves serious reconsideration, if cooperation of the Palestinians were to be mobilized in the cause of peace, for their sake and the sake of Israel.

Closure of the offices of the PLO may be challenged on legal grounds as well as philosophical and diplomatic grounds. Such challenges will certainly be exercised by other parties and in other contexts; however our concern in this context is the pragmatic situation in which cooperation of the Palestinians seems crucial for the success of the newly initiated peace efforts. Closure of the PLO offices, especially the office at the United Nations, results in few potential benefits for the United States, but in many harmful effects for not only the US but for Israel and other less involved parties as well. Most of all, the net result can be extremely harmful to the US diplomatic efforts that are being expended on behalf of peace.

Who are the potential beneficiaries of the policy of closure of the PLO offices? The United States government can hardly gain, except to prove one more time that it does what Israel and its lobby wants. However, such a result can hardly be significant since the US government already has a strong ally in Israel and further appeasement or inducement can barely add to the strength of that alliance. The people of the United States cannot expect to benefit since the offices and officers of the PLO in the United States are not doing any harm to them. On the contrary, they may be doing some good by disseminating information that may help democracy to function on the basis of knowledge and awareness of the various sides of the issues involved.

The lobbyists for Israel may think that they have benefited by seeing their short-run objectives realized; peace in this case must certainly not be one of their objectives. Members of Congress who are running for office and need the votes and financial support of the pro-Israel lobby and its sympathizers may also benefit. These candidates may win elections through these means, but the larger objective of peace through the US initiative will suffer. Another group that might benefit and, which will overlap with those already mentioned, are the people who wish to annihilate the identity of the Palestinians as a nation, of whom there are quite a few in the Middle East as well as outside it. The history of the last one hundred years, however, shows that the Palestinian identity cannot be annihilated and that the short-run joy over the closure of offices will not be transformed into a long-run joy over the desired but unattainable peace. Finally, and ironically, the Palestinians themselves may be beneficiaries of the closures in as much as the closures victimize them and may help to mobilize sympathy and diplomatic support for them around the world. The Palestinians, however, would most probably prefer to keep their offices open rather than fill their coffers with rhetoric and verbal sympathy. In conclusion, then, the policy of closure of the PLO offices can benefit neither the United States policies nor the most recent US peace initiative.

The beneficiaries may be few, but the losers are many. On the philosophical and diplomatic levels, it is sufficient to suggest that the tradition of diplomatic courtesy and the idea of an international forum will suffer a setback by this unilateral action. If the PLO does not deserve to have an observer's status in the United Nations, then the United Nations should be left to make such a decision. The most immediate harm will certainly fall on the current peace efforts: how will the United States convince the Palestinians and their supporters of its genuine endeavor to bring about peace between them and Israel while they close down the offices of Palestinian representatives both within the United States and at the United Nations? How will the United States convince all of the mediators who have been trying to bring Palestinians and Israelis closer together that the closures are a positive step in the direction of peace? The potential losers are many, but

foremost among them are the Palestinians who truly seek an international forum as a means to find a solution to the conflict. If they cannot address the United Nations and be heard, how can the Palestinians seek a political solution? And if a political solution is not reachable, is it not possible that they will have to resort to other means including violence? Other important potential losers are the Israeli and American groups who actively believe in peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. How can these peace-seeking groups carry on a dialogue for peace when the Palestinians and their representatives are denied access to an international forum, even on the neutral grounds of the United Nations?

The Palestinian people are desperate to understand. They have been regularly ignored and frequently misunderstood. To close their offices and to expel them from the US can only add to their frustration, compound their suffering, and reinforce their misunderstanding. The United States has the power to change that situation by hearing the Palestinians and by challenging them to explain themselves to the American people under the severe scrutiny of the American system of democracy and free dialogue. The United States can change that situation by challenging the Palestinians to face the scrutiny and live up to the expectations of the international community represented in the United Nations. The United States can change that situation by challenging the Palestinians to face Israel at the international forum and negotiate a peaceful settlement responsibly as a member of the family of nations. The United States can indeed change that situation by setting the example for Israel to face the Palestinians and challenge them to step forward at the international forum of the United Nations and negotiate a settlement that will guarantee security and sovereignty for both of them. The United States can still reconsider the closure policy and instead contemplate on these changes that would enhance its peace initiative.

**STEREOTYPES IN CALIFORNIA:  
EDUCATION AND ETHNIC AND RACIAL PREJUDICE  
April 1988**

We often wonder where prejudice comes from, and why it persists even when people try to overcome it. Education in a broad sense may be responsible, and those who guide education must shoulder that responsibility, whether they intend its prejudicial effects or not. Sometimes the intentions are definitely positive, but the results turn out to be in some ways negative. One such situation happens to be occurring in California education at the present time, which may negatively affect students enrolled in grades 7 to 12 for years to come, unless something is done about it.

With most honorable intentions the legislators of California have instructed the State Department of Education to "develop a model curriculum for use by school districts grades 7 to 12, inclusive" to create awareness on Human Rights and Genocide. The MODEL CURRICULUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENOCIDE, 1988, has been the product. It has been adopted by the Board of Education and is ready to be incorporated in the instructional program of all California schools.

This model curriculum is an important document. The California legislators and the Board of Education should be commended on their initiative and efforts to bring issues of human rights and genocide to the attention of our children and their educators. The model curriculum is particularly significant because it emphasizes instances of abuse of human rights and of genocide that are not widely known, including:

- Annihilation of the Armenians by the government of the Ottoman Empire.
- Famine in the Ukraine caused by the Soviet government.
- Nazi extermination of European Jews (the Holocaust).
- Mass murders of the Poles.
- Mass killings of Cambodians by the Pol Pot regime.

The model curriculum also presents a candid picture of the "extreme human rights violations" by the United States, with special reference to the enslavement of black people in the US, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 in California, the forced relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II on the West Coast, and the discrimination against Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, American Indians, women, homosexuals, and the handicapped throughout the entire United States. It then deals with Apartheid in South Africa, political repression and torture in Argentina, and totalitarian policies in many other countries. These various cases are used to illustrate violations and abuses which our children should be aware of and which should not be allowed to happen. The model curriculum also draws attention to the various national and international declarations, which establish standards for human rights and "respect for differences among people and for the rights of all people." For all these reasons, we should be grateful to the Legislators and the Board of Education for their good intentions and for this valuable document.

Yet, in spite of all good intentions, there are problems in this model curriculum, both by omission and by commission. On the omission side, it seems to exclude any reference to the continuing discriminatory treatment of minorities in this country and in this state. The struggle for civil rights by Blacks and for equality by other groups enumerated in the document has not achieved its objectives and our children should be aware of this predicament. Another serious omission, which applies to the United States including California, as well as to other countries, is the plight of the homeless and the hungry, whose numbers are increasing and who in many cases have no control over their situation. These omissions are particularly disturbing considering that one of the major newspapers in California's capital, THE SACRAMENTO BEE, has run a series on the hungry and homeless, and is currently running a series on color and racism in California.

Another glaring problem of this model curriculum, one of combined omission and commission, is evident in its treatment of the Middle East, a region which is almost constantly in the news and of which our children should no doubt be made aware. THE MODEL CURRICULUM which is 66 pages in length, devotes one short paragraph to the Middle East, on p. 21, as follows: "During the unit on the 'Middle East: Israel and Syria,' studies include the problems of the displaced Palestinian refugees, the recurrent use of terrorism, ...and the Holocaust as a factor in the creation of Israel in 1948." On page 65 three more paragraphs are included as follows:

In the Middle East, totalitarianism is the rule. With the exception of Israel, not one of the nations in the region can be said to be truly democratic. In Syria, a 'state of emergency' has been in force since 1963, and reports of massacres are frequent. In Iran, the government of Ayatollah Khomeini has executed thousands; in one three-month period 1,800 people were put to death. In Libya, Col. Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi arrested over 3,000 political opponents in 1980-81 alone, and many of them have been reported executed or tortured to death.

Palestinian refugees have been denied citizenship in every Arab nation in the Middle East except Jordan, though an equal number of Jewish refugees, violently expelled from Arab lands at the same time that the Palestinians left Palestine, have been successfully absorbed into Israeli life.

Though the plight of these refugees is in some ways unique, it is as much the result of totalitarian rule as that of the other peoples in times past. The difference here is that the unfortunate Arab refugees are being exploited, not by one dictator, but by dozens, and their situation has led to the spread of terrorism worldwide.

This coverage of the Middle East suffers from brevity, inaccuracy, and distortion. On one hand, it ignores the fact that there are several different models of behavior among the countries of the Middle East and certainly most of them do not fit the model described above. On the other hand, the plight of the Palestinian refugees was not brought about by any of the dictators or non-dictators of the Middle East, but by the infringement of Israel on their rights and its continued denial of their right to return to their homes in Palestine, a right which has been recognized and reiterated by the United Nations ever since their dispersion in 1947/8. To suggest otherwise is certainly a falsification of history. Is that how we want to educate our children?

There is no doubt that some atrocities and abuses of human rights have taken place and still do in some countries of the Middle East, but not in all of them; some are totalitarian states, but not all of them; some exploit the Palestinian refugees, but not all of them. Shouldn't our students be aware of these differences?

Still another distortion is evident in referring to Israel as the only democracy in the region. Should not the model curriculum address human rights, which attacks discrimination and racism in the United States, also attack discrimination and racism in Israel? Should it not tell that Israeli democracy is only for the Jews in Israel and not for all of the citizens, especially not for the Israeli Arabs who are treated as second-class citizens? The distortion seems even more flagrant when it comes to human rights: how would a California school teacher explain Israel's assumed respect for human rights to a student who reads about Israeli soldiers burying young Palestinians alive, after having arrested and disarmed them? How would a teacher explain to the student the Israeli soldiers' behavior when they blindfold young Palestinians and tie them to the front of their trucks as shields against stones thrown at them? How would the teacher explain the Israeli soldiers' behavior of arresting Palestinians, handcuffing them and then proceeding to break their bones systematically? How would the teacher explain the Israeli soldiers' behavior when they lift young Palestinians in a helicopter to a height of ten feet and then push them out to meet their fate unprotected?

These illustrations clearly indicate the dangers inherent in this distorted, though probably unintended, picture of the Middle East. To condemn totalitarianism in the Middle East is justified, but it should not be an indiscriminate condemnation of all the countries of the region. To admire Israel's democracy is justified, but it should not be an endorsement of Israel's violations of human rights in its treatment of the Palestinians, or of its discrimination against its non-Jewish citizens. Unintended distortions like these can form stereotypes that become a hotbed for racial and ethnic prejudice.

We owe it to our children, who will be the leaders of tomorrow, to help them grow up free from stereotypes which lead to and perpetuate prejudice. The Legislators and the Board of Education of California have taken a major step in the direction of such freedom. It is still in their power to amend this important document, in the name of accuracy and for the sake of our children.

## **PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT**

### **May 1988**

The United States Peace Initiative and its Middle East International Peace Conference seem to have had a stillbirth. More correctly, they were never born because they were never meant to be. The would-be parents had apparently decided that it would be dangerous for them to change their status and impregnate themselves with an offspring they did not care to have.

The latest idea of an international peace conference acquired a certain momentum about a year ago, reaching a climax when the US Secretary of State George Shultz decided to take personal charge of the peace initiative and start shuttling back and forth between the capitals of a few Middle Eastern countries. Secretary Shultz's declarations that the peace initiative is alive notwithstanding, the initiative and proposed international peace conference show no sign of life. They are dead and that should not be surprising. Few serious observers expected the United States to succeed. The initiative was doomed to failure from the start because it offered little inducement to the relevant parties to compromise, whether in rewards or in reduction of costs. Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Syria could not find much in the initiative to justify a compromise of their long-held positions on the major issues.

Israel, at least as represented by the Shamir government, had no use for the international conference, nor for a peace settlement it did not dictate, because it has what it wants: the land and the full uncompromised support of the United States. Furthermore, the absence of peace is not new for Israel and its leaders, all of whom have grown up with war and conflict as part of the daily menu. A state of peace would probably be a frightening experience for them. At the same time, Israel's losses in the conflict have not been unbearable: the human losses have been minimal compared with losses of the other parties; the material losses have been offset by levies on the occupied territories and by aid from the outside, and when not offset, they are rationalized as the price for security. In the meantime, Israel holds on to the Occupied Territories and acts as a superpower in the region.

The Palestinians, as represented by the PLO, also had little stock in the US peace initiative, especially because they were not a party in it. The Secretary of State made conflicting declarations. On one hand, he respects the legitimate rights of the Palestinians; on the other, he denies them the right to choose their own representatives. The Secretary would meet individual Palestinians but would not recognize or meet with the leadership. Yet it is the leadership that can negotiate and has the authority to make decisions. The Secretary of State went further, echoing the most extreme slogan of the government of Israel: he committed himself and the government of the United States to the "Three NOs": No Negotiation with the PLO, No State of Palestine, and No Return to

the 1967 borders. In view of such a public commitment by the Secretary of State, it is hardly surprising that the PLO and the Palestinians at large would have little inducement to compromise and give support to the US peace initiative.

Syria would be a party at the international peace conference. Once the conference is convened, Syria would be expected to go into direct negotiations with Israel. But why would Syria want to negotiate with Israel, which has broken international law by annexing some of Syria's territory and persists in considering the annexation permanent? Syria has seen no gesture of good will or good intentions on the part of Israel to justify its support of the peace initiative. Syria has not seen any pressure put on Israel by the United States to show good will or good intentions toward a peaceful settlement with Syria. Any compromise in such circumstances is bound to be fruitless. In fact, it would be surprising if Israel were anxious to enter into negotiations with Syria at this time, considering that Israel has the Golan Heights, UN observers to help maintain a ceasefire in the area, and little security risk. Hence, a compromise by Israel would seem largely premature and unnecessary. It is true that much more than we know probably was covered in the meetings between Secretary Shultz and the leaders of Israel and Syria, but the signs are not encouraging that the peace initiative and the conference would be rewarding for either party.

If any country were to benefit from the US peace initiative and the international conference, it would be Jordan and by implication, Israel. Jordan, according to the initiative, would be a main party to the negotiations; Jordan would take the lead on behalf of the Palestinians, and undermine their present leadership, the PLO; Jordan might retrieve some territory it had occupied between 1948 and 1967; it might formalize any tacit agreements it has with Israel; and it might solidify its friendship with the United States. Indeed, Jordan had good reasons to support the peace initiative, but even then it could not swallow the renewed public commitment of Secretary Shultz to Israel by reaffirming the Three NOs on behalf of the United States. Jordan had to withhold its open support of the initiative.

The Palestinian Uprising in the Occupied Territories has now overshadowed the flurry of activity on behalf of the peace initiative and the international peace conference. Indeed, the peace initiative seems all but formally declared dead and buried. The conflict has now acquired new features with direct action by the Palestinians and harsh reactions by Israel. In addition, mounting losses have been occurring on both sides, though the losses are not symmetric or comparable. Israel's losses have been largely in material terms. The cost of reacting to the Uprising has reached over 100 million dollars a month over and above the regular budget of occupation. In addition, Israel has had to lengthen the reserve army service from 40 to 62 days a year, which is over a 50% increase in wasted human capital on account of the reserve army; and it has suffered some human casualties. In contrast, almost 200 Palestinians have been killed, several hundred more have been injured, thousands have been arrested or jailed, and hundreds of millions of dollars have been lost in unearned income and destroyed capital. However, the most severe cost both parties have endured is the pain suffered by the families of the casualties and the deep feelings of enmity generated within each party against the other. There is hardly a family that has not been directly or indirectly affected by the human losses of the war. In the meantime, the Palestinians have learned lessons from Israel in that violence

and terrorism pay, that might be right if given enough time, and that one should not compromise until one has to.

Yet, all need not be lost. The cry for peace can be heard on both sides. Peace demonstrations in Israel have been large and persistent. The cry for peace can be heard on the side of the Palestinians as well. It may not be in the form of demonstrations, but it is there just the same. What is missing, however, is a bipartisan and coordinated effort by the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to push for a negotiated settlement.

The Israeli and Palestinian proponents of a negotiated settlement are not far apart in its main components. Both agree that occupation by force cannot last, that both have legitimate rights to a national home and self determination, that both people have a right to such a home in mandatory Palestine, that peace and security in the future depend on their mutual respect and recognition of each other's rights, and that the shortest cut to a solution is for the Israelis and the Palestinians to take matters into their own hands and speak directly to each other. Let us hope that they can join forces and publicly call on their leaders to take a more peaceful approach, negotiate a settlement, and begin to rebuild for a secure and peaceful future for their two peoples.

**ECONOMICS OF OCCUPATION: ISRAEL AND  
THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES  
June 1988**

Various declarations have been made in the past three years promising economic development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Jordan published a "Plan," the United States allocated aid funds, and Israel talked of a "Marshall Plan." Like most propaganda campaigns, these grandiose declarations have virtually come to naught. The Occupied Territories are still without a development program, the standard of living remains low, and the prospects do not seem any brighter now than they were before those declarations were made. In fact, the economic conditions in the Territories are more distressed now than they were before.

The grim economic situation which prevails in the Occupied Territories is the result of a number of factors: the absence of a policy for development, fragmentation of the market, poor endowment of resources, and subjugation of the economy of the Territories to the political and military whims of the occupation authorities. Now, as has been the case in the past forty years of occupation, little attention is being paid to economic development in Gaza or the West Bank. This neglect has no doubt sustained and probably aggravated underdevelopment. It has also undermined efforts that may have been made to improve political relations between Israel and the Occupied Territories.

The West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Jordan and Egypt respectively for almost as long as they have been occupied by Israel. Economic development in those first 20 years of occupation was as slow as it has been in the second 20 years. However, the relatively slow pace of change under the Israeli occupation has more significance than it did under the Jordanian or Egyptian occupation. The Jordanian and Egyptian economies were not more advanced or developed than the economies of the West Bank and Gaza and therefore, it would have been unlikely for them to influence the development of the territories under their occupation.

In contrast, Israel has an advanced economy, a highly developed economic and financial institution, and the capacity to promote rapid economic development in the less developed territories under its occupation. The fact that such development has not taken place means that an important opportunity to use economic forces to promote peace may have been missed. It is true that economic development could not have been one of the objectives of occupation. Nevertheless, whatever the objectives of occupation might have been, economic development could have helped to realize them. Suppose, for example, that Israel's objectives are simply to maintain law and order in the Territories until a final settlement has been reached and the occupation forces are withdrawn.

Would it not be to Israel's advantage to leave behind a more developed rather than a less developed economy as a neighbor and potential trade partner? Trade is usually more active between developed partners than between developed and underdeveloped partners. Suppose, on the other hand, that Israel had planned to annex the territories and integrate them into the Israeli economy. Would it not be more efficient to annex a more developed rather than a less developed economy? Even if Israel had planned to annex the territory without the people, would it not be more advantageous to annex a more developed rather than a less developed infrastructure? In either case, the occupation has failed; the Palestinians have not and will not evacuate the territory, and the economy has remained underdeveloped.

Israel has maintained economic and trade relations with the Occupied Territories in the meantime. Certainly it would have been to Israel's benefit to raise the standard of living of the people in the Territories, increase their purchasing power, and expand the market for Israeli products. It would also have been to Israel's advantage to raise the levels of technology and productivity in the Territories and thus raise a potential resource for the Israeli economy to draw on. Such a policy would also have generated externalities or side-effects by helping to improve the social and political relations with the Palestinians, reduce the security risks by keeping the people busy in achieving economic targets, and build mutual trust between the Palestinians and Israelis. None of this has happened, even though much could have been done at little or no cost to the Israeli economy and society.

These observations have recently been confirmed by interviews with about 50 business executives in the West Bank and Gaza, conducted anonymously in Arabic, by local people. Several observations may be noted. While there is an impression that no development has taken place in the Territories during the Israeli occupation, more than 50% of the businesses surveyed were established during the occupation period. However, little credit is given by the interviewees to the Israeli authorities in the establishment of such development; the credit, if any, is given to the Jordanian authorities. Most of these businesses have remained small, somewhat traditional, and concentrated in trade, commerce, or food processing, rather than in industry or manufacturing. No change in the economic structure of the Territories is apparent from these interviews. When asked to explain the limited expansion, the interviewees attributed it to the lack of capital, lack of financial institutions, severe competition by Israeli business, and the restrictive policies of the occupation. They also emphasized the deep uncertainty and grave risk they would take by investing, given the unstable political situation. Probably the most serious observation is that even after 20 years of economic interaction with Israelis, not a single interviewee would choose an Israeli business partner, if a partner were to be selected. The majority would choose a local partner, but some would take a partner from another Arab country, or from Europe, or from an "economically advanced country," but not from Israel. This unanimity suggests a deep feeling of separation from Israel, rather than any sign of integration. It is evident that the Israeli policies, economic and otherwise, have simply failed to win cooperation of the business community in the Occupied Territories, even though the benefits of cooperation would be mutual. Similarly, few of these businesses aim at the Israeli market or expect help from Israel, but they do expect it from Jordan. They want Jordan to improve the infrastructure, reduce the taxes, expand the market, and promote vocational training.

Whenever two economies of unequal economic or technological strength interact, the stronger economy tends to dominate, and the weaker economy becomes more dependent. The domination and the dependence may be aggravated by political and military domination or occupation. This is what we observe at present with an extreme case of domination and dependence nourished by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The results have been negative for both economies even though certain groups and individuals on both sides may have reaped benefits in the short run. The survey indicates two major objectives held by the Palestinians. The first is an end to the occupation so that the residents can become responsible for their own economic development. Failing this, the second is to have a better economic environment so as to make investment and growth feasible and rational. The specific measures recommended by a majority include improvement of the infrastructure and services, simplification of the existing rules and regulations, reduction of taxes, and expansion of the market. A large group also recommended leaving more authority in the hands of the local community and protecting local products to allow these industries to gain some competitive strength.

The measures proposed are realistic and feasible. Their benefits would accrue to both the economy of Israel and that of the Occupied Territories. The benefits, no doubt, would go beyond economics and business and influence the total relations between the two communities. Precedents showing positive economic measures taken by occupying countries are not uncommon in history. The Arabs developed agriculture in occupied Spain. The Americans helped to reconstruct the economies of occupied Germany, Italy, and Japan. Given these examples, the Israelis are capable of positively influencing the economy of the Occupied Territories. By doing so, they would assure themselves a better and more fruitful relationship with the closest and most important neighbor they will ever have.

**THE PALESTINIAN INTIFADAH: A SIGN OF HOPE AND A TIME TO ACT**  
**July 1988**

The Palestinian people have suffered, sometimes by their own doing, but more often by the actions of others. Imperial Britain, ambitious early Arab leaders, Zionism, the Cold War, and military defeats, all have contributed to the dispersal and subjugation of the Palestinians. It is ironic that their subjugation is enforced by Arab States as much as by Israel, or as much by allies and supporters as by the enemy. They have been waiting for forty years, either as refugees or as people under occupation, with hope and the expectation that deliverance will come soon. The deliverance has not come. On the contrary, their dispersal has been expanded and their subjugation has been compounded as the years have gone by. More of them have become refugees. More of them have been killed or maimed. More of their land has been confiscated, and more of their homes have been destroyed.

Yet, their hopes have not been dimmed. Their population size has continued to explode, their educational level has continued to rise, and more of them have joined the club of the wealthy and millionaires, even at a time when most of them have become poor and destitute. As these developments have unfolded, the world has looked on: The United States has continued to pay lip service to the legitimate rights of the Palestinians while it gives full moral and material support to Israel. The Soviet Union has entertained Palestinian leaders and vaguely endorsed their demands, but it has proceeded to mend its relations with Israel. The European community has supported the Palestinians mostly on human rights issues, but it has not once endangered its solidarity with the State of Israel. The Third World countries have given full support to the Palestinians, but their support is mainly rhetorical because they are poor and helpless when it comes to providing substantial and genuine support. The Arab countries, the main source of hope for the Palestinians, have continued to issue proclamations and rhetorical statements, all of which have so far come to naught, most probably because they were intended that way. The three Arab countries that can make a difference in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, are neither united in their approach nor do they see eye to eye with the Palestinians on the desired solution. As a result the position of the Arab countries, individually and collectively, can hardly be a major source of hope or comfort at present or in the future.

Who else might be expected to come to the aid of the Palestinians in their struggle against an established and well-fortified state of Israel? No one. The Palestinians stand alone, and since Israel has long been aware of this, it has continued to ignore them as the major party to the conflict, with the hope that their identity and their claims may be

extinguished forever. The Palestinians have been fighting against these forces and they have every reason not to give up on their claims or identity, both of which are legitimate, strong, and consistent with the historical tendencies of national liberation movements. But the Palestinians have another enemy to cope with; it is the enemy within, namely their own divided leadership, segmented energies, and poorly coordinated efforts, which weaken their struggle.

The Palestinian leadership has been weakened by the conflict within, and by the political and military reversals it has suffered. The leadership has been crippled by its entrapment in historical positions, which have had only negative results. It has also been distracted by engaging in barely relevant world diplomacy, by alliances with movements that can hardly help and may actually hurt its cause, and by the false conviction that time will solve the conflict in their favor. In the meantime, Israel has continued to celebrate its territorial acquisitions and to entrench itself in the Occupied Territories with confidence that the Intifadah will somehow wither away.

The Intifadah has been a spontaneous revival of Palestinian nationalism and a new source of hope and unity for all the Palestinians. The Palestinians of the Intifadah should be proud of their own awakening and of the fact that they have finally become convinced that they alone can serve their cause. It is ironic that many observers, including Palestinians, give credit to Israel for the Intifadah, suggesting that the Israeli democracy and its commitment to individual freedom and tolerance of opposition in the Occupied Territories have served as a model for and encouraged the Intifadah. If so, Israel may have unleashed forces of liberation and freedom, which can hardly be put into shackles again, especially if Israel itself has contributed to the crystallization and emergence of those forces. The genie is out of the bottle and no amount of repression or violation of human rights will be able to put it back in. Even so, it is futile to expect the Israeli government, regardless of the party, to respond positively to the Intifadah and to Palestinian nationalism, unless it is forced to. Whether Likud or Labor, Ashkenazim or Sephardim, the leaders of Israel should not be expected to bring deliverance to the Palestinian people. If none of the foreign or Arab states can be expected to help, if the Israeli government cannot be expected to change its policies unilaterally, and if the Palestinian leadership is too entangled in world affairs and weakened by internal conflict to act, what options remain for the Palestinian people to realize their national aspirations?

The most promising option is self-reliance and cooperation with all progressive forces, including Israelis, to force change in Israeli policies. The Palestinian people have acted on their own behalf and what resulted was the Intifadah, which has drawn world attention and won friends for the Palestinians. It has restored hope and created a new opportunity for a successful struggle for liberation and freedom. By acting solidly on their own behalf and by joining hands with Israeli forces that sympathize with their aspirations, the Palestinians should be able to maximize the benefits of the Intifadah and the opportunities it has created. Several steps may be suggested for this process.

First and foremost, the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and elsewhere should take matters into their own hands, clarify their objectives, shake up the leadership, and bring the Intifadah to its full realization. Repression of the Palestinians in the Diasporas is not any less painful than their repression under occupation. The Intifadah means shaking off the shackles wherever they may be.

Second, full realization of the Intifadah requires some new and dynamic leadership and new strategies in dealing with Israel. It is time to recognize that the violent approach has not worked; why keep it? The rejectionist approach has not worked; why pursue it? Traditional diplomacy has not worked; why practice it? New approaches and new strategies are indispensable and the time is ripe for both. The Palestinians need to face reality and act on it.

Third, beginning with their own house, the Palestinians should recognize that differences of opinion within their own ranks are legitimate and therefore they should refrain from suppressing opposition and inflicting harm on those who disagree. They should also recognize that leadership is a dynamic process and that leaders should be in daily communication with the events and experiences of the people on the front line. This means that local leadership among the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and in other locations should arise and be encouraged and supported. The Palestinians should know by now that the perennial "No" to every proposal can be detrimental, and saying, "Yes" can be beneficial and less costly. A "Yes" to Israel on some basic issues and a challenge to Israel on others to reciprocate may be more effective than holding onto a futile policy of rejectionism. The Palestinians should know that the longer they wait, the more difficult it becomes to "deinstitutionalize" their dispersion and subjugation and compensate for the losses they have suffered. Acting now can save lives, land, and material wellbeing for the present and the future.

Fourth, it is time to recognize that there are positive Israeli forces that may be mobilized to work for a fair settlement of the conflict. The Israelis have often asked, "Where are the Palestinians who seek peace and where are the Palestinians we can talk to?" The Palestinians have rarely faced that challenge or taken advantage of the influence a joint Palestinian-Israeli movement could have on the outcome. The Intifadah may be celebrated as the occasion to take the challenge and reach for formal cooperation with Israeli peace movements. The Intifadah may be celebrated as a new page in the struggle for self-determination, equal rights, and peaceful coexistence with Israel. The Intifadah must now go beyond stone throwing by one party and brutal reaction by the other. It can and should evolve into a massive non-violent movement based on self-reliance and the fact that Palestinian and Israeli leaders must face reality and recognize the mutual rights of their people to coexist peacefully and securely in the land they both claim and cherish as their own. This can be done if people on both sides join hands and make the Intifadah a symbol of peace and cooperation between them.

## **THE PALESTINIANS: REFUGEES OR CITIZENS?**

**August 1988**

The status of the Palestinians has been debated: are they a people with legitimate rights to independence and sovereignty in their home country, or are they refugees waiting to find a home to settle in under the sovereignty of others? In the minds of the Palestinian leaders, they are a national group with legitimate rights and a home to go back to as soon as it is liberated. In the minds of many others, they are refugees who need to be resettled.

About a third of the Palestinians live in Palestine/Israel, either as citizens of Israel or under Israeli military occupation. Another third are citizens of Jordan, though many of them work and live elsewhere. The rest are dispersed in Lebanon, Syria and other Arab countries, and outside the Middle East. More than half of the Palestinians are stateless. Over two million of them live in refugee camps waiting to be repatriated to their home country. It is not clear however, how many of them stay in the camps voluntarily. Given the quality of life in the camps and the limited opportunities it offers, one may suspect that they stay because of circumstances imposed on them.

It has been forty years since the tragedy hit the Palestinian people. Almost two generations have been born in refugee camps, in a state of homelessness and in poverty and destitution. Yet, there are no indications that their conditions are improving. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask: how long will the Palestinians remain as refugees? What are the economic costs and benefits of their refugee status, to them and to their host countries? And, what are the costs and benefits of resettlement on a permanent basis, regardless of the status of their struggle for their national home?

The economic costs to them and to their host countries are reflected in the underutilization of their capacities as an immense reservoir of human capital, and the foregone economic opportunities because of their status. Furthermore, the countries in which they live must bear the costs of administrative and security measures that those countries feel are necessary to impose upon them.

Some observers argue that the Arab host countries do not allow the refugees to settle permanently because they do not want them for economic and political reasons, because these countries do not feel responsible for them, or because they consider Palestine the legitimate place for them to return to. Israeli leaders argue that Israel has resettled hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Arab countries, and that the Arab countries should be able and willing to do the same for the Palestinians. All these arguments notwithstanding, both the Arab countries and Israel have played a role in

preventing resettlement. If, as they suggest, the Palestinians themselves choose to wait until the conflict is resolved, why not give them the option of resettlement as citizens and let them decide? It is evident that the Palestinians who have remained in refugee status all this time derive little benefit from that status. They just survive and suffer deprivation and harassment. It is possible that the host countries benefit from their existence as sources of relatively cheap labor, but they would benefit more from them as full-fledged citizens and full-potential producers. If so, why then do the Palestinians remain refugees?

Probably the most common arguments are political and nationalistic, not economic. It is often argued that the refugee status, especially of those living in camps, is the best assurance that the Palestinian-Israeli problem will remain in focus, pending settlement. Refugee camp life style may also be the best facilitator for the organization and training of fighters in the struggle for Palestine. This argument, however, is neither convincing nor defensible, for two reasons: 1) The Palestinian struggle is too deeply entrenched in the hearts and minds of the Palestinians to have to depend on their refugee status to stay alive. 2) The Palestinians who live outside the camps and those who have acquired citizenship are as nationalistic as those who are refugees or live in camps, and they have more resources to expend on behalf of Palestine and the restoration of the legitimate rights of its people.

The present state of affairs is untenable. Generations of Palestinians are being wasted and they have nothing to show in return. Is it not time, therefore, to seek other options to rescue these people from the tragedy that has embittered them and made homelessness a tolerable way of life? I think it is.

Suppose, for instance, that an agreement has been reached and the Palestinians are able to return to a home somewhere in Palestine. Will they not be better equipped if they return as people experienced in citizenship and the utilization of their capacities than they will be as refugees, dependent on aid and other meager sources of income? But if the outcome of the conflict precludes their returning to their homes in Palestine, the impact will be worse for those who have not resettled. They would have wasted their capacities all these years waiting for an outcome that could never be realized. Similarly, the host countries will have wasted the energies and capacities of the refugee guests, when they could have allowed them to perform at full potential and settle and be secure on a more permanent basis.

History may not repeat itself, but it does offer important lessons. For example, rarely have war-dispersed people been resettled on a large scale in their original homes, or home countries. The refugees who take advantage of the opportunities available to them to resettle are more successful in defending their rights than those who do not. And those countries, which offer resettlement opportunities more freely to their guest refugees, benefit more than countries that do not.

For all these reasons, it is time for the Palestinians and their host countries to reconsider the Palestinians' refugee status and their forced residence in refugee camps. Several steps may be suggested in this regard. First, it would be a major step for all countries involved, including Israel, to show good will by establishing a liberal program of family reunification within the region or outside it, depending largely on the spread of the family in question. Second, it would be most beneficial if the host countries would openly invite their guest refugees, whether in the camps or outside them, to seek and

obtain permanent residence and citizenship if they so desire. Third, it would be most helpful if the United Nations, with the cooperation of interested countries, would re-channel aid to the Palestinian refugees, supplemented by international contributions, for resettlement wherever it may be feasible and acceptable to them.

The struggle of the Palestinian people will remain centered within Palestine/Israel, wherever the Palestinians happen to be. But the struggle for peace and justice will gain more strength from a settled and well-established Palestinian community than from Palestinian refugees who are unsettled, insecure, and unable to utilize their capacities to the fullest.

**THE PALESTINIANS AND THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS<sup>1</sup>**  
**September 1988**  
**Dr. Edy Kaufman**

This November first is Election Day in Israel. While it is now impossible to predict the results, the right-wing Likud and its Orthodox and Nationalist allies seem to have a marginal advantage. This is a depressing forecast for the moderates among us and for all those who look towards the advancement of peace. Yet, the situation is not static and some time still remains until Election Day, when voters, for better or worse, will choose their political leaders. Now is not the time to raise our arms in defeat, but rather to redouble our efforts to influence Israelis who, through their votes, have the potential to change the status quo.

Clearly the present situation is untenable. The Likud-Labor coalition is stalemated and this uneasy "partnership" has resulted in the inability of the government to move in any consistent direction. It has also legitimized the dramatic increase in repressive measure with which the Intifadah has been confronted.

There is no doubt that Israeli moderates and liberals or, as we are sometimes called, doves, have a primary responsibility in striving for change. There is much that needs to be done. Professor Y. Harkabi, in his unique book, Fateful Decisions, devotes a section to the "Treason of the Intellectuals" who in Israel have thus far opted out of the ideological struggle for peace. While espousing liberal values and ideals, they have not been fully committed to the propagation and implementation of their ideas and remain, by and large, in an ivory tower. Their superficial involvement, for example, in attending monthly demonstrations against governmental policies is no more than ritualistic lip service to the "cause" of peace. At times like these, much more commitment is needed. Pragmatic, concerned, and even-handed Israelis should be implored to change their priorities and devote themselves as fully as possible to the advancement of their ideas.

As important as this is, however, it is certainly not the only factor that can alter the results of the elections. Much has been said, for instance, about the role the United States and European countries can play in a more sophisticated and forceful attempt to encourage the parties in the conflict towards the negotiating table.

---

<sup>1</sup> Article written and submitted by Dr. Edy Kaufman. Dr. Kaufman teaches political science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and at the University of California- Los Angeles. He also serves as Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Israel's Civil Rights and Peace Movement Party (TATZ). The views expressed here are those of the author alone.

But an additional potentially very powerful influence is the role of the Palestinians themselves. The recent declarations of King Hussein, disengaging himself from any further responsibility in relation to the Palestinian issue has generated both new challenges and problems for the residents of the Occupied Territories. On one hand, the Intifadah has now achieved acceptance of its singular and independent nature. On the other, priority has now to be invested in finding solutions to immediate questions such as those dealing with documents, schools, salaries, and freedom of movement and so many other aspects of daily life. Still, such dramatic development should not divert their attention from the possible implications of their new role towards the Israelis, who are facing crucial decisions too. According to Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, the uprising in the Occupied Territories has, among other things, generated a situation in which Palestinians have become less fearful. Israelis, on the other hand, have become more so, afraid to travel in the Occupied Territories, and even parts of Jerusalem. There is some truth to Abdul Hadi's contention. Further, as unreasonable as it may seem to some given the power differential between Israel and the Palestinians, it is nonetheless true that many Israelis believe that the Intifadah and its supporters are determined to destroy Israel. The net result of these deep concerns and fears is a leaning towards hardliners by Israeli voters. It is a rule of thumb that even limited violence and fear of violence would influence the electorate towards intransigence and hostility.

The question, which must be addressed, then, is what Palestinians can do to bring about the opposite effect, namely encouraging voters toward moderation and compromise. Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, in Israel, and those in the diaspora at large have a role to play. So does the PLO.

For their part, Palestinians, now more self-confident and less fearful, need to find a proud and self-respectful way of temporarily halting the semi-violent stone throwing, violent Molotov cocktails, and the threatening aspects of the Intifadah. It is time to clearly communicate to Israelis their understanding of political reality and, what is more important, to demonstrate their willingness to struggle towards reconciliation based on mutual recognition and acceptance. In doing so, voters will be moved away from acting upon irrational fears and towards making rational and calm decisions in the elections.

The attitude of Arab citizens inside Israel has profound political importance. The strength of 12 to 14 mandates among the Knesset members can be used to support either those parties marginalized from the political establishment (Communist and Progressive), or parties that will be potential partners with a Labor-led coalition. A few may surprisingly continue to work for the ruling parties. While there are signs of serious soul searching among many Palestinians in Israel, no clear indications of a strategy can be detected, either from them or from their brethren elsewhere in terms of how to influence the election process.

The PLO should be more aware that it bears an enormous responsibility in influencing the outcome of the forthcoming elections. On the negative side, a dramatic act of terror against Israeli non-combatants shortly before the polls will unquestionably move the fluid vote towards the right, extremist parties. Conversely, the PLO could have a positive influence by unequivocally accepting the challenge to negotiate. Foreign minister Shimon Peres, in his advocacy of the concept of an international conference, argues that no Arab state will agree to engage in direct negotiations with Israel. Following the lead advanced by Likud's Prime Minister, Itzhak Shamir, for direct

negotiations, the Labor leader suggests that the only possible partner for such an appeal is Yassir Arafat. In doing so, Peres implicitly admits his own willingness, as well as that of the PLO chairman, to participate in peace negotiations with Israel. An effective strategy for the PLO is to rise to the challenge and endorse Abu Shariff's memo that circulated at the last Algiers Conference, and announce that it is willing to talk about peace with the elected government of Israel.

The persistent statements of King Hussein have encouraged further Palestinian statements. Forthcoming PLO gatherings may be persuaded to issue more specific declarations. However, if explicitly recognizing Israel in its pre-1967 borders along a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories is still considered premature, then it will be best to commit itself to more generalized statements, such as calling for the acceptance of the 1947 Partition Plan and leaving room for further compromise during the negotiation process. In as much as this action could be perceived by an Israeli minority as a step towards moderation, it could unite Likud and Labor in its rejection. The West Bankers have found it difficult to organize themselves within such political positions, given the repressive policies, including arrest of local leaders and their banishment and deportation. Nevertheless, to borrow Dr. Mubarak Awad's interpretation of "empowerment," such constraints cannot silence determined voices for peace, which can still come from prison or underground.

Finally, Palestinian intellectuals and professionals, scattered as they are in many western countries, should intensify the dialogue and encounter with Israelis of all political persuasions and with local Jewish communities. In addition, they should attempt, as much as possible, to visit Israel and to use the media there and elsewhere to call for moderation and compromise.

At a recent talk I attended on the Intifadah, it was evident that interested parties, Palestinians, Israelis, and Americans wanted to "pass the buck." Each suggested that it was the other that needed to do something in order to make a difference. This kind of thinking is ineffective and counterproductive. Rather, each group must look inward and clearly analyze its own responsibilities and courses of action. Israelis, of course, are included and we must not expect outside salvation. Yet, attitudes and actions of our current foes, and hopefully, one day our trustworthy neighbors, have clear-cut effects on the political process. Israelis need to acknowledge that Palestinians, dealing with fragmentation, extremism, and fundamentalism, have a difficult task in making cool, rational, and unified decisions. With this in mind, it is obvious that the work of moderates among them is by no means easy. Yet, I stress that this is the time for renewed efforts, consultation, and intensive dialogues so that peace-loving people in both societies can be more successful in overcoming the formidable obstacles that stand in the way. Insha Allah (God Willing).

**TOXIC WASTE AND MODERN HIGH TECH IMPERIALISM**  
**October 1988**

A ship owned by Germans, loaded with Italian toxic waste, unloaded and reloaded in Nigeria, is now floating in the Atlantic with no destination for its load. Had the ship not been discovered by chance, the load would have been dumped in Nigeria as a cheap way of disposing of toxic waste that Europe, the United States, and the rest of the developed world do not want to dispose of responsibly. The developed countries are aware of the harm that the dumping of toxic waste can inflict on the environment; therefore, laws and regulations have been established to control the disposal of toxic waste generated by industry and manufacturing. Compliance with the rules by industry

and their enforcement by the authorities are costly operations; if borne by the producers of the waste, the costs could put them at a competitive disadvantage in the market, or could at least lower their potential profits. Rational economic actors would certainly seek ways to lower the costs, sustain their profits, and maintain their competitive advantage in the market. Dumping toxic waste in Nigeria, or any other country, for a token fee by lying about the contents of the waste seems to be a cheap way of disposing of it. In this way all of the benefits would have accrued to the producers of the wastes, and all of the costs would have been borne by the Nigerians.

The German ship with the Italian waste is still floating, as is the American raft carrying wastes from New York, which had unsuccessfully tried to dispose of its load in the Caribbean. However these are only two loads of waste. How many such loads have actually been disposed of in these countries is not known, nor is it certain that more loads will not be dumped illegally in the future. The fact is that dumping toxic waste in the Third World by industrialists of the developed countries is not an isolated phenomenon. It is in many ways a continuation of the policy of exploitation of the less educated, less developed, and needier developing countries of the Third World by the more educated, more developed, and richer and thus more powerful countries of the West. Or more accurately, it is exploitation of the weak and needy by certain interest groups from the developed countries. It is done in the name of business, profit and free trade. Presumably the governments of the developed countries are not involved because they do not want to interfere in the market, although they rarely hesitate to come to the rescue of nationals when caught in a crisis abroad.

Dumping toxic waste in Third World countries is not an isolated phenomenon. For example, dumping waste in developing countries is akin to, but probably more dangerous than, pushing cigarette sales overseas. Cigarette advertising in the United States has been curtailed, although subsidies to tobacco growers have not. Advertising cigarettes in other countries by American manufacturers goes unchecked, even though the Surgeon General describes the export of tobacco as “exporting disease, disability and death.” The promotion and export of tobacco has been likened to the 19th century “Opium War” against China waged by Britain through the export of Opium to the Chinese mainland, with full support of the British government.

Likewise, there is little difference between dumping waste and dumping tainted food into the Third World market. Spoiled meat, radioactive milk, tainted potatoes and other products coming from the West, especially after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, have reached developing countries, always under false pretensions. Many of those shipments were rejected but we do not know how many were accepted before the potential harm was discovered. Private companies contracted the shipments, but the governments of the countries of origin did not prevent or interfere in the sale of those products abroad, even though they were prohibited at home. Evidently the government would not interfere unless forced to by international public opinion, regardless of the potential harm to the people of those recipient countries. Exploitation of the less educated, the less powerful, and the needy countries are permissible, as long as it goes undetected.

Dumping waste and shipping tainted foods are not isolated phenomena when seen in a historical perspective. They are not much different, though less drastic, than colonial exploitation in the 15th-18th centuries, enslavement of the blacks and their evacuation

from Africa as human capital, decimation of the Indians through war, disease, and alcohol, or the imposition of foreign rules in Asia and Africa in search of profit and material gain. They are not different either from the expansion of foreign domination in the late 19th century in Africa and Asia, which has been called the “New Imperialism.” Now we are facing what may be called the Modern High Tech Imperialism.

Modern High Tech Imperialism is a new phenomenon in that it does not depend directly on force. It depends on the market, on government acquiescence, and on unawareness and poverty of the exploited. Such transactions, including the dumping of hazardous waste, first appear as market activities, even though not all the necessary information is made available to the receiving countries and much of what is available is falsified. Those countries are perhaps unaware of the dangers inherent in these transactions because of their relatively low levels of education or the relatively high cost of implementing quality controls; and more likely, Third World responses are muted by abject poverty and need. The governments of the sending countries are not totally innocent in these transactions because in many cases the transactions are financed by loans from public or semi-public agencies. Until a scandal is discovered, the authorities in the developed countries act innocently, as if no harm is being done to anybody and least of all to their own citizens.

Modern High Tech Imperialism, however, has another feature in common with earlier forms of imperialism: the imperialist forces have always been able to recruit willing local collaborators in the dominated countries who should bear some of the responsibility. These may be profit seekers, greedy business people, insensitive or corrupt officials, as well as ignorant individuals. These people make it possible for the producers of waste to dump their waste in Third World countries, as their predecessors have helped the imperialist forces to dominate and exploit them for decades and over centuries.

Unfortunately, harm inflicted on the environment in Nigeria, Egypt, or any other Third World country can hardly be confined to that locality. Pollution of the Atlantic cannot be confined to the shores of Africa. Pollution of the atmosphere in Africa cannot be confined to that continent. Nor will pollution of the soil in a country, which receives the toxic waste, be confined to that country. Not only are bodies of water and the atmosphere connected, but the socioeconomic environments are connected as well. Clean ships going to a polluted environment would be vulnerable to toxicity and disease. Trade items exchanged with those countries will be tainted and harmful. And there is also the political pollution that may result from this new form of imperialism. Relations between countries can be polluted as a result of exploitation, which is inherent in trade between countries that are technologically and economically unequal. As long as there are major differences in the levels of technology and economic development between the parties to trade, exploitation is likely to happen unless preventive measures are taken. In other words, we should expect those who have toxic waste to search for the cheapest way of disposal and to exploit it (provided they can get away with it), even if at the expense of those living in the receiving countries. We should also expect those who stand to profit by dumping tainted foods, cigarettes, and drugs in countries where high profits may be expected to go on doing so until stopped by preventive measures. It so happens that the Third World countries are the least protected by such measures and are therefore the most vulnerable.

To appeal to the conscience of those business agents who dump toxic waste, sell tainted food, promote cigarette smoking, or deal drugs is a hopeless way of protecting the vulnerable. To appeal to Western governments to put a stop to this new form of imperialism is also hopeless because these governments are often tacitly contributing to the crime. To appeal to the United Nations as the most influential international body can only be helpful by raising the conscience and awareness of the members. But to be effective, more serious steps must be taken, and they can only be taken by the Third World countries themselves. The governments of those countries must be the guiding force in raising the awareness of their own people to protect the environment and to protect their own health. It is for those governments to establish quality controls on national and international trade. And most of all, it is for those countries and their governments to promote education, science, and technology to enable their citizens to deal with their counterparts from the developed countries in all kinds of transactions. It is for them to reduce the gap between them and the developed countries and thus to make exploitation and the modern high tech imperialism unprofitable and therefore unthinkable.

## **NEEDED: AN ALTERNATIVE ROAD TO PEACE<sup>2</sup>**

**November 1988**

**David Shaham**

The peace process between Israelis and Palestinians has never left the pre-negotiation stage. It is in this stage that partners try to discover each other's positions, dispositions, and starting points. Thus far, the process of negotiation has been entangled in a maze of preconditions. Each side spells out ultimatums related to its own recognition, to the acceptance of its identity, to preliminary steps which should be taken

---

<sup>2</sup> Article written and submitted by David Shaham, the Executive Director of the International Center for Peace in the Middle East, Tel Aviv, Israel.

by the other side, and even to the nature of the final settlement, threatening that if these demands are not met a priori there will be no negotiations.

Symmetry exists between the attitudes of the main parties in the conflict: each negates the other's identity, history, rights, and suffering; and both tend to treat the conflict as a fight between "good" and "evil," attributing total guilt to the other side and total justice to its own. Obviously, these attitudes are not conducive to reaching a solution based on compromise. Instead, the two sides remain mired in issues of procedure, and in other trivialities that divert energy and human resources away from the central issues.

It is time to look for alternative roads. A concentrated effort must be made to bypass these procedural obstacles. As in other cases of conflict, it may be easier to reach a solution than to agree on the procedure of negotiation. It may also be easier to enter into negotiation than to try to solve all the preliminary questions raised in the pre-negotiation stage.

Certainly, the best alternative would be for Israelis and Palestinians to enter into direct negotiations (through their obvious representatives, the Israeli government and the PLO) without any pre-conditions whatsoever: no recognition, no halting of the use of force and violence, no commitment to withdraw or recognize any rights. The feasibility of these objectives would be determined in the process of negotiation itself. Thus, each side would face the challenge and test its readiness to accept compromise in order to reach a peaceful solution.

Unfortunately, this scenario is not realistic. Neither side has been able to convince its own rejectionist front that only direct negotiations can be the vehicle for testing willingness to compromise and for sorting out the possibilities of a peaceful solution to the conflict. The preconditions each side spells out are directed not as much against the enemy as towards its own constituents. These preconditions restrict the flexibility of one's own negotiators rather than inhibit the rival. Therefore, another possible option would be to enter into the negotiation process itself through third parties. No special procedure would need to be defined, no preconditions declared beforehand.

To help this process, it is necessary to apply confidence-building measures, which should not be made public or even announced formally in advance. Such measures could be implemented on a small scale at the beginning, and then expanded as confidence grew. For example, the Palestinians' tacit agreement to suspend a few well-defined hostile activities, such as crossing the northern border, could quietly engender good will and a level of trust that would enhance progress toward peace. The Palestinians need neither make open promises nor announce intentions to end "armed resistance." The mere fact that a tacit promise had been kept over a period of time would increase confidence in future promises. From the Israeli camp, it is doubtful that the present administration would publicly declare intentions to stop the proliferation of settlements in the Occupied Territories. However, an unofficial promise to postpone settling a few areas already slated for settlement could boost confidence in Israel's intentions to ease the conflict.

It may be difficult to negotiate reciprocal confidence-building measures involving the Intifadah. Little or no central control exists over the sporadic acts motivated by individual initiative, which occur in the West Bank and Gaza. And the Israeli Army is under strong pressure from the Israeli body politic to prove that it can pacify these areas. Despite this apparent impasse, there may still be room for movement. The Palestinians

could agree to halt forest and field arson and the use of incendiary bombs. It would help if the Palestinian leadership, which showed itself capable of preventing the use of firearms in the Intifadah, would act strongly to encourage such restraint. The same would be true of the Israeli Army if it could agree to pull out from certain remote areas in return for a promise from the Palestinians, made to a third party, that certain roads would be free of stone-throwing.

These are by no means the only possibilities, but they might serve as feasible examples. Confidence-building measures, by their nature, cannot be negotiated directly. A third party is necessary to assist both sides in the process. Although the superpowers must participate in negotiations toward any comprehensive resolution of the conflict, they may not be the appropriate third parties. Certain European countries could play a crucial role, and so could Egypt.

Enormous energy is now wasted in endless bickering over procedural issues. Any effort, direct or indirect, to funnel this precious energy into better serving the peace process must be welcomed.

---

The Palestinians and the Israelis are now at a crossroads. The Palestine National Council (PNC) will meet on October 31st to decide whether to declare a Palestinian government in exile and how to deal with Israel in light of the Intifadah. Israelis will go to the ballot box on November 1st to decide who shall lead them for the next four years, and how to deal with the Palestinians in that same light. Both Palestinians and Israelis want peace and this time they may be facing a showdown. Leaders have taken positive steps in the last few days from both sides. Foreign Minister Peres has promised to promote an international peace conference if elected, which will include the Palestinians. Khalid Al Hassan of the PLO has called on the Israeli people to vote for peace and not for war. Even Prime Minister Shamir could not ignore these gestures, though he considers them negative rather than positive. However, the most important recent event has been the direct and personal involvement of President Mubarak of Egypt in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. His gesture to bring Hussein and Arafat together is significant as a measure of unification of forces, but it is more significant because it allows Egypt and Mubarak to play the role that only they can play to promote a peaceful settlement. Egypt is the most influential Arab country, given its size, resources, and power, and it has peaceful relations with both parties to the conflict, as well as very friendly relations with the United States. It is hoped that both the Israelis and the Palestinians will welcome Mubarak in this role and that he will continue to use his good offices to make peace and security in the Middle East a reality for all concerned.

**ISRAEL'S ELECTION RESULTS AND THE SILVER LINING**  
**December 1988**

The Palestinians are now celebrating their newly declared independence, even though the real independence may still be in the future. The results of the Israeli election can only seem as another obstacle in the way of realizing that independence. Yet, if the Palestinians look carefully at the results, they should be able to see a silver lining and an invaluable opportunity to move toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

The election results left Israel without a majority party and with the necessity of forming a coalition government. The only coalition of any two single parties can be between Labor and Likud, two parties that agree on little other than the ambition of their respective leaders to stay in power. Any other coalition must include a splinter of parties,

which have little in common except perhaps their fear, and feeling of enmity toward the Palestinians. This vote splintering means that whatever coalition is formed will be based on too many compromises. It will also have to face at least two major sources of opposition: internal conflict within the coalition and external opposition from the other major party, which is a constant contender for power and the formation of government. In other words, any such coalition government is bound to expend much of its energy in trying to sustain its position of power, let alone cope with the Arab Israeli conflict, control the Intifadah, manage the weak economy, protect Israel's international image, and try to arrest the widening split between fundamentalist and secular Jews within and outside Israel.

This fragmentation of Israel's resources will be reflected in a weak government that will find it difficult to take initiative or make firm decisions. Such a government should be anxious to hold on to any thread of hope of staying in power and reducing the impact of the conflict on the Israeli people and the economy. This is where one can see the silver lining.

The PLO must see this opportunity and act on it expeditiously to turn the presumed catastrophic election results into an opportunity for the Palestinian people to enhance their independence and resolve the conflict with Israel peacefully.

In the past, the Palestinians have been charged with rejectionism, seeing opportunities only too late to act on them, and of always reacting to moves by others rather than taking the initiative and acting on their own. While some of these charges may be true, it is also true that the Palestinians have been put in a position of vulnerability in terms of territory, resources, and dependency on others inside and outside the region. It has been difficult for them to take initiative. On the contrary, they have been forced to react to the actions of others, especially Israel, the Arab countries, and the United States. Their pattern of reactive behavior has borne bitter fruit.

The Intifadah may have changed all that. The Intifadah has been an action rather than a reaction, which has already helped to change the framework of the conflict. The Declaration of Independence by the Palestine National Council has been another action, rather than a reaction, and it may also help to change the framework more in favor of a peaceful settlement. It is now for the PLO to take another action that could put the divided Israeli political groups on the defensive and force them to react to the Palestinian action in a way that is favorable to the Palestinians themselves. The Palestinians must not miss this opportunity.

The Palestine National Council has already taken a few steps in that direction by accepting Resolutions 242 and 338, which imply recognition of the right of Israel to exist in peace and security in the region. But the PNC or the PLO would also do well to:

1. Explicitly declare to the world their conviction that the only viable solution to the Palestinian Israeli conflict is a two-state solution.

2. Explicitly declare to the world that they recognize the right of Israel to exist in peace and harmony side by side with their own State of Palestine.

3. Directly challenge the Israeli government to meet with them somewhere in the Middle East, in Jerusalem, Cairo, or Amman, and negotiate an end to the differences that stand in the way of peace, including national boundaries, security, settlement of the refugees, confiscated or abandoned properties, and the signing of a comprehensive peace treaty.

4. Invite the United Nations, the Arab League, and the World Jewish Congress to nominate representatives to act as observers at the negotiations.

5. Challenge Israel to suspend its repressive military actions against the Palestinians in return for a Palestinian moratorium on all acts of violence inside and outside Palestine for the duration of the negotiations.

The Israeli political parties must react to such initiative, whether they are in government or not. What reactions can we expect? The forces on the left would no doubt welcome this opportunity to attack the problem head on. They would welcome the olive branch extended to them by the "enemy." Labor, as a major "liberal" party, will have no option but to go along with the new proposals and abandon the international conference gimmick they have toyed with fruitlessly for many years. Likud, in contrast, will find itself on the spot by having to face the challenge of peace and direct negotiations, which they have been advertising as their preferred approach for a long time. If they fail to react positively they will lose their credibility and their argument that security is their main objective. The small splinter parties will have little to lose and much to gain by going along with the proposed steps, since their political objectives would have a better chance of being fulfilled in a state of peace than one of war. Interest groups concerned with the economy and quality of life would be elated since more resources could then be devoted to re-strengthening the economy and to reversing the decline in the standard of living. The extremists on the right who advocate annexation of territory and transfer of population would be totally isolated and their cause would be eternally put to rest. Finally, the United States, the arch and blind supporter of Israel, will have little excuse not to recognize the State of Palestine and the Palestinian right to sovereignty and independence.

The Arab countries will have no choice but to go along with the Palestinian peace proposals, and some of them may be gratified since solution of the Palestinian Israeli conflict will allow them to redirect some of their resources to their own causes and to improve relations with countries that now blindly support Israel, if they see fit to do so. World Jewry, who want security for, in support of the Palestinian peace initiative, but who also have sympathy for the Palestinian people, would probably join the Arab countries. The United Nations would certainly welcome this initiative since a peaceful settlement of the conflict has always been its main objective, especially since the initiative will serve to satisfy the aspirations of both peoples, the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine, as was intended by the United Nations in all its efforts.

The Arabs and the Jews have been in conflict for almost a century. The Israelis the Palestinians have been at war for forty years. The pattern has always been for the Palestinians to only react to initiatives by others. Now the Palestinians can act and let others react. The Israelis are divided among themselves and between the cracks one can see the silver lining. It is one more chance for the Palestinians to take the initiative. Let us hope that they take it.

Secretary of State Schultz's denial of Yasser Arafat's request to visit the United States in order to address the United Nations General Assembly is most regrettable. This decision effectively precludes the United States from positively influencing the Middle East peace process, which became possible with the Palestine National Council's move toward reconciliation with Israel.

The denial is politically motivated. US security is not at risk. The presence of Arafat in the United States is not itself a threat to the United States or to its citizens. Nor is the principle of fighting terrorism a valid reason since Arafat was coming to speak of peace.

More importantly, the denial of Arafat's visa is unfortunate because it is contrary to US interests. It runs against the American ideals of free speech and exchange of ideas and effectively deprives the United States and the United Nations the opportunity to hear Arafat commit himself and the Palestinian people to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Middle East.

Most grave, as far as the United States is concerned, is that by showing itself to be a selfless, blind supporter of Israel, the US has forfeited its right to act as a mediator between the Palestinians and Israelis.

We hope that the Palestinians will see this as only a minor setback, and will continue to spread the message that they seek to live in their own state of Palestine, side by side with Israel, with peace and security for both.

## **THE MIDDLE EAST WATER CRISIS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION<sup>3</sup>**

**January 1989**

**Joyce Starr**

By the year 2000, it is highly likely that water will emerge as a more precious commodity than oil. The dimensions of the looming global water crisis are staggering. According to the World Bank's most conservative estimates, the world will require \$180

---

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Starr is a Senior Associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C.

billion in new investments by 1990 to meet the decade's requirements. Yet, like an animal blinded by a car's headlights, we find ourselves immobilized before the dangers that lay ahead.

Action must be taken now to avert the all too familiar cycle of bureaucratic inertia followed by crisis reaction, the accompanying stopgap solutions, and the costly adjustments to political and economic shocks. The Global 2000 report points out that between 1970 and 2000, population growth alone will double the need for water in nearly half the world.

Failure to adequately manage water supply and demand could have devastating consequences for world stability and order, and for US interests. Indeed, the US government has recently targeted 10 locations worldwide where state-to-state conflict would be most likely to occur over scarce and inadequate water resources. More than half are in the Middle East region, including: Israel and Syria; Syria and Turkey; Iraq and Syria; Israel and Jordan; Jordan and Syria; Egypt and Ethiopia.

The critical relationship between water management and peace cannot be ignored. For example, we know today that unless remedial measures are adopted, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, and Jordan will have depleted virtually all of their renewable sources of fresh water by 1995.

It is also clear that one of the first issues on the agenda of future peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will be the question of water. Israel is today heavily dependent on an aquifer that lies beneath the mountains of the West Bank, while Jewish settlements in both the West Bank and Gaza are presently drawing almost 30 percent more water than their Arab neighbors. Moreover, the sewage problem in Gaza has been described by Israeli experts as a "time bomb waiting to explode."

The pending crisis calls for a more integrated approach to the global water crisis by the leading Western nations. Putting the international water crisis on the US foreign policy agenda is the first crucial step in this process. For at this juncture, no country or international agency is providing the necessary leadership in developing a coordinated and comprehensive Western response to the water emergency.

The US Congress, the incoming Administration, and the policy community must be educated on the dire situation ahead -- before the US once more finds itself facing a reality that it is powerless to affect.

The US government, and other governments and international agencies can most effectively respond to the crisis by concentrating on four areas:

1) The Development of Advanced Water Technologies

Although technology is not a panacea for the region's problems, technology can reduce the strain on existing water supplies. More wide scale use of desalination, for example, could supplement current supplies. While the capital investment and energy expenses now associated with desalination make it prohibitive for many Middle Eastern countries today, improvements in the process -- especially those related to reduced energy costs-- would heighten its attractiveness in the future.

Attention should also be given to protecting and extending existing resources. Advanced water-reuse technologies would recycle precious supplies. Although recycled water is already employed in agriculture, future efforts could concentrate on selected domestic and industrial uses.

Improved pollution control and water treatment processes will also help safeguard water quality. Contamination of surface and ground water supplies from agricultural, municipal and industrial sources is a growing problem in many Middle Eastern countries. Procedures must be developed both to treat already contaminated water and to neutralize pollutants before they damage supplies. Special emphasis should be given to utilizing the region's abundant solar energy in wastewater treatment processes.

#### 2) Aid to Middle East countries to Adopt More Efficient Resource Management and Conservation Strategies

Experts from the Middle East and US government alike point out that the region's water problems stem as much from improperly used resources as from increased demand. To varying degrees, the countries examined here suffer from poorly maintained utilities, improperly designed water projects, and inadequately trained staffs for water facilities. These three conditions are interrelated, and each compounds the effects of the others, thereby exacerbating the strain placed on scarce supplies.

Particularly urgent is the inadequacy of personnel operating and maintaining water infrastructures. Lack of incentive to keep standards high, low salary levels, and an absence of encouragement for professional responsibility all contribute to continuing personnel difficulties. In addition, physical problems in water systems add to infrastructure difficulties. For example, enormous amounts of water are lost in urban areas because of leaks in distribution systems and contamination by untreated or partially treated sewage. Many industrial facilities use water intensive technologies that are inappropriate for the region.

Poor initial planning on project designs imposes even greater burdens. This is most apparent in the case of large-scale irrigation schemes. In Iraq, improperly planned and executed irrigation projects have led to the abandonment of large tracts of land in the lower Mesopotamian plain. In Egypt, faulty drainage systems have saturated agricultural land, resulting in a higher water table, increased salinity, and numerous health problems.

Training programs to familiarize specialists from the Middle East region in advanced water management and conservation techniques would be of great help.

#### 3) Coordination between Foreign Specialists Involved with Water Development Issues with their Counterparts in the Middle East.

There is a need to improve coordination and communication among foreign specialists and with their counterparts. In part, this is necessary because of the wide variety of activities undertaken and the sheer number of organizations involved. For example, experts within the US government acknowledge their inability to follow the work of counterparts in other agencies -- primarily a reflection of inadequate staff levels.

A centralized process for policy coordination, program planning, and data collection should be established for Middle East water projects. Experts could then easily draw upon past efforts, while keeping their counterparts throughout the government informed of ongoing work or anticipated programs.

#### 4) Long-Term Research and Planning to Identify Emerging Issues and to Offer Possible Policy Responses.

The US government has traditionally lacked the means or capability to undertake long-term studies on water resource trends in the international arena. Even when a specific division within a major agency tracks evolving water issues, the focus is rarely

anticipatory. Budgetary and manpower constraints result in a reactive approach, with little possibility for anticipating or preventing a crisis certain to emerge.

A process in which long-term assessments can be conducted and future policy initiatives outlined is sorely needed. For example, analysis of the viability of proposed programs like the Turkish peace pipeline or the Maqarin/Unity Dam in Jordan would be invaluable to avoid future crisis.

In summary, small practical steps taken today can avert crises and the need for massive aid in the future.

The PLO has finally gratified the United States government enough to be rewarded with some form of dialogue between them; however, there were no promises, no commitments, and no explicit plan of action by the US that holds any real hope of an early settlement favorable to the Palestinians. The PLO's top echelon were engaged in this drama for weeks: they traveled to Algiers, to Stockholm, and to Geneva; they issued statements and declarations, and they made clarifications and commitments; they even recited verbatim a text dictated by US officials in order to qualify for that dialogue. Finally US Secretary of State gave the nod, though grudgingly, allowing them to proceed to the harder test of taming the Intifadah as another step toward a settlement.

It is long overdue for the PLO to recognize the right of a state of Israel to exist side by side with a state of Palestine. It is long overdue to renounce violence and seek a peaceful settlement through diplomacy and direct negotiations. It is also long overdue to recognize the real opponent and direct all these efforts toward a settlement with that opponent. The US is not the opponent, Israel is. The energy expended in appeasing the US government may make a difference, but only if they can be at least indirectly aimed at Israel. Otherwise this energy may be wasted energies. So far it is unclear that the payoff has been positive.

It is in fact possible to argue that these "misdirected" energies, declarations, and commitments by the PLO have served Israel, especially the hardliners and conservatives in the Israeli polity. No sooner had the US agreed to talk with the PLO, an Israeli government was formed between the two major parties, Labor and Likud, or between the so-called liberals and the conservatives. They united on the basis of terms that hardly indicate any flexibility on behalf of Israel. They agreed that the government of Israel will "never negotiate with the PLO," that five to eight new settlements will be built in the Occupied Territories next year, that the Labor leader Shimon Perez will give up the foreign ministry and with it his commitment to an international conference, and that Yitzhak Rabin will continue to be the "beat, break, and kill" defense minister. Yitzhak Shamir remains prime minister, and Moshe Arens, a conservative and opponent of the international peace conference becomes foreign minister. If this government lasts for four years, we can expect little progress toward peace in the next four years, the possibility of a dialogue between the PLO and the US notwithstanding.

However, the PLO, as Government of the State of Palestine, can still set the pace for the future of the Occupied Territories. It can take the initiative by unilaterally seeking a peaceful settlement with Israel through direct recognition of the State of Israel, a challenge to direct negotiations between representatives of the two states, Israel and Palestine, and by commitment to the principles of statehood and international laws and procedures. Israel then will have compelling reasons to negotiate.

## **SECULARISM: A MISSING FORCE IN MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS**

### **February 1989**

The Middle East has been known for its religions, the strong religious belief of the people, and confessionalism or theocratic character of the states in the region. However, it is little admitted or recognized that confessionalism and state theocracy have been obstacles in the way of economic development, stability, and modernism. To pretend that confessionalism, as opposed to state secularism or separation of church from the state, can be reconciled with the objectives and expectations of the people in the Middle East region has no doubt been self-deceiving. Confessionalism has never been easy to reconcile with strong nationalism, national unity, a unified market, political stability, efficient or rapid economic development, or peace and security, which are the main objectives of the Middle East countries. Observations of the last few decades suggest that most of these objectives remain unfulfilled. It is true that other obstacles have stood in the way, but confessionalism cannot be ruled out as one of the major obstacles to the realization of these objectives.

Confessionalism at the level of the community or the nation means applying one's religious beliefs to all aspects of society and failure to separate "church from state." In this sense confessionalism dictates separatism between one religious group and another within the same country or nation. It also infringes on the ability of the segmented society to fulfill goals that require national unity and cooperation. Even a cursory look at

the prevailing conditions in the Middle East should be sufficient to illustrate the harm that confessionalism has inflicted on groups and nations of the region.

National unity demands cooperation of all the citizens in the name of the nation and willingness to sacrifice personal goals for collective ones. The adoption and enforcement of a state religion have tended to obstruct the development of a strong nationalist and unified state. Protecting a minority religion in a confessional state has rarely succeeded in reconciling nationalism with confessionalism. Egypt, among the Middle Eastern states, has probably been the most successful but still not successful enough to remove conflict between its different religious communities, the Christian Coptic minority and the Muslim majority, and thereby solidify national sentiments. In fact, solidarity is not evident within the Muslim community itself, given the various sections, interpretations, and degrees of fundamentalism within Islam in Egypt and elsewhere.

Worse situations exist in Sudan, Lebanon, Iran, and Israel. The Sudan has lost hundreds of thousands of people killed by civil war and starvation, and is now threatened with partition between north and south because of confessionalism. The adoption of Islam as state religion and the Shari'a law as state law by the North is in contradiction with the rights of citizens to freedom of belief and expression, rights expected by the Christian minority in the South. Lebanon has been shattered: Christians fight Christians, Muslims fight Muslims, and factions within each denomination or sect fight each other. Few people retain hope that Lebanon can be put together again, at least in part because of the predominance of confessionalism in the life of the Lebanese. Iran has just concluded a war that had resulted from the revived confessionalism and the fundamentalism of its leaders.

Israel at one time seemed immune to factionalism within the Jewish community, but it never was immune to the conflict implicit in the confessionalism of Arabs and Jews. Unity within the Jewish community has now been shattered: the attempt to promote freedom of religion and apply secularism to the affairs of state has been undermined by increasing Orthodoxy and fundamentalism among the Jews within and outside the country. It is possible in all these cases to blame the schism on political aspirations, foreign intervention, poverty and inequality of income and wealth distribution. Yet, even when all these factors have been accounted for, confessionalism as a holistic concept of faith that applies to all aspects of life stands out as the most serious obstacle to nationalism, national unity, and solidarity in the region.

The resulting political instability and disunity have left their impact on the societies, economies, international relations, and futures of the individual countries in the Middle East, as well as on the region as a whole. Social relations have been undermined because of discrimination against or in favor of religious minorities. Claims to the contrary notwithstanding, it is easy to show that religious minorities enjoy certain benefits in some countries and costs in others, whether in holding public office, representation in government, or access to domestic and international economic opportunities.

Social disunity has been accompanied by market and economic disunity, which have negatively affected the process of economic development within the individual countries and in the region at large. The inequality of development in Lebanon since independence can easily be identified with religious divisions within the country. The

inequality of development between Lebanon and other Arab countries has often been associated with differences in religious affiliation.

Confessionalism and adoption of a state religion have also been costly in countries, which are homogeneous in belief but exclusive toward other religions. The Arabian Peninsula countries, which had excluded non-Muslims for many years, may have delayed their own development because of their dependence on the expertise and human capital of non-Muslim outsiders. Even today, such exclusion is practiced widely though in a modified form.

Another serious negative effect of confessionalism may be observed in the contradiction, which arises from attempts to advance science, technology, and economic development. Religious and religiously oriented systems of education tend to be traditional, conformist, and little conducive to creativity and independent thinking. The Shari'a rules on finance, investment, inheritance, and public trusts were most helpful when all parties with whom Muslims transacted behaved according to those same rules and principles.

However times have changed, expectations have changed, and business parties have changed. Most of these changes have been in favor of secularism or the separation of religion from the affairs of state and the economy. Yet the Middle East countries continue to practice confessionalism in an old-fashioned way. It is evident, also, that the secular countries, whether in the East or the West, have been more successful in advancing science and technology and developing their economies than the confessional countries have been; the gap between the two seems to be growing rather than contracting. Secular countries have produced many more serious thinkers, inventors, and innovators than non-secular countries. They have elevated the quality of life for their people far above the levels achieved by the confessional countries. It is ironic that confessional countries, which enjoy relatively high standards of living, have achieved those standards by depending on knowledge, capital, and expertise imported from secular countries.

Probably the most serious economic cost of confessionalism is the loss of efficiency in the use of resources for economic development. This loss may be observed in at least three different areas: wasteful expenditure on confessionally induced wars, civil or otherwise; destruction of human and material capital because of conflict; and exclusion of or discrimination against certain groups from efficient use of their abilities in the economy. Women, for example, who form more than half of the population and potential labor force in many of these countries, have faced serious handicaps in realizing their potential. They have been excluded or discriminated against in the name of religion and tradition, which reinforce each other. The cost to the national economy because of this exclusion has not been measured but it is undoubtedly immense.

These observations and arguments strongly suggest the need for the countries of the Middle East to reconsider their commitment to confessionalism in light of their own objectives and expectations. Reconsideration of confessionalism and emphasis on secularism at the national and community levels do not mean a compromise of religion or faith. On the contrary, reassessment may lead to a deeper religious commitment by the individual as a personal experience and by free choice. Such renewed commitment would be a relationship between the individual and the deity. All other matters, however, would then be conducted according to secular rules, reason, efficiency, and in

cooperation with others in the nation, regardless of religious faith or denomination. Both theory and history suggest that secularism may be an indispensable bridge in the affairs of the Middle East. Secularism would eliminate or at least reduce most of the sources of internal and intraregional conflict, smooth the way for better relations with countries outside the region, and facilitate more efficient use of the human and material resources the countries of the Middle East have at their disposal.

**A STATE OF PALESTINE CAN BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE**  
**March 1989**

The declaration of an independent State of Palestine has posed anew the question of economic viability of such a state. Until now few have considered the economic question seriously. Assertions and conclusions regarding the economic viability of a state of Palestine have, nevertheless, been fed to the media with great conviction, although with little evidence or documentation. The comments have usually come from two different groups: one group of commentators has tended to defer the economic question altogether, proclaiming the issue of Palestine as primarily political. The implication of this argument is that once the political problem has been solved, the economic issue will be resolved too. The other group, though agreeing on the importance of the political dimension, has not hesitated to conclude that an independent State of Palestine in the Occupied Territories would not be economically viable. Strangely enough this group has sometimes included Palestinian Arabs who dismiss the economic viability question as irrelevant in order to concentrate their emphasis on the political issues.

While these two groups have overshadowed the few serious attempts to study the economic prospects of a Palestinian State economy, evidently neither of them has done any study or analysis of the economy of the projected state. Few commentators have

bothered to explain what they mean by economic viability. They have rarely considered the political terms on which the state would be based. Nor have they assessed the resources that would be available for the state when it comes into political being. On the contrary, they seem to have assumed, implicitly or explicitly, that the land area would be too small, the water resources too scarce, the mineral and other natural endowments too limited, the people desperately capital poor, and the state too underdeveloped to be viable.

Though these observations may be true, the conclusion of non-viability does not follow. Indeed, a look at the history of the Occupied Territories would lead to a conclusion of relative viability. An analysis of the resources and the prospects would also suggest relative viability. A comparison of the prospective Palestinian economy with other small, poorly endowed economies within and outside the Middle East region would suggest relative viability. Finally, an exploration with the people and their apparent determination and training would suggest relative viability.

Economic viability may have different meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. In this context it means the ability of the economy to achieve and sustain a level of living for the citizens comparable to the level of living in other countries in the region with similar resources. This means that the economy must achieve a rate of growth adequate to support the rise in population as well as to improve the living standard. The basic resources a viable economy needs are land, water, capital, a favorable climate, and trained and dedicated people. The land area of the Occupied Territories, as in the pre-1967 war period, should be adequate to accommodate five million people, according to standards acceptable in some parts of Europe and other regions of the world. The habitation will have to be mostly non-agricultural, especially because of the water limitation. The known water resources, nevertheless, would support no less than five million people if managed carefully. However, the limitation on agriculture would be felt in the limited irrigation possibilities, but that should not be an unusual handicap. Most developed countries tend to shift their populations to the urban areas, and to non-agricultural occupations. It is true that the State of Palestine is not well endowed with minerals and other raw materials, but the supply of such commodities is usually accessible in the international market and can be acquired to support industry and manufacturing, as many small and large countries have usually done.

The economic viability of the State of Palestine is based on certain assumptions: that the State will be at peace with its neighbors; that it will occupy the area of Palestine occupied by Jordan between 1948 and 1967; that it will have full control over the water and mineral resources within its territories; that the population of the State will increase beyond the present population of the Occupied Territories because of the resettlement of refugees; and, finally, that Gaza and the West Bank will be joined by a demilitarized corridor which will permit free and easy mobility between the two areas.

The economy of the Occupied Territories has in the past achieved growth rates similar to those of its neighboring countries, Jordan and Israel, which had occupied it in turn during the last forty years. The economy grew in spite of the occupation, and the available evidence indicates that both occupations have been burdens on the domestic economy. In fact, the economy might have grown even faster had it been free of occupation. It is true that the Occupied Territories have received aid from the United Nations and some foreign countries, but such aid was too modest to account for the

measured growth or to compensate for the restrictions on economic expansion imposed by occupation.

The scarcity of capital is real but it has been greatly exaggerated. Economic development and growth are on-going processes. The demand for capital comes in stages so that much of the capital can be generated gradually by the economy itself. In fact very few countries have depended primarily on foreign capital. The major share of development capital usually comes from domestic sources. The State of Palestine will find itself in an especially difficult position because it has to cope with major demands of reconstruction and resettlement of refugees. However, both of these responsibilities usually attract international support to overcome the critical stages in the process of reconstruction and resettlement. For example, UN aid to the refugees would be rechanneled to the State of Palestine for refugee resettlement. Aid presently extended to the Palestinians by friendly countries could no doubt be redirected to the State of Palestine. Aid from the Arab countries may be expected to increase dramatically from its present levels because peace in the Middle East would be an asset to them as well. Another source of capital would be the payment of reparations by the State of Israel for any property not retrieved in the settlement agreement. However, a major source of capital should be the Palestinians themselves. Those who remain outside the State should be important sources of aid, while those who would be residents should be a source of saving and investment in the economy. Finally, given that a state of peace would prevail, a large cut in the military budget of the State would become feasible and mandatory. The State of Palestine will not be a military power; in fact one could hope that it will have no more than a token military force as a symbol of sovereignty. The savings on the military budget should be a boon to the rest of the economy.

Given these arguments for the predicted viability, it remains to emphasize that the major factor will be the Palestinians themselves. As human capital, as entrepreneurs, and as decision makers, the Palestinians have played major roles in promoting the prosperity of other nations in the Middle East. They have also been able to sustain their own economy even under the yoke of occupation. In a state of freedom and independence, they should be able to perform even better than they have done so far. As Ariel Sharon has suggested, with some regional and international cooperation, the Gaza Strip can be turned into one highly developed industrial zone, and so can most of the West Bank.

Visions aside, problems will still face the new State, such as the small size of the domestic market and stiff competition on the international market. These, however, are problems that face large and small countries and must be dealt with in the process of policymaking and management. Trade agreements, customs unions, and other bilateral and multilateral arrangements would no doubt be concluded with other nations whenever possible and beneficial to the parties concerned. It is also quite likely that after a period of peace and stability the State of Palestine will conclude a sort of economic alliance with its neighbors to overcome the difficulties of small size and external competition. In fact, Yasser Arafat has proposed an economic union between Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Palestine. However, even if no such agreements were to be concluded, the State of Palestine should not be at a unique disadvantage: neither Jordan nor Israel has a large enough domestic market to enjoy economies of scale in manufacturing and industry. Neither of them has enough natural endowments to be independent and self-sufficient. The State of Palestine would have many of the same advantages and disadvantages of

these states. If those states could make it to economic viability it is most likely that the State of Palestine will too.

**INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
TIME FOR SELF EVALUATION  
April 1989**

People in the Middle East are beginning to demand their rights as individuals and as human beings. The movement for rights is now only a breeze, but it cannot be long before it blows as a strong wind to bring a full measure of freedom and a guarantee of human rights to the Middle East countries. This must be welcomed. Hopefully, such transformation can be brought about peacefully.

Several years ago President Mubarak of Egypt took a major step by inviting opposition parties to sit in Parliament, an action that helped to defuse tension and restore a measure of freedom of expression to the country. Since then various Egyptian groups have tried to secure freedom and equality for themselves. The latest such endeavor has been the challenge to the President of Ein Shams University by female students insisting on their right to choose their school attire; they have gone to court against the president's ruling that women could not wear the veil to school. A few years back a challenge to the president of a university would have probably been unthinkable. It certainly would have been unthinkable also for the challenge to be in a court of law, rather than in the streets.

Algeria has just taken a similar step by adopting a multiparty system. Extremist groups that had planned to boycott the new constitution have finally decided to form parties and go on the bandwagon toward a new democracy. The potential for violent conflict may thus have been defused and hope increased that the rule of law will prevail. But the struggle for individual and human rights has just started. Algerian women have been among the first groups to take advantage of the newly promised freedoms and rights. They have marched peacefully, demanding more equality with men and the

abolition of laws restricting their personal status, especially those allowing polygamy and unilateral divorce rights favoring men.

The adoption of a constitution and the passage of laws guaranteeing freedom and human rights are first steps toward the realization of those rights. However, it takes resources and a mechanism of enforcement to make sure that provisions of the law are realized. Unfortunately, passage of the law and its enforcement has not always gone hand in hand in the Middle East. This has been noted candidly by an Arab observer of the status of human rights in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and in other Arab countries. The constitution of the UAE guarantees most of the human rights advocated in the International Declaration of Human Rights. But the implementation falls short of the expectations, and certain provisions are missing, especially those guaranteeing rights of representation and participation in governance. The UAE constitution is also short on protection of women's rights to equality and individual freedom. The same shortcomings apply in all the Arab countries and even more conspicuously in Iran.

Yet, it is quite significant that these shortcomings and omissions are being discussed publicly in the UAE, which certainly is not true in most of the other countries of the region. The extreme example of indifference to or suppression of any discussion of individual freedom and human rights is Iran. Political opposition is not permitted; participation in governance for those who do not follow the regime is virtually nonexistent, and women have been reduced to a status frowned upon even in medieval society. But Iran is not the only violator of these basic rights. Iraq has been accused of torturing children of political opponents to force them to disclose information or to force their parents to confess; as would be expected, the charge has been denied by the Iraqi authorities. The people of Sudan have been waging a civil war that has inflicted starvation and death on hundreds of thousands of children and other innocent people, paying no attention to the basic rights of survival of noncombatants and helpless citizens. There are charges that opponents of the regimes in Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iran sometimes vanish or at least temporarily disappear, regardless of their constitutional rights to protection against abuse of their freedoms and human rights. Israel has been known to torture Palestinians, close their schools, demolish their shelters as collective punishment, and arrest and deport them, all without trial, regardless of their basic rights and freedoms. Palestinians have also deprived other Palestinians of their basic rights by lynching, stabbing, burning their homes, or threatening them in the name of patriotism, without trial or jury.

It should be noted, however, that there is a difference between Israel and other countries in the region. In Israel, opponents of rights violation have been outspoken and publicly critical of their own government. They have publicly condemned those policies and have come to the defense of the Palestinian victims. No such internal opposition or public criticism of a violating government has been evident in any of the Arab countries or in Iran. It seems that self-evaluation and constructive self-criticism have yet to be accepted as integral parts of the system of democratization in these countries. If internal criticism and public condemnation of the violation of guaranteed rights are themselves not tolerated, how can the basic rights be restored and guaranteed, and how can a constitution that provides for those rights be respected and venerated?

The Middle East countries are trying hard to modernize their societies, develop their economies, and raise their living standards to those of the developed countries. To

do so, it is essential that the individual be able to utilize his or her potential to the full within the framework of the law. In order to realize such potential, the individual must be free, secure in that freedom, and protected against abuse of the basic rights advocated by the International Declaration of Human Rights. Both the individual and society will suffer if these freedoms are not guaranteed and the individual's potential is not realized. The Middle East people have suffered, both as individuals and as nations because of restrictions on their individual freedom and violations of their human rights.

All is not lost. The demand for human rights may yet develop into a strong wind that will sweep away the violations and bring in the freedoms the people are yearning for. The people themselves can and must help to make that transformation a reality. Two groups in particular have a responsibility in this regard: the enlightened and sensitive residents of the Middle East countries, and the enlightened and sensitive emigrants who live in freedom and who enjoy the fruits of guaranteed human rights.

The residents of the Middle East countries see the violations first hand. They are best qualified to question those violations and raise their voice publicly against them. They are the people who can reach the media and lead peaceful marches. They are the people who can persuade the public and the authorities that individual freedom and guaranteed human rights benefit society as much as they do the individual. The emigrants have an equally important responsibility. They are best qualified to illustrate the positive effects of individual freedom and human rights. They are the people who can look at their country of origin with compassion and still be constructively critical. And they are the people who can make candid and critical observations without fear of suppression or retribution.

Exposition and criticism of the lack of individual freedom and respect for human rights in the Middle East have usually come from foreign media, international agencies, and unfriendly governments. Such criticism has often been perceived as an attack on the presumed violators, and rarely as a constructive criticism or a helpful recommendation for restoring rights or preventing violation. Therefore, criticism has usually been met with resistance and counter-criticism as prejudicial and antagonistic, and therefore has not been helpful.

In contrast, self-evaluation and constructive criticism by nationals of the Middle East countries and by their emigrant compatriots seem strategically important in promoting individual freedom and human rights. The time is ripe for these two groups to take the lead and help to transform the breeze into a liberating wind on behalf of individual freedom and human rights in all countries of the Middle East.

## UNSUNG HEROES IN MIDDLE EAST SOCIETY

May 1989

History usually records great deeds or deeds of great people. Greatness in each case is seen through the eyes of those in power. Recorded history thus ends up as the history of only some of the greats, those associated with power. Yet there are other greats in society who rarely occupy a place in the chronicles of history. They are rarely recognized for their achievements, and they are barely noticed in the study of society and civilization. These are people who have little political or material power, even though they do share in the making of history.

The history of the modern Middle East is replete with unsung heroes who rarely enter into the chronicles of history. Their deeds are everyday affairs that keep society going. One meets these heroes in every day life, in the street, at work, or at home. Five such heroes are a farmer, a workingwoman, a schoolteacher, a small businessman, and a self-made literate. Each of them radiates heroism without knowing it.

Yousif, the farmer, lives on the Nile. His farmland is a little over one *feddan* (roughly an acre). His wife and five young children share with him a two-room house, with no running water, no electricity, and no gas. The road to his house is not paved. His yard is shared by a *gamousa* (water buffalo), a donkey, two goats, and some chickens. He grows vegetables, sugar cane, and *barseem*. He also grows cotton to comply with government quota allocations. He might have had this requirement waived, but Yousif lacks the clout to obtain a waiver. When asked about his well being, Yousif answers by giving thanks to God for his blessings and invites you to tea. How many hours does he work? He never counts; he does all that needs to be done, around the clock, throughout the year, and in all seasons. He grows two and a half to three crops a year on his land.

Who works with him? Everybody; chores are allocated; as soon as the children are able to walk they begin to help feed the chickens, water the *gamousa*, or keep house while their mother works in the field. Yousif is a member of the agricultural coop; he borrows from the credit cooperative; buys chemicals and seeds from the marketing coop; and at times he acquires new knowledge through the coop or the extension service. He sells his commercial crops through the coop and thus he pays off his loans automatically upon sale of the product.

How much income does he earn? That is not clear, and even if it were, he probably would not admit it for fear of taxation, as a matter of pride, and because much of his product is consumed by the family and the animals. However, the money income is barely enough to clothe the family and pay for other essentials. There is little money for education or books, and most in the family are illiterate. The children may have a chance, but the odds are against their acquiring an education. There is little left for vacation or any nonessential items. Yousif and his wife have to be careful; something might happen to the *gamousa*, or the house may need repair, or someone might fall sick. Of course, they are covered by the national medical insurance, but the village does not always have a doctor, the clinic is not close by, and private care may be necessary. How does Yousif manage? He says God is the manager: nothing on the farm is wasted; everybody works hard; and occasionally there is some off-farm work. Yousif feels lucky. Everybody is healthy and he thanks God again and again. His wife smiles, his children listen carefully and make sure they are recognized for their share in the responsibilities.

Hind is another hero. She left the village with her family to live in the city where opportunity abounds. She never had the luxury of going to school, but she will not admit illiteracy. Once in town she took several jobs because in her perception a full-time job occupies only half a day. She works a distance from her home, as housekeeper, as broker for petty merchandise, and as an investor in the loan business. She admits that the credit business is petty, but it helps because she hopes to purchase land back in her village when she returns.

Hind works about 10 hours a day in two regular jobs, about four hours a day in her home, makes sure the children go to school, sees to it that her sick husband gets his medication, and keeps up a front among her neighbors and friends who are led to believe that she has a job at the university. Hind works mostly for foreign families, earns wages that are double the salary of a teacher in public schools, and dresses well enough to maintain her credibility. Does Hind have any complaints? Yes: the government is inefficient; too many rules and regulations; lots of corruption; the rich get richer and the poor get poorer; public schools and public hospitals are worthless. The girls go to private schools, but she cannot afford private schooling for all. Hind has finally realized some of her goals. She went back to her village, bought a piece of land and put a deposit on another. Strangely enough, Hind joins the silent chorus, who might otherwise applaud her, when she lets the villagers believe that her husband has been responsible for these achievements, and thus she remains the unsung heroine of her sex and family.

Suleiman has been a teacher for over twenty years in the village of his birth. He lives a few hundred yards from the schoolhouse. Actually the schoolhouse is one room in a house, rented by the local council. The owners occupy the rest of the house and share the courtyard. The room is large enough to accommodate forty to fifty children, crammed on benches long enough to seat five in a row. The school consists of four

grades taught by Suleiman in two shifts. His graduates, or a few of them go on to higher grades in the district school a few miles away. Suleiman is proud that he has managed to place several students each year in the district school and that some have gone to university. Suleiman lives well by village standards. He has inherited a piece of land and his house, which he has renovated and added to, and he receives a salary that many people in the village envy.

Why does Suleiman stay in this position and in this village? He did go to the university and could easily find a job in the city. Suleiman does not hesitate: he loves to teach; he loves his home village; he considers it a challenge and an honor to teach in the dire circumstances he faces every day. He gets the chalk from a limestone quarry in the outskirts of the village; he takes his students to a dry river bed for field trips, where they picnic and study wild plants and their uses for people or animals; the children keep the school clean. Suleiman brings his own calculator to show the children. His book collection forms the bulk of the school library. Have any of his former students made it big in the city or in government? Yes, but he does not claim any credit since they had to go through much more education before reaching those positions. He actually gives the credit to the individuals who made it in spite of all the odds against them. He also insists that he is one of many teachers who are in his situation and no special recognition is due him. But without him and the other Suleimans, from where would those chronicled heroes have come?

Uthman is the fourth unsung hero: his motto is live and let live. His shop is in Souk al Hamidiya in Damascus. He invites his customers to have a seat, have coffee or tea, and look around the shop, whether they buy or not does not matter. Uthman says he is doing well compared to his neighbor, but not as well as when there were more tourists, or when the political situation was more stable, or before the prices were regulated and the taxes increased. Uthman criticizes government expenditures, the military spending and corruption, and the heavy burden the government imposes on the shopkeepers and consumers. Uthman does not read the newspaper, but he listens to the radio regularly. He knows what is going on and does not like it. He will not say much about this subject because the "walls have ears," and he does not want to be heard by an informer. Uthman enjoys his business as a way of life and is contented to make a living. He even shocks his customers once in a while by suggesting to them that they do their purchasing at his neighbor's shop. Why? Because this neighbor had not made any sales that day, and he has a family to feed. Uthman will himself take his customer to the shop next door and facilitate the transaction. To him the business is to make a living for him and for his neighbor, and "if I let him live, he will let me live."

My last but not least hero is the young boy or girl who has managed to overcome illiteracy and ignorance in spite of all the odds facing them in many Middle Eastern communities. These young rebels are found in the village and in the city, and on the farm and in the shopping centers. One in particular has earned my admiration. Samir did not go to school as a young boy because there was no school in his tiny village and his parents were too poor to send him to school in another village. Whenever he could, he would sit close to adults to hear them read a newspaper aloud (often done for the benefit of a group), or he would listen to his employer's children recite their reading assignments. Sometimes he would find a book with pictures and try to decipher words on the basis of the pictures. I met Samir when he was sixteen. By then he was able to read and write in

a modest way, but he still had an ambition to get an education. He was waiting impatiently to be seventeen so he could go to the army: the army will help him to continue his education and that is all he wants.

Samir did make it through a high school curriculum; last I heard, he was a teacher in his own village.

## **BETWEEN THE INTIFADAH AND ISRAEL<sup>4</sup>**

**June 1989**

**Sami Geraisey**

There is a saying in almost all languages that “Time is a Great Healer.” This might be true in many other situations; it certainly is not true in ours. The agonizing long-time conflict between the Jewish State and people on one side, and the Palestinians and the Arab world on the other, has not been cured by time. On the contrary, time has been witness to more wars, increasing belligerence, hostilities, and tragedies. The twentieth century has been a century of unsolved conflict, during which a majority of the Palestinians have become refugees and a people without a state. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost; villages and towns have been demolished; large areas of land have been devastated; resources have been wasted; and, above all, more mistrust and more hatred between two Semitic peoples have been generated.

After WWII, several nations struggled for and won their independence. According to feasibility studies, most of these nations should have failed because of their poor economies, fragile infrastructures, and limited administrative experiences. Yet, because of the peoples' belief in their sacred cause and their desire and resolution to earn national identity and gain independence, these nations have been able to defy all odds and succeed. They have carried their responsibilities and won the sympathy and support of the international community. Thus, they have achieved the dream of national sovereignty and independence.

Israel has succeeded in winning wars and defending its independence and is considered one of the major military powers of the world today. But it has failed to win peace; it has failed to build a safe and secure life for its people, and it has failed to win the trust and friendship of its neighbors.

---

4

The Palestinians, both those in the Diaspora and those under Israeli occupation, have belatedly realized that Israel is a reality and that in order to demand nationhood for one's own people, one cannot ignore or deny the same right for others. A majority of the Palestinian National Council members, meeting in Algiers, have stated frankly, openly, and bravely their belief that both their people and the Jewish people need a homeland. It was not an easy task; the majority had to overrule uncompromising members in the Council who prefer fighting to talking, and skeptical members who believe in force more than in dialogue and negotiation in dealing with Israel. PLO Chairman Arafat has extended his hand for peace. The Israeli leadership has answered with a clenched fist, rejection of the right of Palestinians to self-determination and nationhood, and refusal to end the occupation or to negotiate with the PLO.

The Jewish community in Palestine under British Mandate chose its own representatives to form the Jewish Agency. No one could deny them that elementary right or prevent them from practicing it. Almost all nations that have achieved independence were able to choose their own leaders; it was their natural right. The same right should belong to the Palestinians.

Similarly, just as the Jewish problem necessitated the establishment of a Jewish state, the Palestinian problem necessitates the establishment of a Palestinian state. However, only direct talks facilitated by true friends of both sides under the auspices of the United Nations can bring about this desirable result.

It seems that successive governments of Israel were quite comfortable when the Palestinians said NO to proposed solutions. Now that they have said YES and adopted a policy of peace, the Israelis are embarrassed to have become the NO people. This is absurd, unfortunate, and disappointing.

We Arabs, citizens of the State of Israel, watch the developments in the Occupied Territories with great concern and anxiety. We read and hear the frightening details of how the powerful Israeli forces deal with unarmed Palestinian masses that only seek liberation and self-determination. We grieve for the lives that are lost daily. We grieve for the disabled, for those detained under inhuman conditions without trial, and for those who are banished and expelled. We grieve for those families whose homes have been demolished and whose orchards have been uprooted. We grieve over the methods adopted by Israeli politicians and experts and applied by the Israeli forces in dealing with the Intifadah.

We Arabs, citizens of the State of Israel, have our own long list of grievances and complaints: expropriation of our private and common land, discrimination against us in the allocation of government funds, deprivation of basic public services such as education, housing, health, and rehabilitation, and disproportionately high rates of unemployment. We have sought equal opportunity and equal treatment, but still the gap is widening. Arab and Jewish members of Knesset (Israel's Parliament) who believe in democratic co-existence, and the Committee of Arab Heads of Local Authorities continue to promote more sensitivity to these issues and a better appreciation of need for sharing and belonging. Many Jewish intellectuals, humanists, poets, and men and women of letters support our claims for equality. While we continue to strive for equality, we remain sensitive to the plight of our Palestinian brothers and sisters under occupation, who struggle for liberty and self-determination; we express our solidarity with them.

Yet, despite these concerns, I am optimistic because there is a mood of detente in international relations and a trend toward the settlement of world conflicts by peaceful means. I am optimistic because of the changes taking place in the perception of wide circles in the Israeli society, who have decided to actively promote the “Two States for Two Peoples” solution, and who believe that only through dialogue and peaceful negotiation can a fair solution be reached. I am optimistic also because the European Community and the European Parliament have launched a dynamic method of intervention and have become directly involved in the search for peaceful settlement in the region.

It is high time for the Israeli politicians and leaders to realize that they cannot have All of Palestine. The Palestinian leadership has at long last realized that fact. Justice cannot be one-sided or a monopoly by one side or the other. The Palestinian leadership has abandoned the All of Palestine dream and has accepted what has been adopted as most feasible by the international community; the leadership has accepted the realistic and democratic solution: Two States for Two Peoples. It is time for Israel to accept the same principle. Only then can we fulfill the vision of peace in the Middle East and build for a future that will allow the human spirit and creativity to triumph over racist and destructive tendencies. Only then can we, Jew and Arab alike, join together and start a new chapter of peace, justice, and equality for all. If time is a great healer, now is the time to make peace; there is a great opportunity and we must not lose it.

Dr. Sami F. Geraisy was, until his recent retirement, the highest - ranking Arab public official in Israel. He is presently active on behalf of the World Council of Churches and other voluntary organizations. The above views are his own and do not represent these organizations in any way. He delivered an earlier version of this paper in Jerusalem at a conference organized by the International Center For Peace in the Middle East.

**THE TIDE FOR THE PALESTINIANS MAY BE CHANGING  
BUT THEY MUST PLAY THE ROLE  
July 1989**

Change has come in Middle Eastern affairs, presumably in favor of the Palestinians: the international community has begun to pay attention, the United States is “talking” with the PLO, European heads of state and foreign ministers have received Palestinian officials almost as if they were counterparts, and Israeli peace forces, including members of the *Knesset* (parliament), have been meeting face to face with Palestinians at the highest levels of PLO leadership. The USSR also has continued to express its sympathy and support for the Palestinian cause. Change may have been the result of the Intifadah, or it may have been due to maturation of the Palestinian policy makers, or it may be a reflection of the increasing socio-economic and moral burden on Israel, or it may have resulted from a combination of these factors that has put Israel on the moral defensive, indicating that the tide has begun to change. If indeed it has, this change can only be the beginning of the long process toward a peaceful settlement. However, to make the process endure, the Palestinians in general and the PLO leaders in particular will have to work hard to sustain their new peace-seeker image and to realize tangible results by being acceptable and predictable.

The Palestine National Council (PNC) has proclaimed an Independent State of Palestine, with Yasser Arafat as its President. Though no formal government-in-exile has been announced, members of the Executive Committee of the PNC act as cabinet members. Therefore the world should expect President Arafat and his cabinet to play the roles bestowed on them in accordance with national and international protocol and diplomacy.

National and international protocols are means of lowering costs of communication between governments, facilitating affairs of state, and resolving conflict. Conversely, deviation from protocol may create confusion, misunderstanding, and may

actually result in conflict. For example, protocol specifies who shall meet the head of state or the cabinet member on official business; and it specifies when, where, how, and by whom policy statements are delivered. Protocol helps to maintain the dignity of office, conserve energy, and enhance efficiency.

Conforming to protocol means that private groups, splinter groups, or peace groups usually meet with their like since they can neither negotiate with officials on behalf of their government nor do they have authority to make policy. The Israelis have often asked, "Where are Arab and Palestinian Peace Now organizations? Where are the Doves among the Palestinians?" Officials of the State of Palestine cannot substitute for these private groups by meeting representatives of Peace Now or Israeli Doves. The correct step for the state officials is to promote and encourage such groups among the Palestinians, rather than expend time and energy meeting with Israeli and American individuals who have neither the authority nor the responsibility for policy making.

The Head of State and the Cabinet have the responsibility toward their constituents. To conserve energy and make best use of the resources, they should identify policy objectives and tailor behavior guidelines accordingly, and modify these guidelines as conditions change. The Intifadah has undoubtedly made a difference in the relations between Palestinians and Israelis, and should be continued. However, the tactics of the Intifadah may be due for review and modification. For example, rock throwing may have been effective at the beginning but it may not be effective now, in which case it should be changed to conserve life and energy. The Intifadah may be carried on in a different form: for example, the Palestinians may be equally effective by practicing silent passive resistance, boycotting Israeli product and labor markets, and exercising nonviolent civil disobedience. It is not likely that an Israeli soldier will shoot a person simply because he refuses to buy an Israeli product, work in Israel, or pay taxes, but an Israeli soldier can easily find an excuse to fire at a rock thrower. The Palestine State leaders must take the lead in reviewing the tactics and promoting new guidelines to end the occupation.

The State officials have a grave responsibility toward state building and education of the future generations. At present the occupation policy of school and university closure in the West Bank inflicts a heavy cost on the Palestinians and their future. The Palestinian State leaders must see to it that schools and universities remain open, which they can do by depriving the occupation authority of any excuse to close these institutions. They can do so by abandoning the educational strike approach and adopting new tactics. The students can deliver their message by holding silent strikes for one hour a week; they can march back and forth from home to school in complete silence; and they can express their most intensive resistance by concentrating more fully on their studies and the improvement of their human capital.

The Head of State and the Cabinet have the responsibility to build the state and develop its economy. The Palestinian state officials, though not on site, can begin the process of state building and economic development by helping to phase out Palestinian labor dependence on Israel. They can do so by advocating and financing the building of schools and homes, restoring the infrastructure, promoting industry and manufacturing, and expanding vocational and professional training. These projects will generate employment and serve as a mechanism to phase out the humiliating employment of Palestinians in Israel. What are missing are the resources. The Israeli leaders will not

invest in these endeavors, but they can hardly prevent the Palestinians from building schools or roads or from promoting vocational training if they have the resources to do so. The Palestinians have started many small industries and they have established five universities and Israel did not prevent them from doing so as long as Israeli resources were not required for the purpose. The Palestinian leaders should undertake these tasks with Palestinian resources.

The Head of State and Cabinet members also have the responsibility to maintain law and order. One way the Palestinian state leaders can contribute to law and order is to prevent the ongoing recrimination and arbitrary infliction of punishment on Palestinians by Palestinians, with little evidence of due process. A life lost is a great loss to the individual, the family, and the nation.

There is little doubt that the tide has begun to change. There is little doubt that the Palestine state leaders can and must use their resources -- human and material capital, diplomacy and international good will, and the moral strength they have realized--to their own advantage. They have created an image of themselves as peace seekers. To safeguard that image and communicate their commitment for peaceful settlement and coexistence with Israel, it would be to their advantage to observe protocol, shift to silent passive resistance and boycott, and invest as heavily as they can in moral, social, and economic building of the new State of Palestine.

## **SYRIA: A STRATEGIC PLAYER IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS**

### **August 1989**

The ebb and flow of activities on behalf of peace in the Middle East have in common the almost total absence of involvement of Syria. The other players, the Palestinians, Israel, the United States, and others seem little concerned or interested in involving Syria in the peace-making process at this early stage. Whatever the reasons for this exclusion, and whether they are intended or not, the results are detrimental and obstructive to any attempt to conclude a comprehensive peace settlement between the Arabs and Israel, or a partial settlement between the Palestinians and Israel.

To begin with, Syria is a “confrontation” state and a party to the conflict. Syria has participated in all the wars with Israel and has lost territory, the Golan Heights, in the process. Syria also has been the “home” for about 300,000 Palestinians. Since Syria has provided them with a residence and all the benefits short of citizenship, it tends to have a disproportionate share of influence on Palestinian politics.

Syria's direct influence on the Palestinians derives from three other sources: it is the headquarters of important, including radical factions of the liberation movement; it is in direct contact with the Palestinians in Lebanon, sometimes as a protector and other times as a suppressor or disciplinarian; and it is also the most nationalistic Arab country in the classical sense of a united Arab Nation.

Syria's nationalism is an asset in the peace process because whatever position it takes, it can hardly be accused of betraying the Arab cause. This inherent strength is further enhanced by the size of Syria among the confrontation countries. With Egypt at peace with Israel, Syria is the largest country in the immediate vicinity and the 6th largest in the Arab world in terms of population size. Finally, Syria has resources, arms, and a motive to be an active strategic player in the peace (or war) process.

These attributes no doubt have a negative dimension. For example, Syria has the capability of complicating the negotiations and making them less feasible. It may demand stiffer terms. It may be able to frighten other parties away from the negotiation

table, including the Palestinians and Jordanians, as it has already foiled the attempts of Lebanon to reach an agreement with Israel. Nevertheless, these negative aspects are much less destructive to the peace process than the exclusion of Syria at an early stage.

To exclude Syria, as has been more or less the case, may seem to facilitate the peace process for Israel by easing the terms or by promoting negotiations with relatively weak parties (the Palestinians and Jordan, singly or combined). Syria's exclusion also could mean avoiding the most intransigent Arab party to the conflict. Yet, there is little evidence that the exclusion of Syria has brought any benefits to the peace process and it may be that the policy of exclusion has made peace making much more difficult than it would have been otherwise. Syria can single-handedly make it impossible for the Palestinians or Jordan to conclude a peace agreement with Israel, if only by putting pressure on the Palestinians under its direct influence. It can raise the costs of the peace process by making it necessary to prolong the negotiations, duplicate the efforts, allow casualties to increase in the meantime, and thereby lessen the probability of success in the end. Syria can promote guerrilla activities by the Palestinians on more than one front and thus harden the position of Israel enough to make it no longer acceptable to the other parties in the peace negotiations. In fact, Syria can sabotage the peace process by resorting to military action. Even if such action was not to lead to a total war in the region, it will increase the costs, heighten Israel's insecurity, and make the building of mutual trust more difficult.

There are, however, many constructive reasons why Syria should be included. Looking at Syria's position in the international context, it is in an ideal situation to promote peace, if it so desires. Syria has now mended its relations with most of the Arab countries, with the possible exception of Iraq and certain Christian factions in Lebanon. Syria has maintained diplomatic and at times cordial relations with the United States. Cooperation between the two countries has been evident, especially with regard to the American hostages. Its relations with the Soviet Union have been good and there is little evidence that this relationship is about to change. Syria has a stake in the resources of the region, which cannot be compromised without endangering any attempt to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Syria's cooperation on the use of water in the region, whether it is the Jordan River, the Litani, or the waters of Turkey, requires it to play an important role in any such agreement. In addition, Syria cannot be ignored in any form of economic cooperation, both as a producer and as a consumer. Given its relatively high levels of income per capita and industrialization within the region, once peace has been achieved Syria will play a strategic role in the creation of stability and the normalization of relations with Israel. And most important of all, Syria and Israel seem to have reached an unwritten agreement regarding security and calm on their shared borders, whether in the Golan Heights or in Lebanon. This kind of cooperation, or the implicit policy of compliance with the imaginary boundaries between them, can be an asset in trying to promote a more permanent settlement of the conflict.

It may be argued that peace efforts through the convening of an international conference were surely intended to include Syria, but both Israel and the United States have been opposed to an international conference. It may also be argued that Syria has opted to isolate itself because of its own intransigence. That might be so, but in that case, special efforts should be made to break down that isolation and intransigence for the sake of peace. Indeed, it would be a credit to the United States policy to mobilize all the

forces on behalf of peace, including the indispensable force represented by Syria. An even stronger case may be made for Israel to approach Syria in the early stages of any attempt to conclude peace agreements in the region. Syria is an injured party, having lost the Golan Heights, and will not allow peace to become a reality unless its own losses are redeemed and its injury is healed. The payoff to Israel's security and integration in the region would be more gently enhanced by reaching an agreement with Syria than with any other party in the region other than the Palestinians. It is unfortunate that the US media have virtually ignored Syria and its potential role in the peace negotiations, as if the media were an echo of the official policies of the US and Israel.

Let us think that the non-inclusion of Syria has not be intentional, and hope that the mediators of peace and the media will rectify the situation by embarking on a major effort to mobilize Syria as a strategic pillar in erecting a permanent structure for peace in the Middle East.

### **TRAGEDY OF LEBANON IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD<sup>5</sup>** **September 1989**

Political stability has never been a characteristic of Lebanon. The Lebanese have been battling each other off and on since their independence in 1943. France's attempt to create a democracy based on a confessional balance between Christian, Muslim, and Druze was doomed from the beginning because it did not have the prerequisites of a democracy.

The Lebanese internal strife has been fanned by external forces: Israel, Palestine, Syria, and most recently Iran and Iraq; not to mention the roles played by the United States and the former imperial power, France. The Palestinians were trying for almost total autonomy or a state within a state. The Israelis used their excuse for security to enter Lebanon and create a new zone of influence for themselves in collaboration with a small Christian faction in south Lebanon. Syria, which has always had direct interest in and traditional ties with Lebanon, was able to come in by a mandate from the League to bring about peace and stability to its neighbor Lebanon, and is still there. Iran, intoxicated by its ability to oust a corrupt regime and establish a fundamentalist theocracy, has found a fertile soil in Lebanon to sow the seeds of Islamic fundamentalism. Iraq, having rested from its long destructive war with Iran, could not overlook the opportunity to counter Iran's influence in Lebanon by aiding the Christians under General Aoun, and to challenge Syria for leadership Ba'athism (Arab national revivalism). France probably feels guilty for the unstable system it had virtually imposed on Lebanon and now wants to make amends. The United States actually does not have a special reason to be involved and tends to confuse the hostage situation as cause rather than as a possible result of its intervention. But would a world power like the US ever stand aside in world affairs?

The Lebanese themselves are aware of most of these complications, but they probably do not know how to get out of the dilemma by themselves, and no other party

---

5

seems to care enough to put an end to the killing and destruction. The end result may be summarized as follows:

1. The Lebanese leaders are not about to sit down with each other and talk peace, nor is any one faction strong enough to force the other factions to lay down their arms. So far none of the Lebanese warlords or their followers seem to have exhausted themselves or their supply of arms and equipment enough to seek a lasting ceasefire, let alone peace.

2. The Arab League is interested in bringing about a settlement by forming committees to talk to the Lebanese leaders; unfortunately talk alone has brought few positive results so far.

3. Syria is not about to withdraw from Lebanon, nor take firm action to impose a ceasefire; the Arab League has not mandated Syria to do so, and Israel might not stand aside if Syria did.

4. The United Nations force in Lebanon, as presently constituted, can hardly impose a ceasefire, even if it wanted to; it is too small for that, and the imposition of a ceasefire is not one of its missions.

5. Finally, it is obvious that war materials keep flowing into Lebanon. Profiteers and arms suppliers are having a hay day. In the meantime, thousands of innocent people are being killed and wounded; hundreds of thousands are being evicted and turned into refugees and exiles. Vast areas of agriculture and industry are being put out of commission; most of the infrastructure and housing has been turned into rubble, and Beirut and other cities have become battlefields. The world looks on.

It is true that every now and then world leaders make appeals to the Lebanese to stop fighting, but no effective steps have been taken to make a ceasefire attractive or necessary. However, the present conditions in Lebanon are not tenable. The cost of waiting is too high. The Lebanese leaders are feudal lords, hung up on power, blinded by religious and political fanaticism, and too shortsighted to assess the great harm they are inflicting on their own society and on humanity. Therefore, international intervention seems to be the only legitimate way to put a stop to bloodshed and genocide in Lebanon.

There is precedent for outside intervention when internal forces have been unable to come to an understanding with each other. When feudal lords in Europe could not settle their differences, the king or the duke interfered. When cities were at war with each other, the king interfered, by force, when necessary. The Ottoman sultan interfered in Lebanon when trouble erupted and ancestors of the present-day warlords could not agree. France interfered in Indo-China, though unsuccessfully, and Britain has interfered in most parts of the world in the name of stabilization and peacemaking. Since there is no Lebanese higher authority to impose a ceasefire, it becomes imperative that an outside authority takes such action.

Given their basic political and philosophical differences, it is probably too idealistic to expect the superpowers to join forces and put an end to fighting in Lebanon. The Arab League is too weak and internally divided to be able to send a military force to do that either. Syria and Israel together could do it, but they are not on speaking terms and can hardly be expected to consider such a possibility. The only remaining potentially viable force is the United Nations. The United Nations can send a multinational military force of 50,000 strong, fully equipped to impose a ceasefire on all factions and set the

stage for restoring a measure of tranquility to Lebanon. To be effective, this proposal has two main components: a ceasefire, and reconstruction.

First, a UN force, strong enough by military standards to impose a ceasefire, will take positions, order a ceasefire for a period of 6 months to one year, and enforce it.

Second, the UN force will impose an embargo on all military shipments to Lebanon and appeal to UN members to help stop the flow of arms to that country.

Third, the United Nations Secretary General will invite the two contending prime ministers, Salim El Hoss and Michel Aoun, to the United Nations for talks under UN auspices and keep them there until they come to terms with each other; a representative of the Secretary General will mediate.

Fourth, while the ceasefire is being established, social and economic task forces -- UN, Arab League, and other friendly nations -- will help the Lebanese restore viability to their society and economy by rebuilding the utilities, assuring food supplies, encouraging domestic production of necessities, repairing roads and transportation means, and revitalizing the port facilities. Fifth, the task forces will mobilize the largest possible number of sympathizers from among Arab and Lebanese émigré's, the media, and the grassroots in Lebanon to focus on reconstruction and put pressure on the Lebanese leaders to come to terms and end the conflict.

Two external stumbling blocks may stand in the way--Syria and the lack of funds. Syria may find in this proposal a graceful way of withdrawing its troops. On the other hand, Syrian forces may be incorporated, at least in part, in the UN military force, both because they are already entrenched there, and as a face-saving mechanism to encourage Syria to cooperate. As for funds, the United States, France, Japan, the Arab oil countries, and other members of the UN may be persuaded to fund the UN special effort to put an end to the tragedy of Lebanon.

Intervention has precedents in modern history and no other viable alternatives are in sight. Lebanon is crying for help and the world community can give it.

<sup>5</sup> A shorter version has appeared in the L.A. Herald Examiner, August 27, under a modified title.

## **POPULATION TRANSFER AND THE FATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **October 1989**

Over 250,000 Bulgarians of Turkish origin have been forced to leave their homes and move to Turkey. The Bulgarian authorities deny exerting any pressure to cause this mass movement of its Turkish minority. On the contrary, they argue that the exodus is causing labor shortage. But the Government of Bulgaria does not deny that it has forced Turkish Bulgarians to assimilate by adopting Bulgarian names instead of their own to make them forget their ethnic origin.

Minorities in East Europe and in areas that were parts of the Ottoman Empire were supposed to be protected by the Paris Peace Conference following WWI. Such protection, however, was aimed at preserving the rights of individuals, not of groups. The agreement has in fact served to promote assimilation of minorities, even though it was clear that full assimilation was hardly possible in all situations. Violation of the letter and spirit of that agreement soon followed, reaching a climax in Nazi Germany.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights after WWII, presumably an advance over the previous agreement, was in many ways a reiteration of the right of minority groups and individuals to be protected from abuse by the majority or the party in power. Unfortunately, this new declaration has been hardly more effective in guaranteeing human rights or protecting minorities than its predecessor. Pressures to assimilate and massive transfers of population, plus the weak reactions to such transfer attest to that failure.

Population transfers are not new phenomena, nor are they monopolized by any one political or economic system. They have also been frequently forced on people by indirect means. East Germans have been fleeing East Germany, by their own choice, but the political overtones of such migration can hardly be ignored. Millions of people have been driven out of their homes in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Sudan, Iran, and Lebanon because of war, though there are no guarantees that these people will be repatriated once the war has ceased. Others have been transferred as a way of solving the minority problem, as was the case in population exchanges between Turkey and Greece earlier in

the century. Still others have been driven out or relocated as a way of punishing them and dissipating their struggle for national rights, as has happened with the Kurds in Iraq. Probably the most serious recent episode of population transfer has been the evacuation by the state of Israel of over two thirds of the Palestinians from Palestine in order to seize their territory by the State of Israel (though debates continue regarding the process of evacuation and whose responsibility it was).

International reactions to these population movements have been limited and almost always colored by the political ideologies and alliances of the parties concerned. Western countries have been somewhat timid in reacting to these massive assaults on national minorities probably because they themselves have practiced similar population transfers, as with the Native Americans in the United States and the blacks within and from Africa under white rule. On the other hand, they may have little sympathy with such victims as the Bulgarian Turks because of Turkey's past treatment of minorities, or with the Arabs because of the blind western sympathy with Israel.

Muslim countries of the Middle East have faintly criticized Bulgaria for its abusive treatment of the Turkish minority. On one hand, they feel they should side with Turkey as a Muslim country against Communist Bulgaria. On the other hand, their own history of discrimination against minorities and their own practice of population transfer would hardly entitle them to be critical of others. For example, about one million people in Sudan have been forced out of their homes, over two million evacuated Iran, not always by choice, and half a million Kurds have been relocated by force and their villages destroyed by Iraqi authorities in the last few years.

The only serious response to these population movements has come from the United Nations, who provided food and care for the refugees created by these movements. However, the human and civil rights of these refugees are yet to be protected. While many of these population transfers started as reactions to unusual circumstances, such as war or internal conflict, the effects have often become permanent and fully accepted. At times population transfers have been declared internal issues not to be discussed by other countries. At other times the victimization has been committed by governments, which enjoy full backing of one superpower or another. As a result, the phenomenon of forced population transfer, directly or indirectly, has been recurring with little attempt by the international community to prevent it or limit its effects.

The international community should be concerned. What will prevent Iran, Iraq, or Turkey from continuing their abusive treatment of the Kurds and other minorities to force them to flee from their own countries? The Arab people in general, and the Palestinians in particular, should be doubly concerned. What has happened to the Turkish minority in Bulgaria and to the Kurds in Iraq could easily happen to other minorities in the Middle East. For example, what will prevent Israel from pressuring its Arab citizens to assimilate fully with the Jewish majority and forget their culture or leave the country? What will prevent Israel from forcing the transfer of Palestinians out of the Occupied Territories in order to seize their land and homogenize the population? In fact various parties in Israel have revived the issue of population transfer in recent months.

It will take a concerted effort by the international community to put an end to the abuse of minorities and forced population transfer, and to mitigate the negative effect of these atrocities when they occur. Such action must come on both the individual country level and on the multi-nation level. On the individual country level, it is most important

that each country commit itself to respect human rights, the rights of its own minority, and to prevent forced population transfers for whatever reason. When they behave with such decency they will earn the right and moral power to influence other countries to do the same.

On the multi-nation level, such as the Arab League or the United Nations, several steps deserve serious attention. First, attempts should be made to advise the victims of minority abuse and forced population movements of their rights as citizens and as humans. Second, all possible peaceful means should be used to pressure violating countries to avoid arbitrary actions that lead to massive forced population transfers or relocations. Third, all possible peaceful steps should be taken to prevent violating governments from realizing any territorial gains by evacuating the residents of those territories, regardless of the circumstances. Fourth, steps should be taken to assure the repatriation of all people, minorities or otherwise, forced out of their homes because of war or other circumstances, once these circumstances have been removed, to provide those people who choose to be repatriated with the opportunity to do so. Finally, should repatriation be impossible or not desired by the victims, measures should be taken to assure the victims of minority abuse and forced population transfers full compensation for material losses and the opportunity to relocate where they can enjoy full rights as citizens and as humans. Only then can we claim to have guaranteed human rights for others as well as for ourselves.

## **AT HOME AWAY FROM HOME**

**November 1989**

This is the story of a child; some say it was a boy and others said it was a girl, but the fact of the matter is that it happened to both the boy and the girl.

They were born at home, away from home, in a Refugee Camp.

It was to be home, but only for a while, though no one would say for how long: for a day, a week, or a month, or, as some would dare say, forever.

They were a boy and a girl; now they are a man and a woman, but they still are at home, away from home.

Home is just across, beyond a barbed wire, the nozzle of a machine gun, or on the other side of a closed border, and it will be so at least for a while, though no one would say how long a while it will be. The Camp is home for now, for here they have become certified refugees, man and woman, and their own story they will tell:

In the Camp we have lived since we first saw the light; a woman in white greeted us; she also was at home away from home.

The woman in white had come to do a good deed, to help people like us, who were in need, and so the Camp for her has become a home away from home, but just for a while, by choice; for how long, it was for her to say.

We were born in Camp and so was our livelihood; once we saw the light a ration card was born too: Milk and sugar, medicine and clothing would come our way, for both mother and babe, as long as in the queue we stayed.

Food and sustenance were always there to ensure that we survived, for that is all the others could do for us, at home away from home.

From crawl to walk, from baby coo to sensible talk, our skills and abilities have grown; and in search of knowledge off to school we were flown; to a one-room school a few yards away and a lone teacher who too was a refugee, at home away from home.

At school we learned to read and write, but at home we heard the story of that other home. We became certain that at home we soon should be, for that is what our elders had told us, and they ought to know.

But experience was our greatest teacher: poverty, starvation, detention, jail, and loss of liberty-- these were our daily diet; stateless within states we were, and aliens

among citizens, who deigned to be our peers; guests, intruders, just homeless, but never were we free. For, we were at home, away from home.

Our parents knew where home was: it was where olive trees and orange groves pleased the eye; where melons and grapes grew large and sweet; where bread was always hot, and mother was always at home, waiting for us to greet.

But here in Camp, father did a little work, and then took his time to tell the story of that other home; mother counted the coins to make sure that if poverty should rain it would not pour.

This has been our life as the days go by. Neither house nor neighbor has changed, for change would come only when our home will no longer be away from home. The cycle has repeated itself; now we are man and woman fully grown.

We have skill and muscle, and lots of time to spare. A small job here and a little work there, another wedding here and a new babe there, but still we are at home away from home.

The houses have grown bigger, a new wall here and another room there, many more of us have become certified refugees, citizens of the Camp, at home away from home.

We have become teachers and nurses, women in white; we have heard the tunes from across the borders and from overseas, from leaders far away and from those next door urging us to sing the song of home return, to a home not away from home.

We believed for we had no choice. But now by choice we make the Camp our home away from home, to make sure the leaders keep their promises and pave the way for us to go home.

Belief in the return is a sacred mission, and for us waiting has become a national duty; our patience has been nourished with utterings of patriotism and offerings of sacrifice; yet, little change has come and waiting has become a sore, for all we want is to be at home, not away from home.

And then one night there was a change: The right to return is long overdue!

The leaders have little more to say, nor do the sentries, who by the closed borders stay. Whether they have guns or only the power of the law, the guardians of liberty and independence have to answer to us, we brothers and sisters, young and old, who have never tasted life at the real home.

We ask for freedom, we get bullets, beatings, bone breaking, and the ugly whip; but none of these could stand in the way of our marching boys and girls, men and women, for all we want is freedom, peace, and a home not away from home.

The song of peace and freedom echoes across the land, under occupation, and in and out of camp, by Arabs and by Jews alike, for both have known the drudgery of life at a home, away from home.

This is our story, we often have told. It is our dream, our hope, and our aspiration that some day we shall be at home not away from home.

(Dedicated to the more than 15 million refugees registered in 1988 and to those who have joined them since then.)

## **GLASNOST, PERESTROIKA, AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER**

### **December 1989**

There has been jubilation in the West and half-hearted restructuring in the East. Glasnost has been a proclamation of Soviet intentions to have open societies, while Perestroika or restructuring has aimed at revitalizing the ailing "Socialist" economies. Actions on these fronts have combined political declarations with new policy measures to promote political stability and economic prosperity. The Western countries have expressed their pleasure in rhetoric and packages of new trade deals, joint ventures, potential loan agreements, and other forms of economic transactions and exchange.

The socialist countries have evidently decided to allow more individual political freedom, various forms of parliamentary government, and some degree of competition, market pricing, and profit making. They have allowed limited private ownership or control of means of production, especially in agriculture and small business. Mobility has also been increased within and between countries to satisfy the demands of individuals and the principles of human rights. Most of all, Glasnost and Perestroika have improved international relations, especially between the Soviet Union and the United States, with particular emphasis on disarmament and more peaceful relations between the two countries. Improvement in international relations has been so striking that some observers have proclaimed the end of the Cold War. It seems that these observers see the Socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, as "just like us," and now we all can live happily ever after.

It is obvious that the Socialist countries have found it necessary to rethink their sociopolitical and economic policies and philosophies. Whether the rethinking has been to reassure political stability and continuity, or to rescue their ailing economies, or to avoid the threat of devastation in a third world war, the socialist leaders have shown flexibility and responsiveness to popular demand, for which they should be congratulated. On the other hand, whether these changes will bear fruits sweet enough to satisfy both popular demand and the expectations of Western countries remains to be seen. For now the champions of capitalism can enjoy their triumphs, and the champions of individual freedom can feel gratified, even if only with reservations.

Jubilant and self-congratulation, however, can be premature, both because the restructuring is still incomplete, and because some of the newly adopted policies and approaches may have effects other than those expected. Even the socialist leaders themselves are uncertain how far and how fast they can go, and what impact their policies will have. How much of their socialism they intend to preserve and how much market determination they will tolerate is unclear. Whether private ownership and inheritance of means of production will predominate is still to be decided. How much involved in the economy the government will be after Perestroika and how much central planning will remain is also unclear.

Yet, even if no more changes take place, certain benefits have been realized. The increase in individual freedom and free expression, government response to popular and international demands, steps to revive stagnant economies, and an improvement in the international atmosphere with emphasis on disarmament are positive steps to be cherished.

However, it is easy to be carried away with rhetoric and superficial measures, to emphasize the positive and ignore the negative, and to allow ideological bias color the assessment of these efforts and their possible results. It is also easy to forget that neither capitalist nor socialist economies have functioned in a perfect way and neither has had a monopoly on the good or the bad. Both have had economic, social, and political problems, which they had to cope with. Thus, it would be a mistake to take for granted that Perestroika and restructuring in the direction of capitalism and market economies will be all good. Indeed there have been signs of increasing crime in the Soviet Union since Perestroika, and shortages in the market continue to prevail. Apparently most assessments of restructuring have noted the potential benefits without raising questions about the potential costs that may accrue. How will the restructured socialist economies escape increases in unemployment and the inequality of income and wealth distribution that have characterized capitalist economies? How will the restructured economies avoid the creation of an underclass of poor and homeless people who have become constant features of capitalist society? Few have shown how the restructured economies will preserve free education and offer national health insurance to all the people after they go the capitalist way.

To ask these questions is not to say that a capitalist economy or a restructured socialist economy cannot avoid these ills in society. Reconciliation between the benefits of socialist and market economies is technically feasible. It is the will that needs to prevail to make reconciliation possible. Most capitalist countries have apparently chosen not to attempt serious reconciliation. They have allowed poverty, inequality, unemployment, and deprivation to prevail. Let us hope that the socialist leaders will manage to reap the advantages of both socialism and capitalism, preserve the good in what they have had, and enjoy the good in what they plan to have.

## **PALESTINIANS AND ISRAELIS: A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE**

### **January 1990**

After 100 years of conflict, 70 years of searching for national identities, 41 years of Palestinians' living under Arab and Israeli occupation, 2 years of the Intifadah, and a daily routine of violent action and reaction, there are signs that now is an opportune time for the Palestinians and Israelis to break through their impasse. I propose that two new mechanisms could make that possible: pursuing an incremental approach and involving non-Palestinian Arabs and non-Israeli Jews jointly in the peace process. The conflict is between two parties of unequal strength and international military and material backing and accordingly the effects have been differentially distributed. However, it is evident that they have been fighting a war that neither of them can win in full. In the meantime both of them have suffered so long and to such an extent that they should welcome peace, security, and legitimacy for themselves and for future generations.

The casualties of the conflict have mounted: over 750 Palestinians have been killed in the last two years, thousands have been injured and many more thousands have been jailed or detained. Over forty Israelis have been killed and hundreds injured in the same period. The destruction of capital has brought havoc to the Palestinians, whether in the destruction of their homes, businesses, and plantations, or the decimation of their social and economic institutions. Israel, on the other hand, has continued to waste billions of dollars in military expenditure on a war it cannot win. National liberation movements have virtually always succeeded.

While the costs have been mounting, positive forces have been evolving in favor of peace. Egypt is back in the lead in the Arab world to resolve the conflict. The United States is again at the center of diplomatic activity, this time in communication with all parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The Soviet Union, though preoccupied with the dramatic happenings in the Socialist camp, is edging closer toward good relations with Israel while maintaining excellent relations with the PLO. The European Economic Community (EEC) countries are actively trying to promote a resolution of the conflict in a more even-handed and promising manner than ever before. All the major international actors, such as the United Nations and NATO, are trying to smooth relations between Israel and the Palestinians. Most important of all, the

Palestinians themselves, both the PLO leadership and the people who live the Intifadah on a daily basis, have committed themselves to peaceful coexistence with Israel. Furthermore, changes in Eastern Europe are a good reminder that freedom and independence will win.

Change has also been evident on the Israeli side. Though life in Israel may seem normal and the Intifadah far away, the reality is different: civic and literary groups have demanded recognition of the Palestinians as a nation, and peace movements have been active as ever, calling for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Even the Israeli government has within its ranks almost a majority who lean toward negotiating with the Palestinians. In addition, Jews outside Israel have been more active and vocal on the side of peaceful coexistence than ever before.

If all these positive forces exist, why then have the Palestinians and Israelis found no way to make peace? Several factors stand in the way. The Israelis and the Palestinians have long-standing territorial and political conflicts; they have accumulated feelings of hatred and enmity that alienate them and prevent them from pursuing a more peaceful approach to resolving the conflict; and they have become entangled in a procedural maze they are unable to get out of for a variety of reasons.

First, both parties seem to have fallen into a trap of international diplomacy and protocol at the expense of discussing substance. Second, both have been too saturated with distrust and insecurity to risk dealing with each other. Third, both have been deceived by their apparent achievements to agree to a compromise before they are convinced that they have achieved the maximum. The Palestinians mistake world attention to the Intifadah as a triumph, and the Israelis consider their continued occupation as a victory. Yet neither can claim genuine success, while both continue to suffer costs. Finally, both have been at a loss for a face-saving mechanism to break the deadlock. Yasser Arafat has made a major compromise by implicitly recognizing the right of Israel to exist in a part of Palestine but he still has to find his way to explicit recognition. Similarly, Mr. Shamir says "Never" to negotiations with Palestinians associated with the PLO, but he has been willing to talk with Egypt, which has been in direct contact with the PLO. He says "Never" to contact with the PLO but he has been exchanging messages with them through third parties. He says "Never" to a Palestinian state but is willing to negotiate the future of the Occupied Territories after a transition period from occupation to non-occupation. Mr. Shamir still has to find the courage to face the Palestinians in a peace effort as he does in the war effort. Obviously both sides want a catalyst to break the impasse and reach out for substantive peace negotiations. I suggest that pursuing an incremental approach toward pacification and involving non-Palestinian Arabs and non-Israeli Jews could be a big step toward resolving the conflict, as follows:

1. The Palestinians want to end the occupation, while the Israelis argue that occupation will not end as long as violence and insecurity prevail. However, both goals may be satisfied if the Israeli military will stay out of or withdraw from any village or town that appears free of violence for a given period of time, say two weeks, and will cease to interfere in their internal affairs. The less military presence, the less provocation and violence there will be and thus the less need for the military presence. Gradually all of the Occupied Territories may be free of occupation and of violence. This process will

be continued until military occupation is virtually ended, while a political settlement is being negotiated.

2. The Palestinians want elections to be under international supervision, while the Israelis insist that no Palestinian associated with the PLO may be a candidate. I suggest that international supervision may be best conducted jointly by non-Palestinian Arabs and non- Israeli Jews--that should satisfy the Palestinians. On the other hand, any Palestinian should be able to run for elections as long as peaceful coexistence with Israel is part of the election platform, (the joint committee would see to that) which should satisfy the Israelis.

3. Both parties are distrustful of each other; however, if the Palestinian candidates commit themselves to negotiate with Israel in good faith regarding the transition from occupation to non-occupation and future relations, and if Israel commits itself to respect the election results, mutual trust will begin to grow.

4. While these processes are underway, Israel can help to break through the impasse by allowing schools and universities to reopen. Israel will also make a major contribution by removing all restrictions on the economic and social activities in the Occupied Territories, as long as these activities are not security threats. These activities serve both to help improve living conditions and to allow the Palestinian people to be engaged in constructive and productive efforts. Such steps should be beneficial to Israel both in trust building and in cost cutting since less effort would be required to “maintain law and order.”

Direct contact between the conflicting parties is the shortest way to break through the impasse. Though the Palestinians and the Israelis have been in direct contact, it may still be necessary for a third party to facilitate the process of negotiation and legitimize the contact and make it public. The most suitable such third party would be a joint committee of non- Palestinian Arabs and non-Israeli Jews who are committed to peaceful coexistence between the two parties.

These proposals are no doubt based on oversimplifications but they can be viable as a start. If the Palestinians and the Israelis try them, both will be winners, and even if they do not succeed fully, neither party will be a loser.

## **FOOD SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **February 1990**

The leaders of the Maghreb Cooperation Council have just met to discuss issues of mutual interest, one of which was food supply security. Concern for an adequate and secure supply of food is timely, not only in North Africa but also throughout the Middle East. The problem of deficits in domestic food production, relative to the demand, is immense and the obstacles in the way of solving it are formidable, but the Middle East countries can still overcome them by their own efforts.

The deficits in domestic food supply, (excess of imports over exports to compensate for inadequate production and meet the demand for food), have been on the increase since the late fifties. More recently, however, the problem has spread virtually to all countries of the region, including Iran and Israel. Despite attempts to solve the problem, there are few signs that the situation is improving, which suggest that new approaches and policies are in order. Several policies may be suggested, such as: shifting production from non-food to food products; expanding the arable land area in agriculture, particularly for food items; improving the quality of plants and animals; increasing incentives to farmers; removing restrictions on trade; raising productivity; promoting mobility of the factors of production within and between countries; and limiting the natural growth of population. The focus of this viewpoint will be the creation of a balanced ratio between labor or population and the other factors of production so as to improve technology and raise production and productivity in agriculture in general and in food products in particular.

The obstacles to food supply security or independence should not be underestimated. The demand for food in the Middle East has increased rapidly due to population increase, rising incomes, and changing tastes in favor of animal food products that require more land to produce them than the traditional cereal diet of the region. At the same time, domestic food production has met various obstacles, such as shortage of arable land in Egypt, the Gulf countries, and Lebanon; shortage of water, as in Jordan, Israel, Iran, and the North African countries; shortage of labor, as in Libya and the Gulf

countries; and shortage of capital as in Sudan (where labor is relatively short also), Egypt, Syria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Several observations are evident at this point. First, the deficit is serious enough to be a threat to health and socio-political stability in a number of countries. Second, while the supply of calories has been above the minimum requirement for healthy living in most countries, these countries have depended on foreign aid and food imports to supplement domestic production. Third, the prospects of overcoming the deficit in the near future by any one country individually do not seem promising, though the potential for groups of countries to do so through economic cooperation are highly positive. Finally, it is almost certain that the problem of food deficits is closely but negatively tied to the unrestricted growth of population.

Though various measures and policies may have to be implemented simultaneously, the most feasible single policy recommendation is to attempt to raise agricultural productivity and increase food production by coordinating the supply of agricultural labor with the supply of land and capital, at a higher level of technology than has been possible. To do so, two measures seem appropriate: control of natural growth of population, and promotion of intraregional migration so as to create an optimal labor/resource ratio, or balance between labor and the other resources.

Productivity and per capita output depend on the quality and quantity of available labor, relative to other resources such as land and capital. An imbalance in the labor/resource ratio at any given level of technology will no doubt lower productivity and total output and thus increase the risk of generating deficits. The countries of the Middle East have faced both redundant labor supplies and severe shortages relative to the supply of land and capital. As a result, both output and productivity have been below the potential, compared with countries not facing those problems. Therefore, adjusting the labor/resource ratio may be the most viable approach to overcome food deficits -- not through natural population growth, but through labor mobility and migration.

Since land cannot be moved and water can be moved only with difficulty, labor and capital must be the mobile factors. Furthermore, since capital is often embodied as knowledge and skill in human capital, labor is the most strategic input to move to where land and water exist in order to achieve an optimal ratio between the various factors of production. It should be noted, however, that the labor/resource ratio is dynamic, changing as technology and population change. Therefore, any policy that aims at overcoming food supply deficits in the Middle East must allow enough flexibility for labor mobility to maintain an optimal labor/resource ratio.

Efforts by individual countries to overcome food deficits have proved to be of little success, either because of their limited markets, or because of their unfavorable labor/resource ratios. The Arab countries have often discussed ways to overcome these bottlenecks and market limitations, most particularly by means of an Arab Common Market. However, the Arab Common Market remains as an ideal and few people foresee its existence in the near future. To their credit, the Arab countries have tried to be realistic, resorting to sub regional groupings instead of a general common market. The new groupings include the Gulf Cooperation Council of six Gulf States, the Maghreb Cooperation Council composed of five North African countries, and the Arab Cooperation Council consisting of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and the Yemen Arab Republic.

Whether these sub regions will succeed in attaining food supply security will depend on the nature of their cooperation and how well they manage their labor/resource ratios. For example, the Gulf Cooperation Council can hardly be expected to produce enough food to meet the demand on the basis of its own resources. Those countries are short of people who are skilled in farming and who are willing to work the land and invest in it. They are also short of land and water. Therefore, their most viable immediate policy would be to invest their capital in other sub regions or countries where land and labor are relatively abundant, such as Syria, Sudan, and Morocco. However, to secure labor to work the land they have, their best policy would be to invite accomplished migrants from other Arab countries to come and settle the land and work it on a permanent basis.

Similarly, the Arab Cooperation Council countries have a high potential for overcoming deficits of food supply if they would promote more favorable labor/resource ratios in the individual countries through migration of labor, capital, or water. Egypt can supply labor and water; Iraq can supply capital and utilize more labor; Jordan and the Yemen Arab Republic can use both water and capital. The Maghreb Cooperation Council would also enhance its potentials if Libya's capital and land were pooled with Algerian and Moroccan labor. However, both the Arab Cooperation Council and the Maghreb Cooperation Council would be much better off if they would incorporate Sudan's land and water with their own resources to improve the respective labor/resource ratios in all the countries concerned.

These cooperation councils have concentrated mainly on removing trade obstacles and allowing temporary and inadequate labor mobility. The results of more free trade have been limited because all these countries are food deficit countries and trade between them cannot add much to the total supply. Furthermore, temporary and limited labor mobility is not conducive to high incentives and risk taking by migrant aliens who are always threatened by termination of their work contracts. Therefore, the economic cooperation councils of the Arab world could greatly increase food production and reduce food deficits by vigorously promoting inter-Arab labor movements on a permanent, secure basis so that the migrants become citizens.

This approach has many advantages to recommend it: it is cheaper than depending on food imports and foreign aid; it leaves more permanent effects than the temporary measures that have been pursued so far; it creates a wide, positive impact on relations between the Arab countries at large; and it also promises lower costs and earlier and higher returns than securing labor through natural population growth.

The discussion of food in the Middle East has so far concentrated on the Arab countries for practical reasons. Israel and Iran are not candidates for regional or sub-regional cooperation at the present time. However, they too suffer from food supply deficits, though they have great capabilities to overcome that problem through a more positive policy of cooperation between them and the rest of the region. Iran's land, labor, and capital would be a great enhancement to any policy of economic cooperation in the region. Israel's experience of securing labor through immigration and resettlement could be an invaluable model for improving the labor/resource ratio throughout the region. Israel's possible cooperation has actually been considered since Israel has been regarded a potential member of an economic union including Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

In conclusion, the prospects for food supply security through domestic production can be greatly enhanced if and when the countries of the region decide to take the brave step of trying to raise food output and productivity by advancing technology and improving their labor/resource ratios through economic cooperation and intraregional labor mobility. By such cooperation they can overcome the bottlenecks, raise incentives, encourage investment, and thus utilize their great human and material resources far more efficiently than they have done in the past.

**WHY A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE PALESTINIAN ISRAELI  
CONFLICT MAY BE AROUND THE CORNER  
March 1990**

The prospects for a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians may be better than suggested by the continued daily killings and injuries in the Occupied Territories. The prospects may be good not because Yasser Arafat has predicted Palestinian independence by 1992, nor because Ariel Sharon is resigning from the Cabinet, but because of the recent realism and pragmatism demonstrated by Palestinian and Israeli leaders alike. Yasser Arafat's evident pragmatism is almost a match for Yitzhak Shamir's pragmatic politics and diplomacy. Though it took Arafat many years to realize the futility of the military option and the necessity of recognizing and negotiating with Israel, it has taken Shamir as long to realize that compromise and direct negotiation with the Palestinians is the most realistic approach toward a peaceful settlement.

Mr. Shamir's elections plan for the Territories is a compromise as he has become convinced that no settlement can be reached without the Palestinians. His retreat on Ezer Weizman's dismissal from the Cabinet is a compromise because he knows that if the coalition were to fall and elections to be held now he has no assurance that he would be returned to power. And his decision to continue the peace process despite the recent attack on the tourist bus is a compromise because he knows that cooperation with Egypt is his best strategy toward a settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict. Yitzhak Shamir has compromised because he senses accurately that the tide is changing and the gains Israel has realized are worth compromising for. I am speaking of changes within Israel, within the region, and on the international scene, all of which suggest that new directions in Israeli policies are warranted.

Looking at events within Israel and the Occupied Territories, Mr. Shamir sees that the military option to suppress the Intifadah and end the conflict has failed; the Palestinian Identity has become a reality which cannot be ignored; more and more experts and analysts within Israel urge for recognition of the Palestinian rights to self

determination; King Hussein's withdrawal as a major party to the conflict has rendered the Jordanian option virtually irrelevant; and collaboration of Jewish and Arab peace forces has become progressively more evident by the day. Finally, he sees that the costs of intransigence to Israel have become too burdensome to ignore.

On the positive side, Mr. Shamir sees that Israel has achieved more than it had anticipated: it has removed the violent conflict to outside its boundaries, neutralized Egypt, secured recognition of Resolution 242 and 338 by the PLO and all other Arab states, and forced the PLO to reverse its position and seek negotiations after many years of always saying "No." He also sees that when in the future Israel negotiates a settlement, it will negotiate from a position of strength for more security and possibly more territory than it has had reason to hope for.

On the other hand, Mr. Shamir has cause to be concerned with events in the region. Egypt and Syria have "reconciled" their positions, while Egypt still plays the role of mediator in the peacemaking process. Morocco, which has had contact with Israel for some time, continues to play a role in the Arab Israeli conflict, which should not be ignored. Though Syria has in a way reached a tacit agreement with Israel on the northern borders, that position cannot be expected to last for ever, nor can Syria's military power be ignored either. Finally, Israel's experiences in Lebanon have made it obvious that a warpath in the region cannot be successful.

Probably the most pressing events in the direction of pragmatism are those which have occurred on the international scene, especially in Eastern Europe, Soviet Russia, and South Africa, all of which favor democracy, self-determination, and human rights. Long established regimes have crumbled. Decades-old institutions have been reshuffled overnight. Fortifications of power and military rule have been liquidated, all in the name of freedom, independence, and liberty. Probably the most effective of all may be the dramatic change, which is taking place in South Africa. After more than a century of exploitation and absolute domination of the blacks, South Africa's white leaders now agree to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their conflict.

Instead of being forced into action by events, most probably Mr. Shamir would rather step forward and guide those events, as his election plan demonstrates. However, even if all these arguments for pragmatism fail, Mr. Shamir is not one to ignore the threat of losing support of Israel's most devoted and blindly committed ally, the United States. The threat of losing support on both the diplomatic and material levels is real as suggested by recent statements by American legislators.

However, Mr. Shamir needs a national incentive and a diplomatic excuse to undertake a more positive and direct contact with the Palestinians. Such incentives should not be hard to come by. For example, more firm statements by the PLO in favor of peace and mutual security could open the way to a form of negotiations with the Palestinians. A reduction of violence in the Occupied Territories, not of protest and demonstration for independence, could lead to withdrawal of troops and to less meddling by the military in the affairs of the people. It could also lead to the opening of schools and universities and return to more normal daily living in the Territories. More intensified efforts by Egypt could make it too costly for Israel and for Mr. Shamir to ignore the current wave of events in favor of peace. Sustained collaboration between Israelis and Palestinians and between Arabs and Jews in general within the region and outside it, would make it easier for Mr. Shamir or any

Israeli leader to implement substantive changes in policy in favor of a settlement with the Palestinians.

No doubt Mr. Shamir is aware of the growing international public opinion urging for a settlement, with guarantees of peace with security, which the Palestinians are willing to conclude. He is aware of the growing interest in some form of confederation between Israel and its neighbors, Jordan and a state of Palestine. He is also aware of the fact that time might have been on the side of Israel, but not any more. There is an Intifadah within the Palestinian community and outside it. Most probably an Intifadah is going on in Mr. Shamir's thinking. Begin and Sadat experienced it and resolved the Egyptian Israeli conflict. It is not unlikely that Shamir and Arafat will experience it too and resolve the Palestinian Israeli conflict.

***AL'URUBA WAL ISLAM***  
**or**  
**ARAB NATIONALISM AND ISLAM**  
**April 1990**

It has been common, rhetorically and otherwise, among leaders and intellectuals of the Arab world to speak of "Arab Nationalism and Islam" as if it were a natural description of Arab culture and philosophy of society. Yet, the facts do not always fit the ideal. *Al'Uruba Wal Islam* concept has not always been a good representation of the facts in the Arab society. However, by clinging to such a concept, the Arab society has been idolizing the past, or defending a system that does not exist. The commitment to the ideal concept of *Al'Uruba Wal Islam* has virtually meant defending political, scientific, and economic underdevelopment. Let us look first at the alleged misrepresentation, then at the negative effects, and finally at the future of Arab society within the modern global context in which it exists.

Arab nationalism or patriotism existed before Islam, and it has continued in many places without Islam. There are Arabs who are not Muslims and there are Muslims who are not Arabs. Arab nationalism and Islam are not Siamese twins. That Arab nationalism and Islam may have supported each other at one time or another does not mean that the two are or should be dependent on each other. Arab nationalism is strong enough to stand on its own, and so is Islam. Arabs should have the freedom to practice their religion and to express their nationalism singly or combined, but the two modes of behavior need not always be practiced in combination. Indeed, Arab nationalism and Islam can flourish, one without the other, as they did in Lebanon before religious fanaticism destroyed it, in Egypt for a while under Nasser, and in Tunisia to an extent under Bourguiba. In each of these instances, Arab nationalism flourished almost in proportion to its distance from Islam or any other religion. On the other hand, more than fifty percent of the countries that consider themselves Muslim are not Arabs. Therefore,

to combine Arabism with Islam as if they were inseparable is not a true representation of Arab society and culture, nor is it beneficial to Arab nationalism or Islam.

While rhetorical, literary, and political pronouncements may give satisfaction to both the orator and the audience, belief in these pronouncements and commitment to act as if they were true have left negative and possibly disastrous effects on the Arabs, both historically and at the present time.

To begin with, while the Arabs have been preoccupied with maintaining this idealized relationship between their nationalism and religion, other nations have liberated themselves from the force of religion, rendering the latter a matter of individual belief and choice. The liberated community or nation has consequently been able to pursue rational, worldly, and scientific approaches in education, the economy, and the polity. While the world of Islam, including the Arabs, has remained insistent on religious teachings and traditions, which might have been appropriate in centuries past, Europe has revolutionized its educational and productive systems, thus acquiring leadership in every aspect of life in the modern period.

Educators in the Arab world have continued to impress on their students the value of rote learning and recitation, as they do in memorizing the *Kur'an*. Western educators, in contrast, have promoted analytic learning, discovery, and questioning, which had led to revolutionary results both in understanding nature and applying their new knowledge to decipher the complexities of the universe and society.

Of course, Islam itself cannot be blamed for the slow pace of the Arab world to keep up with modernity in education, science, and productive capacity. However, the interpretations and institutions of Islam have had a great impact on policy toward population growth, treatment of women in society, allocation of resources in the economy, and national relations with other countries, especially those that differ in religion and national identity. The impact has not always been favorable, as illustrated by the Union of Muslim Countries (including the Arab countries), which happens to be a union of underdeveloped countries -- not by choice but by the inability to develop. In contrast, all the developed countries have followed the path of separating religion from nationalism.

Arab Women have been another victim of the idealization of *Al'Uruba Wal Islam*. It has kept them from achieving their potential in education, economic performance, and intellectual and scientific achievement. This repression is evident in their low rate of literacy, their low rate of participation in the economy and government, and their limited freedom to express themselves in literature and the arts. Women's natural abilities have been suppressed as they have been rendered instruments of procreation and pleasure for men -- certainly not by their own choosing.

Another impact of this assumed marriage between Arabism and Islam is the discrimination against religious minorities, which has taken violent forms in a number of countries, most obviously in Lebanon, Sudan, and Egypt. The minority problem may not seem as serious in the other Arab countries, mostly because the minorities are too small to be noticed. However, suppression of religious minorities, whether they are small or large, is a cost to society in many ways, especially by preventing them from contributing to society according to their potential and taking from society what they deserve. Often they are excluded from opportunities available to others. At the same time, they are always on alert to avoid discrimination and abuse by others on account of their different

religion. It should be added that religious schism has been destructive between religions as well as within religions, as in Islam, between the Shi'a and Sunni believers.

One may argue that the Arab world is rich with culture and moral values that derive from the combined culture of *Al'Uruba Wal Islam* and does not need to secularize or adopt the values of other societies and countries. Yet, in reality the Arabs are continuously seeking the fruits of other cultures and societies. They are large consumers of the products of the secular western civilization. Why should they not be producers of those products?

Many Arabs have asked such questions. Probably the latest such inquiry has been at a conference on the relation between Nationalism and Islam held in Cairo in September 1989. Views were expressed rather freely, though most seemed to be searching for ways to reconcile the two value systems, rather than to liberate them from each other. The proponents of the concept of *Al'Uruba Wal Islam* may have vested interests of their own, but the public should not be led blindly in the name of God and religion. Even dictatorships in the Arab world are sustained partly by invoking the power of *Al'Uruba Wal Islam*.

The debate has little to do with the freedom of religion, whether it is Islam or any other religion, for that should be guaranteed as a basic principle. The issue is whether confessionism and religious belief should dominate society at the expense of reason, science, and rational policy making which have guided development in modern society. Sydney Hook's advice to the Jewish community was that to guarantee their own survival and independence they should emphasize "the principles of cultural pluralism, political democracy, privatization of religion, a democratic socialist welfare state, and the supremacy of the rational or scientific method." These same principles apply to the Arab world.

As a young boy I learned to recite the motto "religion and belief are God's but the nation is ours," meaning that religion and nationalism should not interfere with each other. That is exactly the opposite of what has been happening in the Arab world and the Arab world is paying for it. It will no doubt continue to pay a heavy price unless secularism is recognized as the way to development and modernization. The Arab countries are facing a grave situation; let us hope that they make the right decision before it is too late.

**ISLAM CAN BE A VIBRANT FORCE OF POSITIVE CHANGE<sup>6</sup>**  
**May 1990**

During the 1980s, the growing strength of Islamic fundamentalism and the increasing support for militant Islamic movements within the Middle East and Islamic parts of Asia have been of major concern to most analysts. These movements have challenged, often forcefully, the legitimacy of secular or tradition-based regimes, seeking to eliminate the influence of Western ideology, diplomacy, popular culture, technology, wealth, military might, as well as the deeply ingrained economic inequalities within their cultures. The ultimate goal of these Islamic revivalists is the establishment of equitable societies based on the Shari'a--Islamic Law.

In spite of pronouncements of impending doom by many observers, the rise of Islam as a vibrantly expanding force throughout the world may be less fearsome than anticipated. This trend should be viewed as a logical reaction to the infusion of European oriented, non-indigenous ideologies, which stressed the social, political, cultural, and economic supremacy of the European/American West. Although western-based values promised the establishment of politically egalitarian regimes and economic prosperity, the results were usually far less gratifying in the Islamic world, as dictatorships, corruption, economic inequalities, stagnant bureaucracies, poverty, and war became the typical rewards of such systems.

It is true that demographic issues, including massive increases in population, have hindered most sincere, dedicated attempts by Middle Eastern and Asian governments to improve the standard of living of their people. However, from the point of view of the common man within such societies, these regimes and their "Western" ways have not met their needs. The hope to return to the past glory of Islamic rule may be the only course, at this point, for Muslims who have exhausted the potentialities of contemporary political

---

<sup>6</sup> Avrum J. Gray is a Research Associate with Joyce R. Starr and Associates, a foreign policy research firm in Washington, D.C. He specializes in Middle Eastern and environmental affairs.

systems. It is a past rooted in enlightened achievements, which far surpassed those of a Europe, then festering in the malignancy of its dark ages.

The Islamic challenge to the West is especially apparent as the Soviet empire continues to disintegrate. The rise of Islamic oriented national movements in Soviet Central Asia and Eastern Europe have directly challenged Communist control, as witnessed by the violent uprisings in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan and similar movements in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

India has also been faced with rising Islamic fervor along its border with Pakistan due to the call for independence of Kashmir or unification with Pakistan. Scores of Kashmiris and Pakistanis were killed in recent weeks as the crisis escalated. In Lebanon, Islamic Shi'ite extremist groups continue to battle with Christian and Druze elements for control of the country as the Lebanese Civil War enters its 15th year. In Syria, the Ba'ath regime of Hafez al-Asad has been locked in a brutal, often ruthless contest for control of Syria, for two and a half decades, with militant wings of the pan-Islamic Muslim Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood and its splinter groups have been extremely influential in Egypt since the 1940s. In recent years, the Brotherhood and its allies have played a major role in the return of many Egyptians to conservative Islamic traditions, including the wearing of veils by women and the rejection of Western-oriented media and entertainment sources. However, unlike more extremist groups in Egypt and elsewhere, the Egyptian Brotherhood has chosen a decidedly moderate path, using Egypt's political process and Brotherhood operated social welfare services to gain the favor of the Egyptian people. These Islamic social service institutions have not only complemented the government's own services, but have often been more capable of meeting the needs of the people than the government. (The Brethren, of course, are not burdened with the same pressing domestic and international responsibilities as the government.)

In November 1989, in Jordan's first parliamentary election in 22 years, the Muslim Brotherhood won 23 seats in the 80 seat Assembly or 29 percent of the House. The Brotherhood's allies won an additional 11 seats, giving Islamic groups control over 42 percent of Jordan's parliament, challenging the rule of King Hussein. Even during the continuing two-year struggle of the Palestinian Intifadah, Islamic elements, especially the Hamas movement, have risen as increasingly attractive, complementary movements to the PLO.

Muslims must be allowed to explore then assert their own identity and choose their own path, like any other people. However, this does not mean that disgraceful displays of intolerance, hate, and violence towards those of different religious or ethnic groups, as was recently seen in Azerbaijan, should be tolerated. All necessary means must be employed to protect people who are threatened by mobs blinded and misled by hate, anger and intolerance, whether these mobs are composed of Muslim, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, or whatever their religious affiliation.

In spite of the desirability of "Islamic" societies and governments to many Muslims, there is the real issue of whether Islam itself will meet the huge expectations being put on it by its adherents. Although Islam might certainly meet the spiritual needs of its followers, will it meet their material needs as well?

At this point it is hard to say. No Muslim country has done so in the modern period through its own production systems, although Islamic societies like the Egyptian

Muslim Brotherhood have effectively met some of the needs of their own followers. Additionally, few of these nations have the wealth of an oil-rich Muslim country like Saudi Arabia. Even worse, many of these regions have populations that are growing at an explosive rate, such as Egypt, with little hope of mitigating its effect through the teaching of Islam.

The militant, expansionist approach of Iran's Islamic Republic, for example which ideologically rejects all cultural and political ties to the non-Islamic world [Not exactly--ties with France, USSR, etc], has not proved to be very successful at adequately providing for the material needs of its people. In spite of its oil wealth, the confrontational nature of this type of regime has led to numerous major and minor conflicts, which have wasted Iran's resources. Battling the western "Great Satan" (the US, Israel, USSR) and battling secular Arab states such as Iraq, have proven to be extremely costly endeavors for Iran, especially in a world that has become so interdependent.

If militant fundamentalism is not a long term viable option, then what approach can the Islamic World take to maintain its religious identity and diverse cultural pride, while also benefiting from the material wealth that the secular West enjoys?

Since the past can hold such meaningful lessons for us all, the golden history of Islam's empires can also provide the Islamic world with the necessary answers to its modern dilemmas. The "Golden Age of Islam," which lasted up to approximately the 17th century, was noted for its open-mindedness, religious self-confidence, affluence, tolerance of people of different faiths, acceptance of foreign ideas and concepts, and the synthesis of these concepts and ideas with Islam. Such syntheses resulted in some of the most advanced scientific and medical discoveries of the time, the production of brilliant works of scholarship, the creation of beautiful poetry, art and literature, and the peaceful and cooperative exploitation of foreign markets and industries to successfully accumulate the wealth needed to run empires.

No period or culture can be exactly replicated in the present, but Islam's roots may suggest a clear road for the modern Islamic world to follow to reestablish its former greatness. It is a road leading toward Islam as it was: unthreatened, yet inspired by intellectual, philosophical, and religious challenge, able to absorb the finest attributes of other societies, and confident enough to tolerate those who choose to follow a different path.

Western leaders must also choose the path of tolerance by putting aside their fear, criticism and misunderstanding of Islam as a religion and accepting it as a legitimate, potentially progressive belief system and way of life for millions of Muslim people--a system which in reality does not necessarily require its followers to be militant fundamentalists and can again enrich the world with its fertile potential.

**ETHNIC MINORITIES AND WOMEN ARE DISCRIMINATED  
AGAINST IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
June 1990**

It should come as no surprise that ethnic minorities and women are subject to discrimination in all countries of the Middle East, as they are in most other countries of the world. What may be surprising is that so little is said or done about it. Ethnic minorities, whether differentiated by religion, ethnic origin, or subculture, exist in all countries of the Middle East and suffer various degrees of discrimination and abuse. The Baha'is and the Kurds in Iran and Iraq respectively, all the "non-native" workers and residents in the Gulf States, the Christians in Southern Sudan and Egypt, the Arabs and Sephardi (Oriental) Jews in Israel, all have been subject to discrimination, in practice, if not by law.

The Sudanese Christians have been waging a war to prevent imposition of the *Shari'a* law on them. Christians are forbidden from spending the night in certain towns in Morocco; they have limited rights in Saudi Arabia; they are urged by Moammar Kadhafi to convert to Islam or leave the Arab countries. The Baha'is, who are taught to respect the authorities, are nevertheless harassed and persecuted in Iran. The Kurds have been brutalized in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. The Arabs of Israel may seem to have adjusted to their position as third class citizens, behind the Ashkenazi (European and Western) and Sephardi Jews, but that is not so. Discrimination has been evident in social, political, and economic aspects of life, as illustrated by the lack of access to opportunity, limited freedom of expression, and the perpetual reminder that they live in countries in which they are minorities by identifying the country as Muslim, Christian, or Jewish.

Similarly, though they are often the majority, women have been treated less equally than men in all countries of the Middle East, and in other countries of the world. Women's status in the Middle East is based on tradition, the teachings of the various religions they belong to, and the fact that the socio-political, and economic institutions have relegated women to a subservient position, relative to men, in all socio-economic

classes and religions. It is true that most women have been quiet about their status, because they have been trained to be passive and accepting, because they have had little education or economic and social independence to be able to act on their own, and because the laws and traditions of the region suppress them.

To illustrate, if the parents can afford to educate only some of the children in the family, they automatically select the male children. A family that has the option of educating the children abroad would send the male children but will most probably hesitate to let a female go. Even if both are educated, the career options are much more limited to the woman than to the man. A woman in Saudi Arabia may achieve a Ph.D. degree but is yet to be allowed to drive a car. She may become an engineer but will not be allowed to practice as a professional engineer. A woman in Kuwait, Iraq, and many other countries as well must obtain an explicit written permission from her husband or other “male protector” before she can travel out of the country. Even Jewish women in Israel who have been presumably equal participants in building the country from its early stages, have been underrepresented in certain careers, underpaid compared with men, and subject to male dominance in accordance with the teaching of religion, regardless whether they practice religion or not.

There are arguments that neither ethnic minorities nor women are discriminated against in the Middle East. One such argument is that both are “protected” by the state, by religion, or by male protectors. In other words, women are patronized on the assumption that they need protection. Yet, this assumption implies that they are not considered equal, for why should they need protection if they were regarded as equal before the law and in society?

Another argument is that ethnic minorities are just that: they are minorities and should accept the rule of the majority, as long as their basic rights are protected. This argument may be correct in a political democracy but not in religious, ethnic, or social terms. No majority in a democracy has the right to impose its religious, ethnic, or cultural values on a minority. Indeed, there is no reason for efficient or democratic governance to identify the religious affiliation or ethnic origin of a citizen. Identification of the polity and the state with a given religion or ethnic origin is itself an invitation to schism and discrimination. Once a country is identified as a Christian, Muslim, or Jewish state, it is hardly possible to avoid discriminating against those who are of a minority religion.

Still another argument that there is no discrimination against ethnic or religious minorities in the Middle East invokes the continued peaceful coexistence between the various ethnic and religious groups as evidence. But this is hardly a convincing argument since at no time have these minorities enjoyed equal opportunities or freedom of expression to see how they would behave (see what happened when minorities in the Soviet Union could speak out). People who enjoy equal opportunity tend to be more productive and better citizens than when they are discriminated against. Had the Kurds been invited to negotiate with their governments, as a national-ethnic group, it is more likely that they would have come to an agreement with the respective government such that armed conflict and vengeful suppression could have been avoided. Had the Christians of Sudan been invited to negotiate a secular government that would make religion a matter of conscience and private belief, Sudan would not have wasted immense resources in fighting a civil war that neither party can win. Thus, the problem of

minorities in the Middle East has been sustained by the comfortable majority, which exploits tradition and religion to perpetuate its dominance at the expense of the minorities and the nation as a whole. In the final analysis, the costs fall on society at large, rather than on the minority.

Discrimination against women is even more serious than against minorities. Women are at least equal in number and in several countries of the Middle East they are a majority. If they had equal opportunity, there is a high probability that the entire society would be different. To begin with, had they been brought up to think of themselves as equal to the male siblings, they would have explored far more horizons than they have. Had they been accorded equal educational opportunities, they would have been more productive, benefiting themselves and society at large. They also would have influenced the education of their children in a much more effective way than they have.

Women have until recently been quiet, but not accepting or contented. Most probably those who have thought about their status have questioned their roles as reproduction instruments and sources of pleasure for men. However, they may have been quiet because of their limited early education, their meager economic and social resources, the belief system they live in, and the sustained suppression by their male counterparts in the family and the nation.

Women work as hard or harder than men, yet they are constantly reminded that men are the breadwinners, that men are strong and can protect them, and that men perpetuate the name of the family. In time women have come to believe all these myths. They are told to obey their men by all religions of the Middle East (except probably Baha'ism); they are delivered in marriage by their male protectors; where divorce is permitted, they are divorced with little say in the matter; they inherit less than men do, according to both the *Shari'a* and tradition. Even where they are allowed access to opportunity and wealth, they are accorded secondary positions relative to men, in terms of employment preference, management of their wealth, appearance in court, and decision-making. As a result, half of the population is undermined, suppressed, exploited, and discriminated against by the other half merely because of their gender.

There is no doubt that ending discrimination against minorities and women will benefit both those discriminated against and society at large. There is no doubt, either, that discrimination can be stopped, or at least reduced, without infringing on religious or national beliefs in any essential way. Let us first look at the benefits.

Whether in the case of minorities or of women, equality would release energies that are suppressed or unutilized at the present time. Those deprived of opportunities are wasted resources. Energies used to defend or restore women's rights could be utilized more productively had there been no discrimination. National resources used to suppress minorities and women would be released for more productive uses had there been equality. National unity would be more natural and productive in the absence of discrimination.

Had there been no discrimination, a large fund of talent, especially of women, would be available to individuals and to society. It is now evident that women can do anything men can do and as well. Similarly, the minorities in the Middle East countries, who have often been better educated and more productive than the discriminating majority, could serve as pace setters and examples if they were allowed to.

Finally, the trend in recent history suggests that discrimination will not be tolerated forever. Therefore, to reduce and remove discrimination by peaceful and orderly means is much cheaper and more viable than achieving the same by adverse socio-political and economic movements for equality.

Can the Middle East countries remove discrimination without violating their basic religious, ethnic, and national beliefs and institutions? Yes they can, but whether they will or not is uncertain. Three principles are essential to rid the Middle East of discrimination: respect for the rights of all individuals as equal, respect for ethnic aspirations within a framework of national unity, and respect for religion as a matter of conscience and belief by the individual. The first principle implies that no individuals will be abused because of their ethnic origin or gender; the second means that ethnic minorities will be brought into the sphere of policy making to see that their ethnic and cultural rights are guaranteed; the third principle means that religion is a personal matter that should not enter in social, political, or economic affairs. Once these principles are accepted, implementation will follow through education and social experimentation.

The Middle East countries are reaching a crisis point because of their treatment of ethnic and religious minorities and of women. They can avoid much pain and waste if they begin to take positive steps toward equality before the law and in society for all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender.

**IF IT IS NOT A RACIST SOCIETY,  
WHY CAN'T ISRAEL PROVE ITS INNOCENCE?  
July 1990**

It is easy to condemn a nation as racist, warlike, aggressive, or antihuman rights on political and subjective grounds. It is also easy to deny such charges but it may not be as easy to convince others when circumstantial evidence begins to pile up in support of those charges. This is the dilemma Israel faces in its treatment of the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. I am not concerned here with the vote of the United Nations Assembly branding Israel as a racist country, or with its condemnation as a violator of human rights. I am more concerned with the daily behavior of government agencies, civilian groups, and individuals toward the Arabs within Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Government agencies set an example for the treatment of Arabs by Jews. While they do so, they tend to encourage and invite arbitrary and "racist" acts of discrimination and violence against Arabs by overlooking such action when it occurs, in defiance of the laws and moral standards of the country. These acts, when they happen, seem to be aimed at Arabs or Palestinians simply because they are Arabs or Palestinians. What should such behavior be called if not racist?

Racism simply means giving differential treatment (usually negative) to a people simply because of their racial origin. Though the Arabs and the Jews are of the same Caucasian Semite racial origin, Israel has been condemned as racist because of its treatment of the Arabs under its rule. Public agencies, private groups, and individuals have demonstrated this type of behavior against the Arabs throughout the history of the state and before. For example, democracy, egalitarianism, freedom of speech, and due process are all amenities enjoyed by Jews but not by Arabs--not only those under occupation, but also those who are citizens of Israel and those who have acquired citizenships in countries outside the Middle East.

Israel has been described as a melting pot, which is true for Jews within the state, but not for all its citizens and certainly not for Arabs. Even Arabs who may have tried to

assimilate are not allowed to do so. The ideal of Israel as a Jewish State and the actions of the government and many of the people are hindrances against such assimilation. The identity cards citizens hold differentiate between Jews and Arabs. Jews can settle anywhere; Arabs are denied this freedom, and they often are evicted from their own lands to make room for Jews. Jews are allowed to bear arms freely, but Arabs are not; even hunting guns are almost impossible to have licensed. Employment in low status, low pay, and manual jobs has become known as the domain of the Arabs; Jews are said to be above that kind of labor, not because of better qualifications or training but because these are jobs Arabs will do. To exclude Arabs from higher status jobs, service in the army has been invoked as a prerequisite, which the Arabs do not satisfy because they are not required to serve in the army. That policy in itself is discrimination against Arabs. Arabic is a second official language in the country and Arabs may address government offices in Arabic. However, if they do they run the risk of not receiving an answer; someone writing in Yiddish, German, or Russian would not run that risk.

Patterns of behavior of the police and the army reinforce the charge of racism. A Jew charged with a crime, whether it is a traffic violation or a murder would be treated with due process; the police will handle an Arab charged with the same crime as if he or she were already guilty. The Arab may be insulted, handled physically, detained or harassed, but not so the Jew. Toward Jews the police act like public servants; toward Arabs they act like masters and guardians of law and order. Similar discriminatory practices are experienced in financing schools, public health, and municipal services: funding per capita in Jewish communities is much higher than funding in Arab communities, largely because of state biased contributions.

However, the most condemning circumstantial evidence comes from political parties in the *Knesset*. As far back as the early 1960s, Golda Meir is reported to have declared that she would not form a government dependent on the votes of Arab *Knesset* members for a majority. In 1990 one of the religious parties has refused to join a coalition that depends on votes of the Arab *Knesset* members to form a majority. Is it possible that the parliament of a democratic country would have two classes of members, some more equal than others, uniquely differentiated by the ethnic (racial) origin of the members? This is happening in Israel.

So far this is the story of an Arab citizen of Israel. An Arab citizen of another country, if he or she ventures to travel to (his/her home) Israel, as Palestinian-born Arabs tend to do, he/she should be prepared for a special treat: they will be interrogated as if they were criminals; they will be searched much more thoroughly than others; they will be made to feel suspicious without a single cause for suspicion except the fact that they are Arabs. Jews of whatever citizenship traveling to the Arab countries, once given the visa, are neither harassed nor treated as less equal than others; Israelis traveling to Egypt are neither harassed nor treated as less equal than other visitors. In contrast, Arab Americans or French Arabs visiting Israel are given the special treatment: harassment, delay, and repetitious interrogation. However, visitors holding similar citizenships but who are not of Arab origin would not have to suffer such mistreatment.

Treatment of the Arabs in the Occupied Territories is something different altogether. In the name of security their land is made out of bounds and confiscated together with the water and mineral rights, all of which are then made accessible to the Jews. In the name of security Arabs are put under emergency laws which deprive them

of all rights of due process, regardless of their age, sex, occupation, or participation in politics or public affairs -- simply because they are Arabs. This treatment preceded the Intifadah (uprising), which began in Dec. 1987. Since then the severity of these measures has multiplied: detention, bone breaking, crippling, killing, deportation, collective punishment, and school and university closures are a sample of what public agencies do. Individual soldiers and armed civilians act worse. How many of those abused Arabs are innocent of any wrongdoing or of any threat to security will never be known because the "punishment" most often comes before the judgment. It is sometimes argued that the Arabs in the Occupied Territories are ruled according to the British Mandate laws, but those laws were colonialist racist laws, and Israel applies them arbitrarily, not by agreement of the ruled.

Arabs from the Occupied Territories are allowed to work in Israel. They commute long distances and waste many hours on the road, not only because of the distance but also because of the red tape and screening operations they have to go through before reaching their jobs. Yet they are not allowed to spend the night in Israel close to their jobs. They are given no work benefits like others, and they have no security of employment simply because they are Arabs.

These illustrations find many parallels in the countries that are known as racist. Israel denies that it is racist. Israeli officials have tried hard to combat the analogy between Israel and racist South Africa. But in view of the abundant circumstantial evidence of racist behavior, Israel has yet to prove its innocence.

"The right of self-determination is a universal principle. We have always and everywhere been among the most fervent defenders of this principle. We are entirely for the right of self-determination of all peoples, of all individuals, of all groups, and it follows that the Arab in Palestine has the right of self-determination. This right is not limited, and cannot be qualified by our own interest... it is possible that the realization of the aspirations (of the Palestinian Arabs) will create serious difficulties for us but this is not a reason to deny their rights..."

-David Ben Gurion, 1931

## **SADDAM HUSSEIN FACES THE WORLD**

### **August 1990**

Western powers and some of the Arab countries have united in condemning him, the United Nations Security Council has resolved against him, and some countries have prepared for military action against him. What is it that Saddam Hussein has done that is so out of the ordinary, so shocking or so threatening to the world to deserve what he is getting?

The case against Hussein may be seen in different ways: as military invasion of another country, as violating the sovereignty of another country, forcing a change of its regime and system, and then annexing it, and as manipulating oil resources to raise oil prices on the international market. Other charges are usually made such as Hussein's miserable record against human rights, the corruption of his regime, and his absolute and harsh rule against minorities and citizens within his own country. Strangely enough Saddam Hussein shares most of these abhorrent behaviors with many leaders of other countries. However, he is condemned because his is the latest of these kinds of behavior, and because he has invaded Kuwait, a satellite country of the United States.

Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, with which Iraq has always had a territorial conflict and a claim over its territory, carved out as a separate entity by a foreign country, Britain. He invaded presumably because the regime that ruled Kuwait was violating resolutions of OPEC on the amount of oil to be drilled, thus endangering a target oil price. Kuwait was overproducing, presumably under pressure from the United States, to the disadvantage of other OPEC members. It is, however, not clear whether the international community is concerned because of the use of violence by Hussein, or in sympathy with the Kuwaiti deposed regime, or simply for fear of losing the relatively cheap oil resources.

As for violence, Hussein was simply imitating others: Britain used violence in the Falkland Islands; the US used violence in Granada and Panama, in Vietnam, Libya, and indirectly in Afghanistan, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. So did Israel in Iraq, Tunisia, and Lebanon, and it continues to occupy territory by force. The Soviet Union dispatched the military against one of its own states, Latvia, even though Latvia had no military of its

own. Therefore, if the condemnation is against the use of violence and the military against other sovereign countries, Saddam Hussein and Iraq share that dishonor with the countries most outspoken against them.

If, on the other hand, Saddam Hussein is blamed for deposing the Kuwaiti regime, one must question the honesty of the champions of democracy around the world who bemoan the fall of a regime like that of Kuwait: absolute, archaic, unrepresentative, nepotistic, and simply contrary to all meanings of democracy. Given that the regime would not be expected to change itself, change must come by a coup. Saddam Hussein expedited the process, which was bound to take place sooner or later. However, Saddam Hussein would have been more convincing had he let the people of Kuwait express themselves on what form of government they should have.

Some of Hussein's most severe critics are worried that he may be planning to expand into Saudi Arabia, topple its regime, and control its oil. Saudi Arabia, however, is a different case: Iraq has no claims on or territorial conflicts with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has been subtle in undermining the resolutions of OPEC regarding oil production. Saudi Arabia is much more powerful than Kuwait was and could be a much harder nut to crack; Saddam Hussein knows that. This, however, does not mean that Saudi Arabia's regime is safe and secure. The Saudi regime is even more archaic and outdated than was the Kuwaiti regime. Respect for human rights in Saudi Arabia is a joke. The so-called "welfare state" is a form of paternalism, which has little to do with rights of citizens, and the price for that paternalism is absolute silence on all matters political in nature. Representation in governance or state affairs is nonexistent. Waste and corruption are covered by the wealth of the country, which is disposed of by the ruling family and its army of princes. Is this the democracy the United States tries to promote around the world? If Saddam Hussein does not depose that regime, someone else will, most probably from within. How else will the Middle East ever catch up with the rest of the world, and what value does Western education acquired by young generations of Arabs have if they were to accept an unrepresentative and undemocratic regime for ever?

Probably the most serious case against Saddam Hussein is that now he will be able to control a large segment of the oil reserves, which the industrial countries count on for relatively cheap energy. Enforcing the oligopoly of OPEC will of course raise the price of oil and cause some redistribution of wealth from oil consumer countries to producer countries, which include the US, the Soviet Union, and England. But the oil price hike can hardly be as disastrous as it is made to be. First, energy is only a small portion of the input in most industries. Second, the price of oil must be compared with the prices of goods purchased by the oil producers from the industrialized countries or oil consumers. Third, given that oil is paid for in dollars and the value of the dollar has declined overtime, much of the price hike tends to be wiped out rapidly. Finally, a large part of the oil revenues are recycled back into the consumer countries either as payment for imports, both military and civilian, or as loans and investments in those countries. What is unclear, however, is why do these various countries care who controls the oil; the oil has to be sold on the market regardless who owns it. Did Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States help to keep the prices low?

The use of violence and the military by Hussein or anyone else cannot be condoned. Yet, in the absence of means of bringing about change when change seems necessary, resorting to violence and the military seems to be the standard approach in the

modern world. But to combat violence with violence and military and economic warfare can only escalate the conflict. Furthermore, imposing an embargo on Iraqi and Kuwaiti oil will raise oil prices still higher, curtail exports to those and other countries, and endanger foreign interests in the M.E. region. Finally, an embargo against Iraq may force the Arab countries, even those that are critical of Saddam Hussein at the present time, to stand by him against the outside countries.

This does not mean that nothing can or should be done. On the contrary, specific steps may be necessary against lawless behavior wherever it occurs. In fact, Saddam Hussein has already opened the door for negotiations. However, any action that seems appropriate must come only through the United Nations. Unilateral or multilateral action by other countries with vested interests of their own can only replace one bully with another and perpetuate what may be considered the law of the jungle. At the same time, it may be more constructive to recognize the need for change in certain countries and help bring about change by more peaceful means. Change of the regime in Kuwait and in several other countries of the Middle East has become necessary and unavoidable, if these countries are to join the family of developed, democratic, and modern nations. Protecting outdated, unrepresentative, traditionally imposed, and undemocratic regimes may postpone the change but cannot prevent it. It is time for the international community to recognize that fact and act accordingly.

## **THE GULF CRISIS AND THE PALESTINIANS**

### **September 1990**

One may look in vain for news of the Palestinians, the Occupied Territories (OT), the Intifadah, or the conflict with Israel. It seems as if the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel no longer exists, as if people are not killed or injured, as if Universities are not closed by the occupation authorities at will, and as if the occupation army has gone on vacation. Of course the opposite is true. No improvement in the situation in the OT has taken place, the absence of any news of trouble notwithstanding. The fact is that distraction from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been a major side effect of the encounter between Saddam Hussein and his opponents. The only hint of the existence of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the media is the infrequent, unfriendly and unflattering reference to Yasser Arafat's alleged support of Saddam Hussein and his so-far fruitless efforts to bring about a diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis -- Arafat actually reserved his vote to be able to mediate.

Three observations may be highlighted at this point: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict still exists; the Palestinians are suffering because of the Gulf turmoil; and the Gulf crisis may offer an opportunity for the Palestinians and Israelis to promote peace between them if they choose to take it.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict still exists, even though it is ignored by the Western media and possibly in the Middle Eastern media. The occupation army is still in place, the Intifadah is still alive, and the suffering and deprivation of Palestinians continue. The loud support of Saddam Hussein by many Palestinians is nothing but a sign of despair and readiness to hang on to any leader who might offer even a tiny bit of hope for a reasonable solution of their conflict with Israel. Their public support of Saddam Hussein is not one of jubilation but of agony for the failure of other Arab leaders to help solve their conflict and alleviate their misery. Saddam Hussein's system of dictatorship, oppression, and violation of the sovereign rights of a neighbor is contrary to

the proclaimed ideals of the Palestinians. The Palestinians' objective has been to live peacefully in a democratic, secular, and secure state of their own. The fact that the Palestinians have rushed to support a different system can only be a sign of despair and a cry for help from a world that seems to ignore them. It is true that the Iraqis have treated them better than the Kuwaitis have, even though the Kuwaitis have paid them more for their services. However, this treatment cannot explain the widespread support of Iraq's resort to violence against a smaller and weaker neighboring country--what security would a small state of Palestine have without trust in international law and respect for sovereignty by each and every nation?

The Palestinians may have not yet calculated the fallout effects of the Gulf crisis and the adventures of Saddam Hussein. For example, one apparent effect has been to put the Palestinian Israeli conflict on a backburner in the international agenda. This sudden neglect of the conflict by the international and Arab communities can only be a boon for Israeli policy makers. Now they can expand settlement in the OT without criticism or opposition from the outside. They can deal with the Intifadah in their own way without fear of sanction or condemnation (verbal or otherwise). Israel can also tighten its grip on the OT in the name of security and defense, pointing out both the vulnerability of small sovereign nations in the region and the support the Palestinians have given to aggression against such nations.

The fallout, however, may be seen in more tangible and material terms. Tens of thousands of Palestinians who had made a decent living in Kuwait are now unemployed. Those who work in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states must now be in a precarious position, if only because they are under surveillance as suspicious characters opposed to those regimes. Financial support for the Palestinians and their various institutions from Kuwait and other Gulf states may be a thing of the past, unless Arafat succeeds in bringing about a diplomatic solution or manages to mend fences with these states.

On the wider international scene the fallout is not any less damaging. Failure to support UN resolutions may have weakened the Palestinians' demand that Israel respect UN resolutions in their favor. It may also have weakened the credibility of their promises to abide by these resolutions and live peacefully in a state of their own side by side with Israel. Furthermore, there is little doubt that the sympathy they may have enjoyed, little as it may have been, in the United States, Europe, and even the USSR, has been negatively affected as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Yet, in spite of all these aggravating and discouraging developments, there may be a new glimpse of hope as a result. While the world is busy with oil and the threat of war in the Gulf area, the Palestinians and Israelis can talk with each other soberly about peace and a solution of their conflict. This may be a good time for quiet unmediated diplomacy, especially between Israeli authorities and Palestinian leaders within the OT.

A number of factors tend to argue for this process. Though Saddam Hussein may be making threatening statements, Israel should feel more secure now than before the crisis broke out. On one hand, the Arab countries are divided and preoccupied with their own problems. On the other, the United States' and forces of other nations friendly to Israel are camped in the Middle East and can interfere at a moment's notice.

On their side, the Palestinians know that compromise and diplomacy are their only way to an acceptable solution. Also, recognized PLO leaders admit that only a few hundred thousand Palestinians may be repatriated into a Palestinian state. If so, it follows

that the major action and burden in dealing with Israel must belong to the residents of the OT. Local leadership, therefore, must shoulder the responsibility of dealing directly with Israel, and they can do so now, quietly, without the fanfare of international forums or shuttle diplomacy. They can meet in Jerusalem, Nablus, or Tel Aviv instead of New York, Washington, London, or Geneva. They can deal with small immediate issues as well as big and long term ones. In fact this process may have begun with the agreement signed by local Palestinian leaders and a select group of Knesset (Parliament) members on August 6, 1990 in Jerusalem.

The process, however, can be advanced only by positive actions and reactions by the Palestinians and Israelis. Several steps may be taken toward peace without risking any of the basic goals and national objectives. For example, unannounced reductions of Israeli military presence in urban and non-strategic locations in the OT may be reciprocated by reductions of violent protests by the residents. Allowing schools and universities to open would remove a major grievance, especially if the military will stay away from the campuses and leave internal discipline to the institutions themselves. Israel could also improve relations dramatically by reducing obstacles to economic and business activities, at no cost to themselves and with much gain to the population. Israel can adjust the system of tax assessment and collection, reorganize health services, and help to build the debilitated infrastructure by placing most of these responsibilities in the hands of the local Palestinian authorities, not the Civil Administration appointed by the military commander.

In conclusion, by quiet diplomacy and good will, the two parties can sow the seeds for a permanent solution and initiate the transition from a pragmatic undeclared autonomy to self-government. This will give the Palestinians the challenge they have been asking for, and it will give the Israelis the relief they have been wanting for a long time. Once these building blocks are in place, the structure of peace will be much easier to erect within formal negotiated agreements. The Palestinians and Israelis have a great opportunity; let us hope they take it.

## **THE GULF CRISIS, THE UNITED NATIONS, AND PEACE**

**October 1990**

War is not inevitable and a peaceful solution is certainly possible, even though the US and Iraq have entrapped themselves with their rhetoric into untenable situations. Nevertheless, ways can be found for Presidents Bush and Hussein to get out of those positions gracefully and pursue a negotiated settlement.

One may oppose Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and its oppressive policies and violations of human rights, including the taking of innocent civilian hostages, but it is important to note that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf crisis did not occur in a vacuum. Let us take a look at the context:

1. Kuwait was a part of the Basra Wilaya (Province), an integral part of Iraq, until the British came to the Middle East. Kuwait was carved out of Iraq and the boundaries were established by force, despite the continued protests of Iraq, under all its regimes since the end of Ottoman rule in 1918--Saddam Hussein did not create the problem; it existed before he was born.

2. At least 20 documented attempts have been made by various Iraqi governments to engage the Kuwaiti rulers in negotiations to resolve the boundary issues, to no avail. The Kuwait rulers always asked to postpone, reconsider or simply ignored such requests.

3. There is no international institutional mechanism or framework to correct errors or revise established boundaries, unless the big powers impose such action. Britain and the US apparently have always been opposed to any revision of those boundaries.

4. Judgments by the World Court of Justice and resolutions by the United Nations have been selectively implemented, usually only at the behest of a superpower. Hence, small countries have had little reason to entrust their fate to these institutions with any hope of success in relieving their grievances. Military attacks, violations of sovereignty, and occupations of other lands have aroused little attention from the international community. Examples of these violations include US military actions in Panama, Grenada, and Libya, the UK's invasion of the Falkland Islands, Israeli and Syrian penetrations in Lebanon, Israel's territorial war gains in Palestine in 1948 and its

continued occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights of Syria, and its later attacks on Iraq and Tunisia. Little international action was taken to bring comfort to the victims of these violations of sovereignty and of foreign military occupation.

5. Immediately before the present crisis Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were undermining the economic interests of other OPEC countries by overproducing oil and lowering the prices, even though they had agreed to comply with OPEC resolutions to regulate production. Their actions entailed high economic costs to those other countries.

However, the US has greatly escalated the crisis by its actions and reactions. For example, sooner than it should have:

1. It condemned Iraq and started sending troops to Saudi Arabia before the UN had resolved to impose any sanctions. Iraq was not allowed a hearing before troop movements began.

2. The US applied pressure on other nations, including bribery, to have them join the alliance; neighboring countries are now standing in line to reap economic benefits from their participation in the military build up in the Gulf.

3. The US has virtually rendered the alliance forces as mercenary forces doing the bidding of Gulf oil States, having those states foot the bill. Ironically, the oil countries do not pay for the military expenses; we, the consumers of oil do, since prices have more than doubled and Saudi Arabia and other oil countries are realizing a windfall.

4. Most important of all, the US has escalated the crisis by its vague definition of the policy objectives: is the US trying to protect state sovereignty, democracy, the ruling dynasties of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, or simply assure relatively cheap supplies of oil? Some of these objectives, if well defined, may be easily realized without war, such as the supply of oil; others may not be worth protecting.

Few people have been searching for peace. For example:

1. International efforts have concentrated on condemnation, threats, sanctions, military build up, and the creation of military bases in the Gulf area. In contrast, little effort has been expended on finding peaceful solutions. Even the few efforts made by King Hussein and Yasser Arafat have been scorned and undermined by the US and Britain. UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar has publicly decried this lack of concentrated effort to search for peace.

2. UN Security Council resolutions have been passed, one after another, with little discussion or consideration of their potential impact or cost of implementation, leaving little room for debate or negotiation, or for safe conduct for Iraq out of the crisis.

3. Though various countries have rushed to “defend” Saudi Arabia, there is little evidence that Saudi Arabia was threatened. The rush to protect Saudi Arabia can be interpreted only as an excuse to create military bases in the region, as well as to subdue Iraq and secure Middle East oil cheaply.

4. The economic embargo on Iraq is equivalent to a war, especially if it includes prohibition of trade in food, medicine, and other basic necessities of life. In fact, such measures, which hurt civilians and innocent people more than all others can be as cruel and inhumane as taking hostages or declaring war. Ironically, the embargo may be one of the most effective inducements to develop the economy of Iraq and increase its self-reliance and domestic food security.

5. Little assessment has been made of the costs of military action in the Gulf area. Given the destructive capability of the weapons on both sides, the harshness of the

terrain, and the density of urban population, the costs are bound to be extremely high in material and human resources. In addition, a high degree of fallout may be expected should war breakout, such as hitting an Islamic holy place or shrine; drawing Israel into the war and mobilizing Arab armies against Israel and the US alliance; or destroying the oil wells and installations in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the other Gulf states, all of which are distinct possibilities.

As long as policy makers are talking, war can be avoided. However, to approach peace with any hope of success, the United Nations, as the only true broker for peace, must guarantee the following:

1. No people will be starved by the embargo imposed by the United Nations. To blame the obstinacy of Iraq's leaders for such results is not an excuse.

2. Protection of sovereignty must be accompanied by institutional mechanisms to prevent terror against or infringement on the rights of others by any country, while that country hides behind the veil of sovereignty.

3. Implementation of UN resolutions must be conducted by direct command under the UN flag, contrary to the present multination, poorly coordinated efforts, which increase the risk of war through error and mismanagement, and undermine the international identity of the force.

4. Implementation of UN resolutions must be generalized to deal with other outstanding issues in the region and elsewhere. Biased, selective passage and implementation of resolutions tend to undermine the rule of law and make a mockery of genuine international attempts to bring about peace where conflict prevails.

5. Any resolution of the immediate crisis must contain the elements necessary to address the long-standing grievances of Iraq and to reach a permanent solution of the conflict between Iraq and its neighbors. Furthermore, restoring sovereignty to Kuwait should not necessarily mean restoring the Sabah dynasty to power; the people of Kuwait should determine who shall govern them and how.

6. UN action in the present crisis should be of such quality and effectiveness as to set a precedent for the future and convince all countries that the international rule of law will prevail in the future. Wise, fair, and least painful action will establish such a precedent.

To pursue peace, the following steps may be suggested:

1. The UN Security Council should resolve again that all efforts will be expended to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. Elements of a peaceful solution may include assurances that Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait will be accompanied or at least followed by: a) negotiations regarding the outstanding Iraqi grievances against Kuwait; b) reduction and eventual withdrawal of foreign forces from the region; and c) a lifting of the economic embargo against Iraq.

2. The United Nations Secretary General should be requested to appoint a Peace Committee to search for options that may be pursued. Excellent candidates for such a committee would be former US President Jimmy Carter, King Hussein of Jordan, and former President of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias Sanchez. If there is a chance for peace, these three people together with Javier Perez de Cuellar are most likely to find it.

**ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIA<sup>7</sup>**  
**November 1990**  
**B. Glassburner**

Indonesia is a huge archipelago, which provides a homeland for 180 million people. When Indonesia's revolutionary leaders fought for and won independence from the Dutch in the late 1940s, they adopted as a motto for their national crest "Unity in Diversity." For, although Indonesia is in many respects a geographic extension of the Malay Peninsula, it is vastly more diverse ethnically and linguistically than her sister state, Malaysia. There are approximately 200 distinct ethnic subgroups, and more than 300 languages and dialects spoken across this vast island chain.

Although this richness of human resources and cultural variety makes Indonesia one of the world's most interesting nations, it comes with a price in terms of ethnic frictions. The dominant ethnic group is the Javanese, who are barely the majority, with approximately 90 million persons, inhabiting most of the island of Java. Understandably, the government is dominated by the Javanese, a fact, which is not appreciated by such proud and dynamic people as the Minangkabau and Bataks of Sumatra, nor by the Buganese of Slawesi. Government officials serving in Bali or Sumatra may be referred to as "overseas Javanese."

It is one of the major achievements of the incumbent government under President Suharto, Indonesia's second president, that there have been no geographic or ethnically based efforts at secession or *coups d'etat*. By contrast, the predecessor government, under Sukarno, had to deal with almost constant battles with dissidents in West Java, West Sumatra, South Sulawesi, and the Moluccas. Nor was this "unity in diversity" achieved merely by military force--although the unification and professionalization of the military has been part of Suharto's nation-building achievements. Political stability has also been supported, at least until recently, by this government's economic achievements, which have included the sharing of the benefits of economic growth with the people in the outer islands generally, and with the agricultural sector particularly.

---

<sup>7</sup>

This is not to say that ethnic harmony has been fully achieved. The annoyance of the Balinese, Achinese, and Menadonese at being ruled from Jakarta remains just beneath the surface--and readily rises to the surface when stimulated, even in ordinary conversation. However, there is only one politically important source of ethnic friction as President Suharto approaches the end of his fourth five-year term. This is the widespread concern from indigenous Indonesians of every variety caused by the growing economic power of Indonesians of Chinese descent. Chinese-Indonesians represent less than 3 percent of the total population, but their position in commerce, banking, and industry is out of all proportion to their numbers.

This is partially explained in historical terms. The ancestors of the Chinese-Indonesians of today were originally the "guest workers" of the Dutch East Indies, brought to do dock and construction work, much as their brothers and cousins were imported to build railroads in the Western United States. In time, their concentration in the port areas of Jakarta (then Batavia), Surabaya, Medan and Makassar led to their involvement in both legal and illegal trade. They also retained their ties to relatives and friends of Chinese descent in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the southern provinces of China.

The powerful Dutch and English trading companies had no difficulty in dealing with this network, and, indeed, very successfully co-opted it and used it as a highly productive auxiliary trade and finance system. The Dutch colonials easily convinced themselves that non-Chinese in general, and Javanese, in particular, were unsuited for trade and industry, or for entrepreneurship generally. This was thought to be because of their cultural and socio-psychological makeup. Ironically, the economic policies of this Javanese-led government have brought the issue of Chinese-Indonesian economic power to the top of the political agenda in the Indonesia of 1990. Once the oil boom became the oil bust of the early 1980s, the Indonesian economy, which had been growing for more than 15 years at more than 7 percent per year, stalled almost completely. The gush of foreign exchange from oil exports became a trickle, and the nation faced a balance of payments and fiscal crises. Responding boldly, Indonesia's economic leaders prescribed opening the economic system, reducing protection, eliminating monopolies, and encouraging non-oil exports. The strategy has worked amazingly well.

But the body politic is not happy with this result. The surge in growth, which has come in the late 1980s, has been led by the private sector -- in banking, exporting, importing, and manufacturing of goods for export. Highly visible among those leading the new charge have been the Chinese-Indonesians. Of course many Pribumi (indigenous) Indonesians have shared in this boom, but the popular conception is that even the Pribumi firms have been operated in cooperation (or collusion) with Chinese-Indonesian financial and managerial resources. While the reality is much less sharp than the perception, it is the perception that matters from a political standpoint. The government is criticized as having allowed the Chinese minority to capture far more wealth than can be justified by their contribution to the generation of that wealth; and it is also seen as contributing to inequity in income distribution.

The facts of the matter are not clear-cut. There are no adequate statistics on income distribution available in Indonesia. The impression of rampant Chinese accumulation of wealth is based on the extremely visible new banking offices in every major city, many of which are Chinese-owned, the expensive houses and cars to be seen

in Chinese neighborhoods, and the general knowledge of huge profits of growing Chinese-led businesses. And a recent financial scandal at the largest non-Chinese bank (Bank Duta) has added fuel to the flames of ethnic friction in the country.

A further irony is that the society has become more liberal in the last six months, where expression of political views is concerned. As a consequence, newspaper editorials dealing with the problem of “conglomerates,” as large Chinese firms are euphemistically referred to, are appearing daily, and foreign newspapers and magazines, such as the Asian Wall Street Journal and the Far Eastern Economic Review are allowed to circulate freely, even when containing discussions of these problems -- whereas only a few months ago they would have been banned.

A heartening by-product has been a spate of discussion of ways to improve the situation by more complete integration of Indonesians of Chinese descent into the Indonesian community. One can only hope that the clear heads responsible for this liberal line of thought will prevail, for the sake of both the economic and social health of this great country.

Bruce Glassburner is Professor of Economics Emeritus at the University of California, Davis, and a lifetime expert on Indonesia.

**THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND THE GULF CRISIS<sup>8</sup>**  
**December 1990**  
**Don Perez**

Although the US and Israeli governments insist that there is no linkage between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the current crisis in the Gulf, occasioned by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, examination of the two phenomena refutes this claim. The invasion was no isolated event unrelated to the wide spectrum of contemporary Middle East political, economic, and social developments. An eruption was nearly inevitable, given the current instability of the region. Others have written of the great disparity between the wealthiest and most impoverished countries in the Middle East, of the vast gaps between rich and poor within nearly every nation in the area, and of the social and political unrest caused by these inequalities. Others too have described the extent to which western nations, particularly the US, have for decades ignored their own prolific waste of energy, causing them to become over dependent on Middle East oil.

A corollary of these developments is the extent to which most countries of the Middle East have become so heavily armed. Failure of western nations to deal rationally with their own energy needs made them so dependent on the Middle East that they have expended billions of dollars for the region's oil, which in turn enabled producers like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates to acquire weapons in greater quantity and level of sophistication than most members of NATO. Indeed, these weapons were acquired not only by the nations with large oil revenues, but also by those countries like Egypt and Syria which were provided with funds from Saudi Arab and Kuwait to make the acquisitions possible.

As Arab nations acquired armament from the Soviet Union, France, the US or other western nations, Israel demanded that it too be provided with the latest aircraft, artillery etc., to match the weaponry of its enemies or potential enemies. Thus, the US itself became a major supplier to antagonists on both sides of the conflict, selling

---

<sup>8</sup> Don Peretz is a Professor of Political Science at State University of New York, Binghamton; his most recent book is Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising, Westview Press, 1990

weapons to Arab oil producers or to their clients, while matching its own sales to Arabs with gifts of military finery to Israel.

Iraq was an integral component of this ever-escalating cycle in the Middle East arms race. It too benefited from the oil-arms formula, becoming perhaps the most heavily armed of all in the Middle East. Without these weapons neither Iraq nor Iran would have been able to wage an eight year war, nor would the other Arab States and Israel have become a threat to each other. The reason that Iraq today is perceived as a threat is not because of its own engineering or technological ingenuity, but because it has acquired such vast stores of weapons from the nations that now regard it as dangerous. It was able to acquire these weapons because the West had become so dependent on its oil and the oil of its neighbors, that these Middle East states were able to acquire from those now threatened, the means to make such threats. Thus, both Eastern and Western blocs, particularly the US and the USSR, are as responsible for the current Gulf crisis and the continuing Arab- Israeli conflict as the nations of the Middle East.

For decades the US and the USSR failed to reach arms limitation agreements, although many observers pointed out that weapons supplied by each bloc were making the region a principal threat to world peace. Now, because of such shortsightedness, the Middle East has become the principal threat to world peace. Because nations like Israel, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia are so heavily armed, they have become overconfident, believing that their military might obviates the need for political compromise. Each of these once third and fourth level nation states suffers from illusions that it is capable of threatening, not only its neighbors, but also the international consensus. Were it not for the arms that Israel acquired from the US, would it be able to resist a compromise on the Occupied Territories? Would Iraq continue to flout the United Nations over Kuwait were it not for the weapons it received from the Soviet Union and France? Would Syria be so determined to maintain its stand in Lebanon were it not for the funds it received from the oil rich Saudis to purchase Soviet planes, tanks, and artillery? Would Saudi Arabia be so determined to settle the current crisis through military means were it not for the military infrastructure created for it by the United States?

President Bush has stated that his administration will not even consider any other problem in the Middle East until Iraq has been driven from Kuwait--a position not unlike a physician dealing with a cancer patient who says, "to Hell with the causes of the disease! Let us operate on the victim, regardless of the outcome, and then we will examine the causes of his illness!" Bush, some of his generals, and a number of their supporters in the press state that the world will not be safe until Saddam Hussein is put in his place, implying that "stability and order" will return to the Middle East after Iraq has been dealt this blow, as if Saddam Hussein is the cause of all troubles in the region, a perception based on "*status quo* thinking" that disregards the instability caused by the Arab-Israeli conflict, resource mismanagement, the arms race, corrupt political systems, and the shortsightedness of the West.

The potential consequences of the war required to drive Iraq from Kuwait are far more disastrous than most people imagine; the costs are far greater than the costs of accepting some form of compromise. Others have analyzed these consequences and costs. What then is to be done?

If another such eruption is to be avoided at some other point in the Middle East, then the causes of this outbreak must be dealt with in a rational manner. No one cause is

paramount. Therefore, they must all be dealt with on equal terms, probably through the United Nations in a series of international conferences involving the nations of the Middle East, the five permanent members of the U. N. Security Council, and other interested parties. The Arab-Israeli conflict is of equal importance in these discussions for it was the spark that ignited the arms race leading to the present situation. Of equal importance are issues such as equitable international distribution of energy resources, development of environmentally safe alternative energy sources, gradual demilitarization of the Middle East, establishment of the region as a nuclear and chemical weapons free zone, developmental assistance to impoverished nations and classes within the region through better resource management, and the problem of water resources distribution.

Many will say that such an approach is Pollyannaish and over idealistic or unrealistic. The realistic alternative is a war that will probably involve most nations of the Middle East including Israel, costs so high that the economies of Middle East nations and the US will be seriously imperiled, another long term stalemate in which each of the problems noted above becomes greatly intensified, and still another war in a generation or less.

## **THE POVERTY OF US DIPLOMACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **January 1991**

The United States policy in the Middle East has never been considered successful, but now it has proved to be a failure. It has drifted from dependence on pseudo-diplomacy to the language of the jungle, clearly illustrated by the diplomacy practiced by both President Bush and Secretary Baker in addressing the conflict with Iraq and its President Saddam Hussein. The language they have used is hardly artful, economical, polished, conducive to problem solving, or realizing objectives as diplomacy is meant to be. If anything, it testifies to the poverty of US diplomacy and the inadequacy of its American practitioners.

According to Webster's dictionary, "diplomacy" means: "1. Art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations, as in arranging treaties. 2. Artful management in securing advantages without arousing hostilities; address or tact." This definition does not stipulate that diplomacy applies only to certain people or certain situations. It applies to all situations, and the graver and more complex they are, the more invaluable diplomacy becomes.

The US administration, with unmistakable encouragement from Britain, has flouted all standards of diplomacy in addressing the conflict with Iraq and its president. It is true that Iraq has violated the international consensus by invading Kuwait and annexing it as Iraq's 19th province. It is also true that President Saddam Hussein's action was an affront to the normal standards of diplomacy and conflict resolution. But it is exactly in these difficult situations that shrewd and seasoned diplomacy by the other parties should be most useful. It is when the crisis is complex and dangerous that the art of diplomacy can be most helpful. Unfortunately the US approach has been the exact opposite of seasoned diplomacy or the artful tactic of dealing with the crisis.

The US declared its military option even before the UN Security Council met to consider the options to be followed by the international community and certainly before the first UN resolution was adopted. The US had that resolution passed almost in record time, without giving Iraq a chance to explain or argue its cares and claims against Kuwait. The US pressured and bribed other nations to form a coalition against Iraq, leaving little room for diplomacy by other countries to run its course.

While the US was building its military strength in Saudi Arabia and the Persian/Arab Gulf, the language and dictionary of diplomacy seem to have been virtually

abandoned even at the highest level of the US administration. President Saddam Hussein was publicly called a liar, an aggressor, cruel, ruthless, another Hitler, and many other names that have no place in diplomacy.

Contrary to the principles of diplomacy, little attempt was made to understand Iraq's counterview. Contrary to diplomatic expectations, little room was left for negotiation. Contrary to diplomatic behavior, little "artful management" was demonstrated. Contrary to the objectives of diplomacy, the positions of the parties were hardened as a result, rather than reconciled in search of a solution. In other words, the US has opted not only to imitate Iraq's most undiplomatic behavior in Kuwait by resorting to force, but it has abandoned the language of diplomacy in favor of the language of the gun.

The US leaders went farther by undermining efforts of other world leaders trying to apply diplomacy. The efforts of President Mitterrand to mediate have hardly received any encouragement. The foreign ministers of the EEC were pressured into canceling a scheduled meeting with Iraq's Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, following the breakdown of negotiations regarding the prospective meeting of Secretary Baker with President Saddam Hussein. Strangely enough the US president had issued the invitation for any time before the 15th of January. When the 12th was chosen, the US President changed his mind because that date was close to the deadline set by the Security Council for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. Yet, not only was that date within the period proposed by the US president, but also it would have necessitated a give-and-take approach and a return to the art of diplomacy.

As if to confirm his disregard for diplomacy as a means to conflict resolution, President Bush addressed a very undiplomatic letter in Arabic to President Hussein. This letter, from one president to another, which I have read in Arabic, reflects condescension, arrogance, and ignorance of the literary Arabic culture, as well as total disregard to diplomacy. It contains threats, one-sided charges and accusations, and a stiff language totally unacceptable in literary Arabic, especially between parties trying to achieve reconciliation and conflict resolution. Unfortunately the letter was justifiably rejected --as is common in diplomacy, and thus any hopes or expectations of promoting harmony were dashed.

Did President Bush intend to insult Saddam Hussein? I doubt it, for that would not be diplomatic. To write an insulting letter would not necessarily insult the addressee; it might actually be an insult to the writer. Did the President intend to abandon the language of diplomacy? If so, he did not have to write that letter; diplomacy had already been abandoned. Did President Bush write the letter in that form in order to have it rejected and thus add another political argument for the use of force? I like to think that President Bush would not have such a mean goal in mind. I am rather persuaded that the US President is surrounded by a group of ignorant unsophisticated advisors who have been misleading him throughout the crisis by their poor advice. These advisors go to the Middle East, but they hardly know it. They may read Arabic, but evidently do not understand it. And they prosper on the riches of the Middle East but have little respect for its culture or people.

The poverty and failure of US diplomacy are grave handicaps facing the administration. They undermine US efforts in world affairs, they incur costs that are avoidable, and they form formidable obstacles in the way of peaceful problem solving

and conflict resolution. Furthermore, as a world leader, the US can and should set the example in the search for and protection of peace; diplomacy in its true meaning is indispensable for that role. In the present conflict with Iraq, the abandonment of diplomacy and the failure to set a good example by the US may result in the death and injury of hundreds of thousands of people.

How much cheaper and more elegant it would be if we let diplomacy prevail, even if it takes more time, energy, and patience to achieve the objectives, because, then, all concerned would be winners.

Demonstrations for peace are taking place throughout the world, including in the Occupied Territories of Palestine. The Arabs in the Territories are demonstrating for peace for its own sake, and because they feel more vulnerable than Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli citizens receive gas masks at no direct expense to them because, according to official explanations, the costs are covered by the national insurance to which they contribute. Arab residents of the Occupied Territories, given that the Territories are not annexed to Israel, are not covered by that national insurance and are therefore required to pay for their gas masks, at the rate of \$20 a piece. These residents took their case to the Israeli High Court, which has just ordered the government of Israel to distribute masks and bear the cost. Now it appears that only 175,000 kits are in stock, though over 1.5 million kits would be needed.

However, regardless of the legalities, it seems unbelievable that Israel would dump the cost burden on the residents whose average incomes are barely above subsistence. Imagine a family of eight or ten, depending on one or two earners whose jobs may be temporary and less than full time, being able to pay \$160 to \$200 for masks in a lump sum. To put the burden on the family is almost like condemning such a family to face a gas war without the masks.

Israel could have avoided this problem in various ways: offering to pay for the masks as a good will gesture and as a humane action against war; offering options of very low installment payments; seeking funds from the outside or encouraging Palestinian leaders to seek funds from the outside; encouraging and allowing aid to the residents of the Occupied Territories from wealthy Palestinians in the Diaspora or from the PLO to pay for the masks. Any of these measures would demonstrate Israeli good will and provide the needed protection, without compromising the security or national objectives of either the Israelis or the Palestinians.

## **THE WAR, ITS IMPACT, AND WHAT COMES NEXT**

### **February 1991**

Eight sources of conflict warned that the war was imminent, though the time and form it would take were unpredictable. First, conflict over boundaries has existed since the end of the Ottoman rule and advent of the British domination, between Iraq and Kuwait, Transjordan and Palestine, and between Israel and Palestine. Another conflict has reflected the ideological and regime differences. Mu'ammarr Al Kadhafi of Libya stands on one end of a continuum and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia on the other. A third conflict has been over religious leadership and orthodoxy. King Fahd has declared himself *Khadim al-Haramayn* or Guardian of the Two most Sacred Shrines of Islam in Mecca and Medina. King Hussein of Jordan has opted for the title of Shareef Hussein, after his great grandfather who was known as Shareef of Mecca (most honored and noble in Mecca). Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran is considered by many as the only true Imam of modern Islam. Confessionalism in Lebanon, sectarianism in Sudan, and fundamentalism have been destabilizing forces throughout the Middle East. The fourth has been a conflict over regional leadership. The power of oil wealth has piled up in one country, while the power of people and knowledge has prevailed in another, as in the Gulf and Egypt respectively. Fifth has been the region's encounter with the West over its search for identity and independence from the colonial legacy. One Arab leader after another has tried to rescue his country from that burden, so far unsuccessfully, and western countries have been anything but helpful. To illustrate, USAID sends an army of experts to monitor dispensation of aid funds in Egypt but lets Israel chart its own plans. The US President does not even try to pronounce the name of Saddam Hussein correctly. He says Sadam instead of Saddam, even though this is a truly Arabic name, phonetic, and easy to pronounce. These may be minor issues but not so for a people trying to establish their identity and independence from foreign domination. A sixth source of conflict has been the dispute over the distribution of the Iran-Iraq war burden. Presumably the war was fought to protect Arab countries of the region from Khomeini's regime, but Iraq was left to carry the burden alone. A seventh problem has been the dispute over oil prices and production policies since 1973. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have often refused to support policies approved by a majority of the Arab oil producers, whether in enforcing an embargo against the US and Holland after the 1973 war or in protecting prices since 1982. Finally, the lack of a dependable international institutional mechanism for fair and just

adjudication has left those with claims almost helpless. The UN Security Council has been crippled by veto power and the superpowers have rarely acted with fairness and evenhandedness in dealing with Middle East issues. Hence, trouble was bound to come.

While the crisis should not have been a surprise, several of its features were. First, it was not expected that Iraq would invade and annex the whole of Kuwait, not just certain disputed oil fields, or seek only certain limited gains. Second, such a swift commitment of military by the US and an expeditious passage of a UN resolution demanding Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait were certainly unexpected. Nor was it expected that the presidents of both Iraq and the US would be so inflexible or that they would resort to such "rhetorical personalization" of the conflict as to preclude diplomacy and rush to war to solve the problem. For example, Iraq's offer to withdraw from Kuwait if Israel withdraws from the Occupied Territories of Palestine was treated with ridicule. Third, it was not expected that such a disproportionately massive military force would be committed against Iraq, nor that major centers of population would be subjected to incessant bombardment for weeks, as has been the case. Finally, it has been a shock to observe such a blatant disregard for the UN resolutions by the Coalition countries. They have arbitrarily expanded the goals of the UN resolution from liberation of Kuwait to destroying Iraq's infrastructure and industry and demolishing its military power.

The full impact is still unknown. Nevertheless, costs may be looked at in terms of economic and non-economic effects on the individual countries. Iraq and Kuwait are now battlefields. They suffer destruction of capital, depletion of resources, demolition of their infrastructure, and economic stagnation and decline. Jordan, though not a party to the war, has lost its tourism and half of its employment and now is threatened with loss of the meager aid it receives from the US. How long it can hold before a total breakdown is unclear. Saudi Arabia, though threatened, is still not much a part of the battlefield and its losses are only in the form of wasted oil revenue. However, if the example of the destroyed town of Khafji is to be repeated, the physical cost is bound to be immense. Egypt and Syria have lost employment opportunities in the Gulf and large amounts of remittances, but the aid they are receiving in return for their participation in the Coalition may be a boon. Egypt has already been forgiven about \$13.5 billion in debts, and other forms of aid are still coming. Israel, though not actively a party to the war, has suffered some ruin by SCUD missiles, but it is bound to come out well off economically. Rumors of over \$10 billion in aid from the US are widespread. The US economy, while far from the battlefield, will feel the impact through the depletion and destruction of capital stock, dislocations through the call up of reserves, and reallocation of resources away from the civilian economy. Alan Greenspan has warned of the gravity of what might come should the war last through April. Charles Shultz is dead wrong to measure the cost of the war only by its marginal impact on the budget, as if the destruction and depletion of stock paid for in previous periods does not count.

The non-economic effects, though they overlap with the former, are even more serious. Loss of life and limb, and disruption of families will hit all the countries involved. Pollution of the air by heavy bombardment, invasion and destruction of the natural desert environment by vast armies and their equipment, and pollution of the sea by oil slicks and sunken ships threaten the Middle East region with environmental disasters. Poison in the air would be catastrophic should the war escalate into chemical, biological, or nuclear warfare. Bitterness, hatred, and renewed enmities between a people

searching for identity and powers associated with imperialism are already in evidence. These feelings will sour even more now that starvation, disease, and dislocation of people as refugees, especially of nationals of noncombatant countries have become evident. Finally, there is the intangible but horrible degradation of human values by trivializing the loss of life in the conduct of war by all parties.

Relations between the US and the Middle East at the end of the war will depend on a number of factors. For instance, will Iran and Israel enter the war? How much damage to civilian life will occur? The more damage, the deeper will be bitterness of the Middle East people against an enemy that has traveled thousands of miles to hit them. The immediate cause of the war will become irrelevant. Another question is how will the victor and the international community treat the vanquished? Will there be vengeance or reconciliation? Will there be smooth and rapid withdrawal of foreign forces from the region once the war is ended? Secretary of State James Baker has suggested the creation of a reconstruction bank to help rebuild after the war. Will such a program be free of "imperialistic" and humiliating conditions or will it serve to perpetuate foreign dominance in the region? Most important, however, will be these two questions: 1) Will there be a mechanism to deal peacefully and fairly with outstanding issues that underlie the crises in the Gulf and the rest of the Middle East region, such as boundaries, self determination, civil and human rights? And 2), Will there be a commitment by the international community to apply measures to enforce UN resolutions against other countries similar to those that have been applied against Iraq, with particular reference to UN Resolutions 242 and 338 which mandate withdrawal of Israel from the Occupied Territories?

In as much as the war will end and Iraq will remain in the community of nations, it is quite appropriate to begin now to pave the road for a peaceful and harmonious relationship between Iraq and its current enemies. Several steps can be taken in that direction. For example, a well orchestrated campaign to inform and reassure the Iraqi people that peace, harmony, and justice can be restored with their cooperation and for their benefit. A US helping hand to the Iraqis and others who are suffering because of the war might help to impress on them the sincerity of the US and the truthfulness of its proclamations for a New International Order. For instance, what is wrong with letting food come into Iraq, now that a military solution has been selected? What is wrong with allowing in and even providing medical assistance now that the war has nullified the sanctions approach? What is wrong with announcing a date for an international peace conference to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict? And what is wrong with telling the Iraqi people that their claims over Kuwait will be adjudicated according to international law and procedure, even if they should be the vanquished? At the same time, steps may be taken to promote some form of democracy, respect for civil rights, and protection of human rights in those countries on whose behalf the Gulf war is being waged. It would be an insult to the principles of democracy and human and civil rights to send thousands of people to their death, if these principles are not respected in those same countries for which this human sacrifice is being made.

## **THE WAR OUTSIDE AND THE WAR INSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

### **March 1991**

Arab Americans are facing a test as harsh and trying as the test faced by the United States society at large. The former do so by trying to maintain good relations between their former home and their new home, and the latter by trying to assimilate its minorities into a healthy well integrated society. Arab Americans have roots and a rich heritage in Middle East society. They share its culture, language, religion, history, and the feelings and emotions they have in common with family and friends still residing in that region. At the same time, they have established roots in the United States, their new home in which they blend the old with the new, East with the West, and the traditional with the acquired. It is a marriage of choice intended for happiness and permanence, in good times and bad, and in peace and war. So far Arab Americans have passed the test of time and many crises. While relations between the US and M.E. countries have often gone sour, Arab Americans have been loyal, productive, and trustworthy citizens. The creation of Israel, the dispersion of the Palestinians, and the US sustained blind commitment to Israel and bias against the Palestinians, its conflict with Egypt in the late fifties and the sixties, its displeasure with Syria since the seventies, its conflict with and bombardment of Libya, its abandonment of Lebanon, and its current war with Iraq -- none of these has shaken the commitment of Arab Americans to their new country. They have tried to mediate, explain, pacify, and promote good relations between their two societies by being good constructive citizens, though not always successfully. Nor have they been adequately appreciated or allowed to integrate fully and peacefully in their new homeland. The current flurry of biased statements and rhetorical and violent attacks against Arab Americans are clear testimony to that effect. The US society has certainly failed the test of cherishing its citizens of Arab descent as welcome and equal.

Arab Americans have been subjected to discriminatory treatment for years. They have been tarnished by misguided stereotypes, misrepresented by distorted and inaccurate images, smeared with false accusations of harboring terrorism, and they have been subjected to Federal Bureau of Investigations without cause. Some of them have been physically harmed, their businesses destroyed, and their movements kept under surveillance for no reason other than their being of Arab descent, despite close to a century of loyalty and productive citizenship in this country.

Why has the US failed its citizens of Arab descent? How do we explain these anomalies of American democracy to the new generations of Arab American school children who find it necessary to seek refuge in the school principal's office during lunch hour to avoid harassment from other children? How to explain those same anomalies to other school children, who may befriend Arab children one day and see them discriminated against and mistreated the next day for no obvious reason or evident misbehavior on their part?

The only explanation that seems to make sense is that the US society, whether fighting a hot or cold war on the outside, has been suffering from and fighting a racial and ethnic war on the inside. Racial and ethnic minorities in the United States have yet to achieve equality of opportunity, full civil rights, or the security of feeling at home in the dream land that has been their home for generations.

It may come as a shock to hear that Blacks in America are still struggling for equality thirteen decades after their emancipation. It may be more shocking that various forms of racial and ethnic segregation still exist by intention and design and that the law of the land does not or cannot do anything about it. The Vice President of the United States recently found himself in an embarrassing situation when he played golf in a country club in Pacific Grove, California, that is closed to Blacks. Segregated country clubs exist in Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, Birmingham, and many other cities. Blacks can enter these clubs only as workers to open doors, park cars, do other menial jobs, but not as members, guests of members, or players -- even if they are potential champions. They are excluded presumably on the grounds that the country club is a private organization and its members are free to exclude Blacks if they so desire. It would be surprising if there were not as many clubs and civic groups that exclude Jews, Asians, women, and others from their ranks, all legally in the name of democracy and private ownership.

Mexican Americans (Chicanos) and other Latinos fare a little but not much better than Blacks, whether in terms of job selection, educational opportunities, or housing options. They face discrimination from other whites (Anglos) simply because of negative stereotypes, because they are different or because they are not strong enough politically to defend their rights. Asians in the US are of many subcultures: Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Filipinos, and others. Some of them are high on the scale of education, professionalism, and earnings, but all of them are subject to bias and discrimination. Many feel insecure even though they were born in this country. Their feelings of insecurity have been well demonstrated recently when Japanese Americans came to the protection of Arab Americans in the face of the recent wave of hatred and violence toward them. The Japanese Americans remember the unjust internment they were subjected to during WWII and they do not want Arab Americans to suffer the same simply because the US is at war with an Arab country.

It is true that discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities has prevailed in virtually all countries of the world, including the countries from which Arab Americans have emigrated. The American society did not invent racial segregation or ethnic discrimination. But the United States must be different from other countries. It has a written Constitution and a Bill of Rights that leave no place for discrimination against citizens. Unfortunately, neither the letter nor the spirit of the Constitution and Bill of Rights have been fully revered or respected. The segregators and discriminators have

somehow been able to evade the law and have paid little respect to the spirit and principles on which the Constitution and their cherished democracy are built.

Why do Anglo Americans (Anglos) choose to exclude Blacks, discriminate against Chicanos, or harass Arab Americans? Why do they fight against socio-political and economic integration, which are supposed to be inherent in the ideals and institutions of American society? What benefits do they realize, and what cost do they suffer or entail as a result of their discriminatory behavior?

It would be difficult to say exactly why people discriminate. The reasons differ between groups and situations. They may be “driven” to such behavior. For example, some may believe themselves superior and that “those who are not like us must be below us,” genetically inferior, educationally incapable, and therefore undeserving of equal treatment, the letter and the spirit of the Constitution notwithstanding. Others may resort to segregation and discrimination because of fear and insecurity generated by ignorance and lack of interaction with those they discriminate against. It is probably easier to resort to discrimination as a defense mechanism than to take a chance by getting to know the objects of their fear and insecurity. The club members who enjoy a “comfortable pew” in the sanctuary of their private club may find it easier to play superior and protector of private ownership, individualism, and false freedom than shed a mask that has served them in the past and may serve them in the future.

Still others may segregate and discriminate to protect the privileged opportunities available to them against stiffer competition within a larger pool that would include racial and ethnic minorities. Skin color and other physical features of ethnic minorities become excuses to keep competition restricted, as if in a reverse oligopoly of the many against the few. The fear of competition is best illustrated by discrimination against Jews and Asians who for a long time were excluded from many opportunities just because they were Jewish or Asian. Now that these two minorities have broken the barriers to some extent, the case against them has been turned around. They are now charged with being disproportionately overrepresented among financiers, intellectuals, and professionals, especially among academicians, as if it were a crime to have merit and enjoy it as guaranteed by the Constitution and the spirit of democracy that are supposed to be cherished in America.

If the above reasons for segregation suggest potential benefits, discrimination no doubt entails costs. Just think of the enmity and hatred it generates in the community. Think of the resources that go unutilized because they belong to the racial and ethnic minority subject to discrimination. Think of the resources that are wasted in the process of maintaining stability and harmony in a divided and unjust society. Think of the destruction and loss of property caused by violent behavior against minorities. And think of the moral dilemma in which the US gets entangled because of the contradictions between the behavior of the majority against the minority and the principles of equality and democracy America preaches around the world.

Arab Americans derive no comfort from the fact that others are also discriminated against. In fact it distresses them to no limit to know that the discriminatory behavior they suffer from and complain about represents a pattern that seems embedded in their new society. It gives them little security to learn that civil rights of Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans, or Chinese have yet to be realized, two centuries after the Constitution of the United States declared all people to be equal.

Nevertheless, Arab Americans may find some comfort in the fact that there has been some movement away from discrimination and segregation. They may find comfort in that in this country they can question, object to, and fight against discrimination. They should also find comfort in that they have the will, the capacity, and hopefully the determination to contribute in the struggle to achieve integration, equality, and security for themselves and for all others in the America they have come to call home.

**IF PEACE THERE SHALL BE, LET IT BEGIN NOW**  
**April 1991**

“Every war must end,” and warring parties eventually end their hostilities, and come to an agreement. By then, they will usually have exhausted their resources and wasted much human and material capital. By then, also, reconstruction will have become more indispensable and more difficult, in proportion to the duration of the conflict and the level of technology used in the war.

Given the suspension of the war with Iraq and the renewed US initiative, the momentum to end the war and bring about peace between the Arabs and Israel is now at a high point. In fact the Palestinians have just offered new concessions in a recent initiative. The other neighboring Arab states are anxious to reach a peace agreement with Israel, including Jordan, Syria, and the Palestinians. Foreign powers, including France, Italy, and the Soviet Union, are also interested in bringing the Arab Israeli conflict to a peaceful solution.

If the “war must end” and peace will become a reality, why don’t the Arabs and Israel let peace begin now? Why not preempt the formal cessation of hostilities and expedite the end of the war, cut their human and material costs accordingly, and begin now rather than later to pave the road for reconciliation and reconstruction?

Leaders of Arab states have come to accept the existence of Israel as a Middle Eastern state and as their neighbor, though they would not admit that much publicly until a positive gesture is anticipated from Israel in return. They have accepted UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and have made numerous statements to that effect, even though these statements fall short of formal and unequivocal recognition, (except for Egypt which has signed a peace agreement with Israel). If indeed the Arabs have accepted the idea of Israel as a neighbor with whom peace will eventually be concluded, why not try to expedite the peace process and avoid the destruction of life and material by taking security-neutral, positive economic steps in that direction?

Most experts are preoccupied with trying to plan for reconstruction, development, economic cooperation and integration in the postwar peace period. These are important steps, but similar economic actions can be put in the service of peace right now. Small but strategic steps taken now can help to bring about a peaceful settlement as well as

solidify it later. Furthermore, such small but immediate steps would entail little cost and yet bring about great benefits.

For example, a relaxation of the Arab economic boycott would be an important starting point. Even if direct trade between the Arab countries and Israel is not feasible at present, secondary boycotts against third parties, which trade with Israel can be reduced with no harm to the Arab cause, but with benefits to the peace process. The Arab countries can show good will and prepare for better relations in the future by putting an end to the black listing of companies that trade with Israel. They can also put an end to the restrictions on imports from the Occupied Territories regardless. They can even explore what they can buy from and sell to Israel with economic advantage, even if they cannot conduct any trade directly before peace is established. In fact, they can trade with Israel indirectly if it is to their benefit. Some trade is actually flowing in now through Lebanon and Jordan and other third parties, but it can be much more extensive if the expression of “peace begins now” is adopted. Moreover, such steps cannot possibly hurt these Arab countries nor undermine their political and military standing against Israel. On the contrary such steps would make it easier for Israel to build some trust in the good will of its neighbors, make compromises, and facilitate peace and economic cooperation, before and after peace becomes a reality. These steps will also put moral pressure on Israel by mobilizing international public opinion on behalf of reconciliation and compromise.

Of course the Arab countries will not do any of the above unless they feel that they will benefit economically from their relationship with Israel. They have a large enough market not to need the Israeli market; they have all of the natural resources Israel is endowed with and more; and they can acquire all the technology and know-how they need from other sources at similar or lower costs than they would be able to purchase them from Israel. The main benefit to the Arab countries, however, is the saving on defense and security, the good will they will build regionally and internationally, and the positive psychological effect of recognizing reality and accepting it.

The Palestinians, being under occupation, can do little to promote economic cooperation with Israel. The Israeli occupation authorities make policy for them. The Palestinians, nevertheless, can make a difference by changing their economic behavior in the Territories. For one thing, they can reduce the number and length of their recurrent strikes, which are costly to them and to the Israeli authorities. Symbolic strikes of one hour a week will probably have the same effect to express protest against the Israeli policy; a pre-planned five-minute period of silence during the day would probably have as much or more impact than does a strike of one day; it also costs less in life and material. Furthermore, reduction and modification of the strike protest approach will not compromise any of the rights and claims the Palestinians have in Palestine or vis-à-vis Israel. On the contrary, such an approach would earn them good will and moral support locally and internationally.

Israel, on the other hand, has much more potential benefits to reap from a policy based on the precept of “peace begins now” in its relations with its Arab neighbors, and with the Palestinians who are the main competitors for the land of Palestine. For demographic, political, and moral reasons, Israel does not want and cannot afford to be a permanent occupier. Therefore, Israel would do well to heed the precept that “all wars must come to an end” and allow peace to begin now. The economic burden of the

present situation is very heavy. The international atmosphere is changing in favor of an end to the war situation and a peaceful resolution of the Arab Israeli conflict. It may also be changing in favor of sanctions against the intransigent party, including Israel, as they have been imposed on Iraq.

Despite its new restrictions in the Occupied Territories, Israel can do much now to promote economic cooperation and possibly future integration. For example, Israel can unilaterally treat the Occupied Territories as an autonomous economy, operationally if not legally. Israel can let the people of the Occupied Territories make their own decisions. It can let them trade with any party that will trade with them, including Israel itself, with as little restriction as absolutely possible. It can let the Palestinians create their own banks and financial institutions. It can even extend to them a helping hand since a healthy economy in the Occupied Territories will be a boon to the Israeli economy at present and in the future.

On the other hand, Israel can invite the Palestinians to participate in the making of economic policy, such as the tax policy on the principle of no taxation without representation. It can let them share in deciding how their tax money is being spent, and why much of their infrastructure is in ruins. It can also let them import capital and promote foreign investment as freely as possible, with hardly any risk to Israel's economy or security. It can let them rebuild the infrastructure, roads, utilities, and the communication systems with monies they may be able to import. Finally, Israel can let the Palestinians have full access to their natural resources, water, and land, as long as these are used for economic and peaceful activities. Israel does not need the water of the Occupied Territories; it needs better water management. Even if it does need water, commercial agreements and transactions between them can solve the problem. If, however, resource regulation is necessary for conservation and ecological purposes, why not let the Palestinians participate in the management of these resources, according to scientific principles and reasonable environmental objectives?

So far Israel has been reminded of what it can let the Palestinians do in their economic interest as part of the "peace begins now" frame of reference. Israel, however, can also do certain things itself. Israel can help the peace effort by protecting the properties of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories; by helping them to conserve their olive trees, market their olive oil, and explore new products; and by closing as much of the gap between the Israeli and Palestinian economies as possible, now as well as after the war ends. The Israelis have done a little of this, but much more can be done without compromising their security or the national objectives.

**QUESTIONS OF ETHICS AND MORALITY IN  
AMERICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST  
May 1991**

The Coalition's military victory against Iraq has not brought peace to the Middle East region, though one may still hope for peace, but a military victory does not guarantee peace, nor is it sufficient or necessary for peace to prevail. Past victories by Israel against the Arabs, Turkey against Greek Cypriots, and Iraq against Iran have all failed to bring about peace. Countries of the Gulf are still on war terms. Lebanon is still an explosive battlefield. The Arabs and Israel are hardly any closer to peace today than they were three wars ago.

Inadequate efforts of the mediators and peace initiators often smother the quest for peace. Intransigence of the warring parties chokes it. Proposals powered by weak commitments and inconsistencies of the peace promoters also strangle it. Such peace efforts falter and clutter the road to peace with the debris of wasted energies and broken hopes. The present may be different and the glimpses of hope for a New World Order of peace and tranquility may still crystallize into brilliant lights to brighten the way and let peace glow.

But lest we build expectations only to be disappointed, expend energies only to be wasted, and nourish hopes only to have them broken, it behooves us to look around us and face the ethical and moral dilemmas that muddy the Middle East panorama politics and international relations. The Gulf war has raised many issues, reopened many wounds, and has drawn attention to lessons that have yet to be learned.

The following reflections are presented below as part of the search for answers, if any can be found: Iraq's occupation of Kuwait is sheer aggression; Israel's continued occupation of Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon is not a matter of liberation and security; nor is Turkey's occupation of Cyprus.

Manipulating oil prices upward is monopolistic, but manipulating them downward is just a return to the free market. President George Bush, President Saddam Hussein, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, all invoke religion for a just cause: three conflicting just causes with One God. Discrimination against Jews is anti-Semitism; discrimination

against Arabs is antiterrorism. Minorities in the Arab countries are “suppressed;” minorities in Israel are just controlled. The former seek independence; the latter seek destruction of Israel. Population increase in the Middle East is condemned as an economic burden; population increase in Israel is condoned and financed by the condemners. UN Resolutions are instruments of international stability and peace and should be implemented, even by force; UN Resolutions relating to Israel and the Arabs are an exception. Weapons of mass destruction should be removed except from the hands of European countries, large countries, Israel, and South Africa. Bombing civilians is barbaric, against humanity, and against the Geneva Conventions, unless it is aimed at Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. All people have the right to choose their leaders; leaders of the Palestinians must be chosen for them. The SCUD missiles have traumatized the children of Israel; incessant bombardment of Iraq, and the routine bombing of Lebanon must have little impact on Arab children; the former get frightened; the latter don't count.

The right of self-determination is a right of all people, unless those people happen to be Palestinians. Internment of civilians during the war is wrong; an unending curfew in the Occupied Territories is OK. Iraq is a totalitarian dictatorship; as for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, ask no questions, and you will receive no wrong answers. The Palestinians cannot claim Palestine 43 years after they lost it; the Iraqis cannot claim Kuwait 70 years later; the Israelis can make a claim even 2000 years later. The Arab oil countries are wrong not to share their oil wealth with their poor sister Arab countries; the people of Northern California are right not to share their water with the thirsty people of Southern California. The Palestinians condemn Israel's occupation of their land; they cheer when Iraq occupies Kuwait. The Palestinians aspire for a democratic, secular, unified state of Palestine; yet they join the Organization of Islamic States, and insist on dividing Palestine into two states; very much like the Israelis.

The Arab countries used war against Israel in 1948 and failed; Nasser went to war in Yemen and failed; he provoked war in 1967 and failed. Sadat and Assad almost succeeded in 1973, but eventually failed. Saddam Hussein fought Iran and failed; he invaded Kuwait and failed; he instigated a war with the Coalition and failed. Syria marched into Lebanon and it has failed. Will the Arabs remember next time to try approaches other than war? Maybe then they will not fail. President Nixon committed an error; he was forced to resign. President Carter miscalculated in Iran; he was not reelected. Mrs. Thatcher antagonized her constituents; she found it necessary to resign. Nasser failed again and again, but he stayed. Hafez al-Assad leveled the city of Hama, but he stays. Mubarak perpetuates emergency laws and he stays. Saddam Hussein destroys Iran, Kuwait, and Iraq, and he stays. Evidently some leaders are held accountable, others are privileged. The people suffer.

Whether in America or in the Middle East, resolving inconsistencies and abiding by moral principles are major steps toward better communications, mutual understanding, more realistic expectations, and avoidance of war. If war cannot be avoided, it will at least be certain that military power will contribute to a peace victory, and will not be used in vain. The following are excerpts from a commentary by Alouph Hareven, Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem, which reached us by way of our reader Judy Kramer of Beyond War, Palo Alto, California.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War “political, strategic, and territorial considerations converge in the quest for a new order in the Middle East. But before the nations of the region proceed on the tortuous road of negotiations, we owe ourselves an historical accounting. Over the years 1966-1991 military expenditures of Middle East countries totaled over \$1,500 billion (= \$1.5 trillion). In order to enable us to perceive the meaning of these staggering sums, let us suppose that major national projects--such as building a big dam, constructing a major water desalination network, establishing a major advanced industry--can each be budgeted at one billion dollars. Thus, \$1,500 billion spent on armies means that 1,500 national and regional projects were not initiated because the funds were spent on tanks, military aircraft, and missiles... in order to pursue addiction to arms.

As in any addiction, there are two sides to this tragedy. If Middle East countries are addicts, then the pushers are the Soviet Union, Europe, and the United States. This is the combination, which deprived most Middle East countries of a generation of development. The responsibility for losing a generation of development rests on the shoulders of Middle East leaders who chose this road. But one cannot absolve the leaders of the Soviet Union, Europe, and the United States for putting considerations of their own financial and political gains above the genuine needs of the people of the region.

Given the new thinking regarding collective security and a New World Order, now is the time to go through some painful accounting and demand of national leaders to reflect and tell their people that these vast sums have been misspent. Now is the time for national leaders of the Middle East, the US, Europe, and the USSR to gather together and make a solemn commitment that in the next twenty-five years we shall NOT throw away another \$1,500 billion on instruments of death. Instead, we shall build a coalition of life, which will use this vast sum for reconstruction and human development.

## **US POLICY ON PALESTINIAN STATE IN QUOTES<sup>9</sup>**

**June 1991**

**Marci Lauphin**

For over four decades, American administrations have declared that achieving a “just and lasting peace” in the Middle East is a top priority, the elusive key to this “just and lasting peace” being the settlement of the “Question of Palestine.” Last month yet another US official, Secretary of State James Baker, went to the Middle East in pursuit of this same objective through the resolution of the Question of Palestine.

Upon examination of statements made by the Presidents, or their administrations since Truman, it appears that US policy has been an avoidance of a “just and lasting” peace, not a quest for it. Time and time again American presidents and their administrations have upheld and reiterated the commitment to the sanctity of inalienable rights and self-determination for all peoples. These esteemed values are reflected in our laws and institutions, and in the Charter of the United Nations and its many resolutions supported by the United States. However, the following collection of US policy statements indicates that the US has fallen short of its stated objectives and ideals and its potential role as peacemaker.

In President Truman's own words,

On May 15, the General Assembly set up a special committee designated as UNSCOP-- the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. The committee, on which none of the so-called great powers was represented, agreed that the British mandate in Palestine should be brought to an end and that, under UN auspices, a form of independence should eventually be worked out in Palestine. The majority of the committee then recommended that independence should take the form of two separate states, one Jewish and one Arab, tied together in an economic union.

Truman “instructed the State Department to support the plan.”

The US's statement at the UN in support of the partition plan (Nov. 25, 1947) supports the same idea:

---

<sup>9</sup>

The proposal of partition with economic union which we are considering is genuinely a United Nations plan. It has been evolved as a result of a special session of the United Nations and the work of a United Nations Special Committee, in addition to the work of the present session of the General Assembly...Much has been said during the course of these debates on the desirability and necessity of presenting to the General Assembly a plan which would command the agreement of both the principal protagonists in this situation ... If we are to effect through the UN a solution of this problem, it cannot be done without the use of the knife. Neither the Jews nor the Arabs will ever be completely satisfied with anything we do, and it is just as well to bear that in mind... It is the sincere belief of the United States delegation that the partition plan recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, with all its imperfections admitted, provides for the people of Palestine in that land the best practicable means at the present time by which these high objectives may be obtained.

In his message to Congress, May 24, 1951, Truman added:

The program of assistance... has the three-fold purpose of assisting the settlement of refugees, of strengthening those states wherein they settle, and assisting both Israel and Arab states by removing this threat to peace of the Area... Some of these refugees could be settled in the area presently controlled by Israel. Most however, could more readily be integrated into lives of neighboring countries.

According to the Eisenhower Doctrine,

Our basic national objective in international affairs remains peace - a world peace based on justice. Such peace must include all areas, all peoples of the world ... The US has made clear... that we are willing to do much to assist the U.N. in solving the basic problems of Palestine... We approve the claims of the State of Israel to the boundaries set forth in the United Nations resolution of November 29 and consider that modifications thereof should be made only if fully acceptable to the state of Israel ...We continue to support, within the framework of the UN, the internationalization of Jerusalem and the protection of the holy places in Palestine.

In a statement on Nov. 9, 1955, Eisenhower said:

I would recommend that the United States join in formal treaty engagements to prevent or thwart any effort by either side to alter by force the boundaries between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Recent developments have made it all the more imperative that a settlement be found. The US will continue to play its full part and will support firmly the United Nations...

According to President Kennedy, in letters to Arab leaders in May 1961, "...This Government's position is anchored and will continue to be anchored in the firm bedrock of support for General Assembly recommendations concerning the refugees and of action and impartial concern that these resolutions be implemented in a way most beneficial to the refugees."

President Kennedy was greatly concerned about the Palestinian refugees whose care had been relegated to the Palestine Conciliation Commission (UN) in Dec. 1948. Thus, Kennedy allotted much attention the Johnson Plan (proposed by Joseph E. Johnston, special Representative to deal with the refugee problem). The plan permitted all Palestinians to choose freely between returning to Israel, or resettling in neighboring Arab states. It was ultimately rejected because some Arabs believed that it placed too much emphasis on resettlement and too little on repatriation.

In a statement on May 23, 1967, President Johnson clarified his position: "I wish to say what three American presidents have said before me--that the US is firmly

committed to the support of the political independence and territorial integrity of all the nations of that area. This has been the policy of the US led by four Presidents--President Truman, Eisenhower, President John F. Kennedy, and myself." On June 19, 1967 President Johnson declared: "Our country is committed--and we here reiterate that commitment today--to a peace [in the ME] that is based on five principles: 1) Recognized right of national life; 2) justice for the refugees; 3) innocent maritime passage; 4) limits on wasteful and destructive arms race; 5) political independence and territorial integrity for all."

Following the 1967 War, on Sept. 10, 1968 President Johnson renewed the US Commitment to peace:

From the day that war broke out, our policy-the policy of this Government-has been to work in every capital, to labor in the UN, to convert the armistice arrangements of 1949 into a stable and agreed regime of peace... No day has passed since then without our taking active steps to try to achieve this end. For its part, the US has fully supported the efforts of the UN rep., Ambassador Jarring, and we shall continue to do so... The political independence and territorial integrity of all the states in the area must be assured. We are not the ones to say where other nations should draw lines between them that will assure each the greatest security. It is clear, however, that a return to the situation of June 4, 1967 will not bring peace. There must be secure and there must be recognized borders. Some such lines must be agreed to by the neighbors involved as part of the transition from armistice to peace.

The decade 1967-1977 saw a fundamental transformation in the treatment of the Palestine question: from being viewed as a refugee problem, to being recognized as an important issue involving the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. In 1975 the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. (The US vetoed a resolution affirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination.)

The Nixon administration, through the Rogers Plan reiterated the principles of Resolution 242, which affirmed the territorial integrity, independence, and security of all states in the Middle East.

In 1975 President Ford initiated a "reassessment" of ME policies as a consequence of Kissinger's inability to advance the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. A strategy of calling for the Israelis to accept a Palestinian homeland and self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza emerged but was not advanced. It was considered inconsistent with previous policies of the administration.

In a letter to Shimon Peres in March 1975, Henry Kissinger said: "We've attempted to reconcile our support for you with our other interests in the Middle East, so that you would not have to make your decisions all at once. If we wanted the 1967 borders we could do it with all of world opinion and considerable domestic opinion behind us. We've avoided drawing up an overall plan for a global settlement. I see pressures building up to force you back to the 1967 borders..."

Thus the "reassessment" policy, and Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, in actuality were transformed into "incremental diplomacy" which has perpetuated the avoidance of confronting the real issues: legitimacy of Palestinian claims to self-determination and inalienable rights.

The US made its position clear again on Oct. 1977, in joint US-Soviet communiqué:

The United States and the Soviet Union believe that, within the framework of a comprehensive settlement of the ME problem, all specific questions of the settlement should be resolved, including such key issues as withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict; the resolution of the Palestinian question, including insuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; termination of the state of war and establishment of normal peaceful relations on the basis of mutual recognition of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence.

President Carter was quite explicit on Dec. 28, 1977 when he said: "We do favor a homeland or an entity wherein the Palestinians can live in peace. President Sadat so far is insisting that the so-called Palestinian entity be an independent nation. My own preference is that they not be an independent nation but be tied in some way with the surrounding countries, making a choice, for instance, between Israel and Jordan."

Little change can be observed through the Reagan administration. In his address to the nation, September 1, 1982, President Reagan said:

First, as outlined in the Camp David accords. There must be a period of time during which the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza will have full autonomy over their own affairs. Due consideration must be given to the principles of self-government by the inhabitants of the territories and the legitimate security concerns of the parties involved...As we look to the future of the West Bank and Gaza, it is clear to me that peace cannot be achieved by the formation of an independent Palestinian state in those territories. Nor is it achievable on the basis of Israeli sovereignty or permanent control over the West Bank and Gaza. So the United States will not support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and we will not support annexation or permanent control by Israel. There is, however, another way to peace. The final status of these lands must, of course, be reached through the give-and-take of negotiations. But it is the firm view of the United States that self-government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just and lasting peace.

The Bush administration's position has been made clear by Sec. of State James Baker (April 9, 1991) when he told a delegation of six Palestinians from the occupied territories that the US does not support an independent Palestinian state but would not object to seeing a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation in the final status.

President Bush has more recently stated that this is a time for "quiet diplomacy in a situation of this complexity and of this endurance," and there is still a real opportunity to make progress toward peace.

There is truth to this assertion. But perhaps what is needed is more assertive diplomacy. Peace need not be evasive. Moral judgments can no longer be avoided. To do so only perpetuates injustice. The ingredients of peace lie in UN resolutions and in our adherence to American ideals and institutions. With more assertive diplomacy, the Question of Palestine can be concluded and peace established once and for all.

-----  
Marci Laughlin is a student in economics and international relations at the University of California, Davis.

**PEACE INITIATIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST REVISITED.  
FORM DOMINATES SUBSTANCE  
July 1991**

President Bush and Secretary Baker have once again embarked on a round of talks for peace in the Middle East. And once again their efforts seem to have come to naught. It is not the lack of interest, energy, resources, or effort that has crowned the initiative with little success. Nor is it the apparent unwillingness of the Arabs and Israelis to reach for peace. Both parties want peace--on their own terms. The United States also wants peace in the Middle East, but without "twisting arms" or "applying pressure." Given the conflicting terms and interests of the two warring parties, and the unwillingness of the United States to use its prestige and resources as a pressure mechanism, it is not surprising that the peace initiative has so far ended in a stalemate. However, much of the breakdown in the initiative can be avoided by minor policy adjustments. It is almost certain that had more attention been paid to the substance of the intended negotiations, some progress would have been achieved.

The shuttle diplomacy of Secretary Baker, and of others before him, has tended to concentrate on whether there will be a large peace conference or direct negotiations between the parties, whether the conference will meet periodically or only once to introduce the prospective negotiators to each other, and whether the UN will or will not be involved. There has been much concern with questions such as where to meet, when to meet, who shall meet whom, or who shall represent the Palestinians, etc. These questions may be important, but they have little to do with the substance of the conflict. Yet the answer to each of the questions has become a determining factor whether there will be negotiations or not. As a result the negotiations have been chronically obstructed. The cost of such misplaced emphasis has been high in terms of resources wasted as well as failure to achieve the peace every one claims to be searching for.

In contrast, historical experience indicates that once emphasis is focused on substance a breakthrough becomes likely. De Gaulle did it in Algeria. Pierre Mendes France did it in Indo-China. Sadat and Begin did it in the Egypt-Israel conflict. Even

Khomeini quickly brought the war with Iraq to an end by concentrating on the impact of the cease-fire rather than on the way to reach it.

Emphasis on form rather than on substance of the negotiations by the Arabs and Israelis is not accidental. Each party thinks it can improve its position if the negotiations take one form rather than another. It may also be that the emphasis on form is used as a tactic to delay negotiations altogether in order to reap certain benefits in the meantime. To illustrate, the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, insist on an international peace conference presumably because they feel they can gain a sense of pride, dignity, and sympathy by putting their case on a large international platform. By this means they also can avoid sitting face to face with Israel, which could imply formal recognition of Israel before a peace agreement has been reached. The Palestinians also hope to achieve recognition as an independent party in a peace conference.

The Israelis, on the other hand, most probably use the emphasis on form at the expense of substance as a delaying tactic. They want peace, but there is no rush to conclude a peace agreement as long as other benefits can be realized in the meantime. For example, while arguments continue regarding the form future negotiations would take, Israel continues to enlarge Jewish habitation in the Occupied Territories, displace Palestinians from their land, pressure many of them to emigrate, and thus weaken their hold on the territories that are the main source of conflict.

It is unfortunate that neither the Arabs nor the Israelis are willing to take a more realistic look at the situation in order to promote peace negotiations. For example, what difference does it make if negotiations are carried out in an international conference (as the Arabs want), in a regional conference, or even in direct talks between the parties (as Israel wants)? Large international conferences have done little in the past to improve the positions of the Arabs. Their case has been heard again and again in large UN conferences, and it has done little to bring peace any closer. Resolutions of international conferences can do little to promote peace if they are not backed by means of enforcement, or if the relevant parties are not willing to negotiate and comply.

Why do the Arab countries insist on wide participation by non-Middle Eastern countries in any prospective peace conference? Many countries that are desired and might be willing to attend have done little in the past, and can do little now to enhance the position of the Arabs. They might vote in favor and express support of Arab causes, but they have neither resources nor political or military clout and commitment to make a difference.

Similarly, it is puzzling that the Israelis would object to a peace conference. Such conferences have not hurt them in the past, in as much as their protector nations have always stood by them to protect their interests.

Why do the Israelis object to the auspices of the United Nations when their own state was created under those same auspices? Is it not possible that by involving the UN, Israel might induce that world body to revoke its resolution associating Zionism with racism? Why do the Israelis insist on advance approval of Palestinian delegates to any negotiations? They know that unless those delegates are credible and have support and confidence of the PLO, they will not be able to deliver on their agreements. Is it possible that all these arguments and conditions regarding form are simply delaying tactics to give Israel time to control more land and reduce the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories?

Finally, why does Israel insist on direct face-to-face negotiations with the Arab countries? Is it because Israel expects the Arabs to say no and thus bear the blame for failure of the peace initiative?

Neither Israel nor the Arabs are innocent or honest positive contributors to the peace initiative. Though the Palestinians have lost so much and can hardly make any more concessions on substance, it may be easy for them to make concessions on form. In fact, they would do better if they were to compromise on form and save their negotiating expertise to matters of substance, if and when Israel comes to the negotiating table.

Similarly, Israel may be gaining from the delaying tactics based on matters of form. Yet, these same tactics are obstructing the creation of peace and security for its people. They also are compounding enmity with the Arabs, costing the economy dearly, and possibly endangering Israel's relations with its greatest benefactor, the United States.

A more viable approach by both the Arabs and Israel may still be found, if indeed they wish to create peace between them. While the exact approach has to be specified by the negotiating parties, or their intermediaries, the following may be helpful steps toward putting back some life into the United States' peace initiative.

First, it is necessary to identify the parties to the Arab Israeli conflict. Not all Arab countries are concerned or relevant. However, it is important to focus on the confrontation parties and the neighbors of Israel who will be directly affected by any settlement that may be concluded.

Second, it is important for each party to identify the issues of substance and the options that may be negotiated in consistency with the objectives of sovereignty, security, and peaceful coexistence. Whether these options are made public or not is not important, but they do set the limits beyond which a given party will not go.

Third, it is equally important to identify the issues of substance and options of the other party to the negotiations, and to make sure that some gratification is allowed for to induce that other party to the negotiation table.

Fourth, it is helpful to identify the forms or frameworks within which negotiations may be conducted productively. Once this is done, it will be helpful to select the framework with the least cost in terms of incentives to negotiate and in terms of resources to be utilized in keeping law and order. Furthermore, special benefits may accrue by taking short cuts to peace whenever that seems possible, such as a "surprise" visit by Arafat to Jerusalem or by Shamir to Amman or Damascus.

Finally, whichever framework is selected, it should be remembered that direct negotiations are indispensable and inevitable, and that the United Nations auspices have been the most viable and equally indispensable in dealing with the Arab Israeli conflict. That is the road that should be taken

In the final analysis, it is lasting peace that counts, not how it is attained.

## **THE ARAB WORLD AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER!**

**August 1991**

Whether there will be a new world order (NWO), what it will consist of, and how successful it will be is still uncertain. It is implicitly agreed, however, that a NWO, should it prevail, will establish principles for achieving international stability, a triumph of peace over war, and more dependence on collective action in resolving international conflict. It is also implicit that the NWO can and will become a reality only if it is backed by the wealthy, industrialized, powerful countries. In fact, it is certain that these countries will shape the NWO in their own image or to their own liking in as much as they will bear the major responsibility for safeguarding and enforcing it. Furthermore, given the current international power distribution, decline of the Cold War, and preoccupation of the Soviet Union in its internal affairs, the United States may be considered the single most important agent responsible for the creation and maintenance of the NWO.

By the same token, other countries that are willing and able to play by those rules will be considered on the side of law and order. They may also be invited to play an active role in upholding the NWO. If they do, they will benefit from their relationship with the leaders in the new game of nations in political, economic, and social relations. By contrast, countries that will choose not to play by the rules of the powerful and wealthy may find themselves isolated, pressured, squeezed, and on occasion subdued, disciplined, and humiliated.

Where does the Arab world stand in relation to the NWO? While the Arab countries represent various philosophies, forms of government, and different international alliances, it is safe to suggest that all of them fall short of being well equipped to play a positive role in the establishment of a NWO as outlined above. It is equally safe that they will find it hard to play by the rules that are most likely to govern the NWO. The Arab countries, singly and in combination, have yet to transform their societies sufficiently in terms of political game play, perspectives on international relations, economic development, industrialization, or military power to be able to play by the rules established by a highly scientific, industrial, and secular group of countries that will comprise the leadership. By admission of Arab experts and intellectuals, the Arab world

still lives in the shadow of traditionalism, conformity, ignorance, and under-development. Therefore, a NWO will prevail in the Arab world only if it is imposed, or if it is adopted and internalized voluntarily, in which case certain fundamental changes in society need to be effected, as follows: 1) Expansion of literacy and reform of education in the direction of scientific, analytical, relevant, and applicable knowledge. 2) Adoption of a certain degree of realism and freedom from myth, tradition, and blind conformity, or “follow the leader” attitude. 3) More application of reason and rational decision-making, in pursuit of specified realistic objectives, with special attention paid to costs in time and resources. 4) Commitment to a sense of accountability, by leader and led, by worker and manager, by young and old, and by all who enter into agreements with self or others.

There is much to be happy about in the expansion of literacy and education in every Arab country during the last few decades. Percentages of the literate and numbers of higher degree holders have mushroomed. Education has been virtually free and peoples’ responses have been very encouraging. Yet, the number of illiterates has also remained high and in some cases increased. Those who finish high school and those who go to college and university acquire an education, which, in most cases has been inadequate to meet challenges of the modern world, the world of the prospective NWO. Education in the Arab world has continued to suffer from lack of resources on one hand, and from inadequate attention to analytical tools, scientific method, and development of the creative and inventive capabilities of the students. Information seems to be “drilled” into the heads of students with little chance of digestion or processing to make it usable. That, however, falls short of the demands of the modern, scientific, rational world of today.

When it comes to realism, there is much lacking in the attitudes displayed by the Arab countries in world affairs. Whether in terms of alliances, systems of government, or expectations in their relations with other countries, most of the Arab countries demonstrate a sort of simplistic and naive understanding of world politics and diplomacy. Some of them maintain anachronistic forms of government, others rule by military force, and others cultivate cult worship of the leaders. As a result they find themselves at odds with the countries that make a difference in the conflicts they are involved in. Accordingly they are often on the losing side, as best illustrated in their conflict with Israel, their application of economic boycott, and their approaches to population control, and other issues.

The Arab world's lack of realism is matched by the limited degree of rationality in its economic, political, and international decision making, in the sense of failing to calculate in advance the degree to which their policies can achieve their objectives. To the extent that traditionalism and religion dominate the affairs of most of the Arab states, their ability to judge according to reason is handicapped. Since all leading countries of the world have managed to a large extent to separate church from state or religion from the affairs of government, the Arab world finds itself little understood or able to understand the complexities of international affairs and the game of nations as practiced by these leading countries. The Arab world is highly endowed with experts who know the modern world and can understand it fully, but these experts are neither free to express themselves, nor able to think freely in an environment which diffuses reason with faith, religion with affairs of the state, and personal matters with public policy. The individual

cannot think freely without running the risk of being branded as an outcast, subject to punishment and discipline.

This issue is not one of religion, faith, or belief. It is how religion and belief are manipulated to strangle the minds and wills of individuals and render them “pseudo-human pseudo-robots”- they cannot fulfill the creative expectations of humans, nor can they deliver the technical efficiency of programmed mechanical instruments. In addition, it is not difficult to see how much Arab society loses by restricting women in the name of tradition and religion. By some distorted interpretation of religion, women are condemned to various degrees of exclusion and seclusion, to the extent that some of them are confined to a sort of imprisonment in the house or in the “moving closet” attire imposed on them. One should wonder what would happen if Arab women had a choice in these matters.

All these inadequacies, however, pale relative to the low level of accountability from which the Arab world suffers. One can only guess how a leader can fail again and again, and still stay in office. How can a leader incur high costs on his society, in human and material form, as in Syria and Iraq, and still continue to hold power?

Social contract is broken almost every day in the market, in the shop, at the university, and in government offices, and yet all those responsible go on with their daily affairs as if nothing had happened. They may get promoted and become wealthy while their country lags in development and achievement, despite its wealth in capital and human resources. Probably the best example of low accountability is that demonstrated by the media which go on broadcasting falsehoods and untruths, on the air and on paper, obviously to please the authorities, with little regard to their readership or to the ethics of their public responsibilities. If the media cannot communicate the truth, if it cannot play the role of a watch dog in the affairs of the nation, if it cannot help to enlighten its readers, the media can hardly be a positive force in helping the country achieve its best in domestic or world affairs.

The prospects of sufficient change in the immediate future to allow the Arab countries to play an important, let alone a leading, role in the NWO seem slim. However, the situation is not hopeless and steps can still be taken to pave the way for a more productive approach to world affairs. More emphasis on scientific, analytical, and usable education is a major step. More realism and freedom from myth and tradition and blind conformity are a must. Reason and rational decision-making are the only guarantees that realistic objectives can be achieved. Finally, without developing a sense of responsibility and accountability all else may fade into a sea of waste and corruption.

The NWO is a stage and the Arab world has good reasons to be a major player on it. Let us hope it will take the challenge and play that role.

**PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**  
**THE ARABS SAY YES: WILL ISRAEL SEE THE LIGHT?**  
**September 1991**

The United States has reactivated its peace initiative and the Arabs have said “Yes,” but will Israel see the light and help to make peace a reality? Prime Minister Shamir and his cabinet have agreed, with conditions, to attend a peace conference. Israel has also indicated willingness to release Arab prisoners from Lebanon in exchange for release of hostages and missing Israeli soldiers. These are good signs. However, Israel’s conditions -- a limited role for the UN at the conference, severe restrictions on Palestinian representation -- and the repeated statements by Israeli officials against “land for peace” or a State of Palestine are strong warnings against rushing to celebrate peace in the Middle East.

I am convinced that most Israelis want peace. But I am also convinced that the Israeli government wants peace on a silver platter, with all compromises to be made by its opponents and none by itself. This position will not lead to peace. Israel must be more realistic, flexible, and willing to give and take in the cause of peace.

There are at least five basic “needs” Israel must satisfy before it can enjoy the peace its people have been wanting for decades.

First, Israel needs to commit itself to certain basic philosophical principles regarding its relations with other countries in the M.E. region: For instance, it has to accept the idea of “live and let live” within recognized boundaries, on the basis of co-existence, not domination; hence, the military occupation of parts of Palestine must end. It has to accept the principle that no territorial war gains can be tolerated; otherwise its own territory and war gains will always be a cause for another war. Israel has also to accept Security Council resolutions as means to coexistence and stability. Israel itself has been created by virtue of a Security Council resolution. Finally, it has to accept the idea that collective action to maintain stability under the NOW can be applied to it as it has been applied to other countries in the region. Israel must not believe that it is immune or above the rule of collective action of which it approved during the Gulf war.

Second, Israel needs to accept the equality of rights of different people to exist as independent and sovereign. While Israel’s right to exist may not be in question, the legitimate rights of the Palestinians are as important as those of Israel, in principle, and

for the sake of international stability. Similarly, unity of the Palestinian people is as important as unity of the Israeli people. Trying to split the Palestinians, those within the Occupied Territories from those without, can only be counterproductive and a blow to the prospects of peace and stability. Israel has only to review the terms of agreement with the Palestinians, regardless of who the representatives are. It can always say no to those terms. To pose strict conditions on representation in advance of the discussion of substance can only foil the initiative and block the way to the peace conference.

Third, Israel needs to recognize the regional expectations of its neighbors. Security of the Arab countries is as important as the security of Israel, and threats to the Arab countries are as destabilizing as the threats to Israel. By the same token, restrictions on the development and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons applied to one country must apply to all countries, including Israel. Otherwise, the threat of such weapons remains and endangers peace and stability of the region and the world.

Fourth, Israel needs to commit itself to peace in action, not just in rhetoric and public declarations. Israel has an obligation to make its commitment to peace substantive, functional, and known. It can do so by taking certain steps, which cost it little and yet contribute much toward the peace process. For example, Israel can release the political detainees in the Occupied Territories, especially those who have been held by administrative detention without due process of law. Their number runs in the thousands and many of them are subjected to cruelty and torture.

Israel can institute due process of law in dealing with Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. These people are neighbors and hopefully will be friends when peace comes.

Israel can remove restrictions on mobility of the Palestinian people, especially labor mobility, with little risk to its security, which is hardly threatened in any case.

Israel can remove the restrictions imposed on educational institutions and let them once again be centers of learning and incubators of knowledge and scholarship.

Israel can free the Palestinian economy from arbitrary military and administrative restrictions, which have crippled it and subjected the Palestinian people to poverty, deprivation, and economic cruelty.

Israel can remove the restrictions on the use of the economic resources in the Occupied Territories by Palestinians who are anxious to invest and expand their agriculture and industry. Releasing water from restrictions, easing the issue of business permits, putting an end to Jewish settlement of Palestinian land and respecting the land rights of the Palestinians, and allowing the Palestinians access to the market as freely as it is in Israel – all these can be major steps toward building confidence and paving the way to peace. These are also ways of allowing the Palestinians to make a decent living by using their own ingenuity and resources.

Israel can transfer many of the administrative responsibilities in the OT to the local authorities, in anticipation of peace and military withdrawal from the Territories.

Israel can reduce its military presence in the OT to an absolute minimum with hardly any risk to its security, both as good will and as sound economic policy. The reduction of military presence can be a major contribution to the initiative for peace and harmony. It will also reduce the burden on the Israeli economy.

Fifth, Israel can contribute to the peace effort by applying its principles of equality and democracy to all its citizens: Jews and Arabs alike. To continue to practice or allow discrimination against its Arab citizens casts doubt on its democracy, sincerity,

and willingness to live in peace with its Arab neighbors. Israel may not want or may be unable to do all the above, but any of the steps suggested would be an important signal that Israel is indeed in favor of peace.

Finally, Israel needs to appreciate the value of peace with its Arab neighbors and do more to bring it about. Peace will allow Israel to enjoy the security it has dreamed of for centuries.

Peace will allow Israeli citizens to travel freely around the M.E. and enjoy in the economic, cultural, and artistic treasures of the region.

Peace will allow Israel to reallocate its resources from the wasteful military to the productive economic sectors and reverse the decline in the standard of living of its people.

Peace will also allow Israel to commit its talents and resources to creativity, technological innovation, and improvement of the quality of life for its own people and for people of other lands.

As I remember it, Abba Eban once said that there is no such thing as the price of peace, for peace has no price and must be achieved for its inherent value. That is true, but the achievement of peace requires sacrifices. Now Israel faces a challenge. It has the chance to share in the sacrifice and let the American initiative and the Arab "Yes" bear the sweet fruit of Peace. Let us hope Israel will do so.

**RETHINKING THE UNTHINKABLE  
PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND?  
October 1991**

I

It is unthinkable that Arabs and Israelis will settle their conflict and live in peace with  
each other,  
Say so many.  
Hatred is ingrained. Imperialism is looming large. The outside world does not care.  
It is unthinkable.

Two proud people, Arabs and Jews, face each other:  
They fight for a piece of land they call their own,  
for culture, for history, for holiness and the heaven they seek in return --  
by way of the Holy Land.

It is unthinkable, they say, that Arabs and Jews would  
lay their arms and live in peace:  
They have invested heavily in sophisticated arms;  
they have sacrificed food, medicine, education, and comfort  
in order to be strong and fight for the "promised" land --  
the British promised it to both.

They sacrificed lives of men, women, and children,  
young, old, and in-between, to save their heritage, their honor, and their land.  
They exhausted their resources, mortgaged their future,  
surrendered their independence,  
and rendered themselves wards of the big and mighty, in the name of statehood  
in the promised land.  
To do otherwise would be unthinkable.

A century has gone by.  
The fruits of their efforts are no less bitter today than they were a century ago.  
Peace is unthinkable, so they say.

## II

Yet, was it not unthinkable  
for Sadat to address the Israeli Knesset in Jerusalem?  
Was it not unthinkable  
for Menachim Begin to enjoy the Egyptian sunset with his adversary in Alexandria?  
Was it not unthinkable  
for Shimon Perez to be the guest of an Arab King in Morocco?  
Was it not unthinkable  
for the “beaten Egyptians” to cross the Canal in triumph?  
Was it not unthinkable  
for the “Children of the Stones” to challenge the mighty army of  
Israel?  
Was it not unthinkable  
that the Israelis would give up Beirut and safe passage out of Lebanon  
to the heavily-armed PLO forces?  
It all happened, even though unthinkable.

## III

Rethinking the Unthinkable!  
Who would have thought  
that Yasser Arafat would offer to go to Jerusalem to talk with the Israelis?  
Who would have thought  
that the PLO would recognize the sovereignty of Israel and seek peaceful coexistence,  
with its  
people as neighbors and economic partners?  
Who would have thought  
that Hafez Al Assad would be the first Arab leader after Sadat to break the ice,  
and agree to negotiate peace with Israel?  
Who would have thought  
the Syrians and Americans, Saudis and Israelis (by proxy) would fight side by side  
against an  
Arab country?  
All these have happened, though unthinkable.

## IV

Was it not unthinkable  
that the Berlin Wall would crumble,  
or for the Communist regimes of East Germany, Romania, and  
Czechoslovakia

to be no more?  
Was it not unthinkable  
for the Iron Curtain to become transparent, or for the Cold War to be dead and forgotten  
so totally and so fast?  
Press conferences, town meetings, and public debates have taken hold,  
where Lenin and Stalin were the Law.  
Was it not unthinkable  
that Stalinism and the Central Plan would give way to the new masters:  
Profit, private ownership, capitalism, and Yeltsin?  
Was it not unthinkable  
that monuments of the Soviet Revolution would be shattered into grains of sand  
to be carried away with the winds of change  
as if by magic?  
Was it not unthinkable  
that churches, mosques, and synagogues would be resurrected, and bells would be ringing  
in the land in which they were taboo for seven decades?  
It all happened, though unthinkable.

V

“Rethinking the Unthinkable” may be hallucination or just a dream, but if it is a dream, it  
is a sweet one.

It may be a dream to see Arabs and Israelis sign a peace agreement, for others say it is  
unthinkable.

It may be a dream to see them sitting across the conference table, winning their battles  
with

words and ideas, and not on a bloody battlefield with guns and ammunition.

It may be a dream to see the “Children of the Stones” retreat into laughter and play, fun  
and learning.

It may be a dream for the Children of Israel  
to forget the masks and scuds that sent them running to the shelters.

It may be a dream to see Israel withdraw from the Occupied Territories  
and live in peace and harmony with its neighbors.

It may be a dream for the Palestinians and Israelis  
to share the promised land and live in peace,  
where culture, history, religion and the heaven they seek can be cherished and celebrated.

All these may be dreams, but dreams can turn into reality, for the unthinkable is  
unthinkable no more!

## **THE COMING ARMS RACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST<sup>10</sup>**

**November 1991**

**Ayad Alqazzaz**

The Middle East is probably the most militarized region in the Third World, and perhaps in the world. It is the most militarized in terms of the size of armed forces relative to the total population. There are approximately ten million people in the armed forces. Almost one in fifty is a soldier. In some countries the ratio is much higher. In Iraq one in twenty and in Syria one in thirty is a soldier. In terms of numbers, Turkey's armed forces are close to 850,000. Iraq's and Iran's are about one million each. Egypt's, Syria's, and Israel's are about half a million each.

Seven of the top per-capita spenders on arms are in the region, with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Iraq leading the way. From 1976 to 1985 about 15% of all goods imported into the Arab world were arms and military supplies, in comparison with 1.8% for the world as a whole and 5.6% for all developing nations put together. Saudi Arabia spent \$57.3 billion on arms between 1983 and 1990. In the same period Iraq spent \$30.4 billion. In 1983 Saudi Arabia spent \$579,442 on each soldier, but only \$869 per person on education and \$433 on health. In the same year Syria spent 93 times as much on defense as on health.

Three sets of reasons account for this arms race--international, regional, and domestic. On the international level, the cold war between East and West contributed significantly in the sense that each side would compete and vie for allies, friends, and clients with large armies and sophisticated weapons. Second, the arms producers in both East and West were very much interested in selling arms and the Middle East countries were good prey for that market. Third, the defense establishments in supplier nations were interested in selling arms in order to reduce the costs of arms production, subsidize the production of other weapon and military research, and test these weapons in a real situation. Finally, the sellers of arms were helped by the revolution in oil prices, which made the Middle East a lucrative place for arms dealers and created another way to recycle the petrodollars.

---

<sup>10</sup>

On the regional level, the arms race was no doubt fanned by the sustained conflicts, such as those between Israel and the Arabs, Iran and Iraq, Turkey and Greece over Cyprus, as well as the internationalized civil war in Lebanon. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iran- Iraq war contributed more to the arms race than any other conflict, both in terms of the quantity and quality of weapons used in these conflicts. Furthermore, every succeeding war was fought with more arms and more sophisticated lethal and destructive weapons, which each party was anxious to obtain. On the domestic level the arms race was often justified by internal conflicts and instabilities. The existence of national minorities, the military background of most of the governments of the region, and the prestige that came with having a large and well-equipped army were important factors conducive to military expenditure. They also contributed to the establishment of a military tradition in the region.

The post-Gulf war period has created new conditions relating to the arms race, some leading to contraction and others to continuation of a military buildup. First, among the forces of contraction, the defeat of Iraq and the tight sanctions imposed by the Security Council eliminate that country as a potential big spender on arms. Second, the end of the Cold War has brought an end to the ideological basis for arms sale. Third, the economic crisis within the region is a dampener on arms expenditure. All countries of the region are facing economic difficulties, whether because of their heavy burdens of the debt, because of the rapidly increasing population, or because of an infrastructure that is crying for reconstruction. Furthermore, the decline in oil prices may have an impact on their readiness to continue their spree of expenditure on arms. Finally, both the people and policy makers in the supplier nations are beginning to question the reliability of arms buildup as a source of stability. The French, for example, who sell about 50% of their military product overseas, are beginning to wonder whether such a trend is morally and internationally justifiable.

On the other hand, there are many reasons why the arms race will continue. For instance, the sources of conflict and tension, which brought about the arms race in the past are still there. Second, the leaders of the New World Order do not seem to be serious about arms control. During 1990 the United States sold almost \$19 billion worth of arms to the Third World, most of which went to the Middle East. The estimates for this year suggest a sale of about \$33 billion, half of which will be destined for the Middle East. Arms from Germany, France, England, and the Soviet Union have continued to flow. Third, both victors and vanquished in the Middle East war are no doubt scrambling to replenish their arsenal with more expensive and updated equipment. One might argue further that suffering economies, especially those of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, will find it attractive to sell arms in order to support their economies. Finally, the fact that most countries of the Middle East believe that Israel has nuclear weapons adds to their insecurity and thereby encourages them to continue to build defenses in any way they can to match the power of Israel. This reality may even be used to justify continued efforts to develop chemical and biological weapons to offset the more sophisticated Israeli arsenal.

However, all is not lost. There are still possibilities to put the breaks on the arms race in the Middle East and elsewhere. Though some responsibility falls on the shoulders of the Middle East leaders, the power and ability to put an end to the arms race are more within the reach of the major suppliers of arms. These same countries happen to be

permanent members of the Security Council. They are the apparent promoters of the New International Order. They are the most capable to do without the arms trade without suffering economic disasters. The main point is whether they have the will and determination to apply the breaks to this destructive trend in military expenditure and arms buildup. [The five permanent members of the Security Council have just agreed on guidelines for the sale of arms, which may lead to arms reduction in the Middle East.] [Editor]

One may argue further that the single most influential party that could reduce or even stop the arms race is undoubtedly the United States. The President of the United States has initiated the New World Order. Most of the Middle East countries depend on the United States for sophisticated equipment, for aid to finance military and other transactions, and for support in world affairs. Therefore, it is likely that the US can be the single most important player in reducing the arms race and wasteful expenditure.

Ayad Al-Qazzaz is a Professor of Sociology at the California State University, Sacramento, California.

**WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
VICTIMS OF POVERTY  
December 1991**

According to *Al Ahram*, an Egyptian daily, one million Arab children die every year before the age of five because of poverty, while another one million suffer from malnutrition. These statistics were reported in 1990 and most probably the number has increased since then because of the larger population, the deteriorating economic conditions, the continuing civil war in Sudan, the new dislocations and hardships caused by the Gulf war, and the lack of any innovative policies to combat that deprivation.

Poverty in the Middle East, however, has weighed heavily on adults as well.

Especially vulnerable have been women, particularly rural women, including some who are fully “employed” on their farms and in domestic or cottage industry. A recent study by the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development indicates that of an estimated 550 million women living in poverty around the world, 18 million are in the Middle East and North Africa, primarily in the Arab countries and Iran. This means that roughly 20 percent of the female population live in poverty; as internationally defined, that is more than 50 percent of the female potential labor force. However, in view of the relatively low rate of female participation in the labor force, the proportion of poverty-stricken women could be close to 75 percent of the active or income-earning female labor force, even though they are working.

The poverty of women and children is in part due to economic underdevelopment, low productivity, and low incomes. They are also due to high rates of inequality of income and wealth distribution. Furthermore, the inequality of income distribution is itself a reflection of the unequal distribution of opportunities. In view of the widespread unemployment and underemployment in the region, the inequality of opportunities falls especially harshly on women who even in good times have limited access to jobs compared with men; it is more so in periods of crisis. The poverty, unequal opportunity, and limited access to jobs by women have direct effects on their dependent children and their malnutrition and high mortality rates.

Poverty and inequality as experienced by women in the Middle East have virtually become institutionalized as obstacles facing women even before they are born. Girls have less access to nutrition and education than boys. Women have less access to higher paying jobs than do men. Women have weaker property rights than men and therefore less access to the business world than men. The UN report singles out the limited access women have to credit for farming and business purposes. In general only about 10 percent of rural poor women have access to credit even though these are working women and would most probably make good use of the capital were it available to them. Women in the Middle East probably face similar limitations. They are usually in low paying jobs, or confined to domestic industry or to small scale labor-intensive farming. They work long hours in unprotected jobs, with little prospect of advancement or improvement of their living conditions. Thus they and their dependent families continue to suffer. As a result, the economy and society in general also suffer.

Poverty and malnutrition, however, have still other causes. I am not thinking only of the effects of war and military conflict, nor of the underdeveloped infrastructure, which obstructs food distribution and labor mobility, nor of the explosively dangerous high rate of population growth relative to the resources. I am thinking also of the lopsided public expenditure policy that is biased against those who need help most, and the absence of any serious attempts to correct these problems.

I am thinking of the sustained high expenditure on military and defense, even though no single country in the Middle East is seriously threatened. This expenditure is to a large extent at the expense of basic needs -- food, shelter, health, and education.

I am thinking of the dual society that exists in all the Middle East countries. On one side live the affluent, educated, highly rewarded, and wealthy minority; on the other side live the poverty stricken, undereducated, poorly rewarded, and needy majority. Women and children within that majority are the most vulnerable and hence the ones who suffer most.

The Middle East countries are not unique in this pattern of unequal distribution and heavy burden on women and children, though they happen to have more inequality and more deprivation than many other countries. However, they have less reason to tolerate such poverty and deprivation.

The Middle East countries are neither destitute nor ignorant of the problem. Yet, there is little indication that conditions are improving. On the contrary, it is more likely that conditions will worsen rather than improve, especially because of the rapid wave of privatization that has hit the region.

In fact, as privatization and deregulation of industry continue, we may expect high prices, unemployment, and more inequality of distribution to follow, especially during the transition from the pseudo-socialism to the pseudo-market economy that lies ahead. The example of Egypt's *Infitah*, or open door economy, is a good illustration.

The situation is not hopeless; it can be changed. Public policy, coordinated with private initiative, should be capable of reversing those prospects and improving them, strictly on the basis of local and national resources. Probably the most important measure is to increase employment such that all those wanting to work can find jobs. This can be accomplished more easily by targeting sectors of the economy and population that are suffering most.

Another measure may be to target the infrastructure, which often depends on local resources, including roads, schools, utilities, and other services, which improve the market, facilitate mobility, raise economic efficiency, and thus productivity and incomes. In this respect, the individual countries would do well to declare war on poverty and deprivation. Let the defense forces face the challenge and come to the aid of the country during peacetime, as they would in wartime. They can build schools, roads, and hospitals, fight disease, and make sure food supplies reach those who need them. In other words, they can be a major force in making sure that basic needs are satisfied for all.

A third measure is to challenge the private sector to take charge of providing jobs, increasing production, and treating working women with more dignity and equality than has been the pattern so far. Extending credit to businesswomen is as critical as giving jobs to women workers. It is not credit as charity, but credit as good business that women want. By extending credit and other facilities to women producers, an under-

utilized resource will be tapped, incentives will be enhanced, work discipline will be brought to the small farm or factory, and women will be able to feed as well as set a good example for their children. Supporting women producers will also help the balance of trade by saving on imports and possibly giving exports a shot in the arm. The family will benefit. The economy will benefit. The private sector can guarantee such opportunities and reap the rewards.

Finally, it should be within the reach of every country in the Middle East to guarantee a minimum income for all people in the country. Such a measure would be consistent with the teachings of religion, human values, and rational economic planning, since those living on incomes below the minimum can hardly be productive and can only be a burden on the economy and society.

One source of power that can and should be mobilized in this effort is the media. It can bring the message home that there are problems, that there are solutions, and that the solutions are within reach, if genuine efforts are made by cooperation of the public and the private sectors. The media will render one of the most important services to society by disseminating information about both the widespread suffering and the ways to overcome it.

The Middle East countries face many problems but none more serious than the deprivation of women and children. The Middle East countries have the resources, the knowledge, and the administrative machinery to arrest the decline in the quality of life of these groups and reverse it. They need only to show their will and determination and translate these into workable solutions before it is too late.

**STABILITY AND PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**  
**NEW DYNAMICS AND EXPECTATIONS**  
**January 1992**

January 16th marks the first anniversary of the attack on Iraq by the United States' led alliance, under United Nations auspices. Great hopes and expectations were built on that multinational effort to redress aggression, promote regional stability, and establish the rule of law in international affairs. Iraq was defeated and Kuwait was liberated. The international military mission was completed, the multinational forces returned home, and now it is time to take stock: the results have been mixed, negative, neutral, and cautiously positive.

On the negative side, the defeat and military crippling of Iraq have redistributed power in the Middle East in favor of Iran, Syria, and Turkey, none of which can be considered a stabilizing element. The new political dynamics can hardly be causes for stability. A pseudo alliance between Syria and Egypt, a relative isolation of Jordan and Yemen, and a wave of antagonism against the PLO and the Palestinians, especially in the Gulf countries, have been evident results of the war dynamics.

The war has inflicted major losses of human and material capital. Approximately 250,000 people were killed, some buried alive in the trenches, and hundreds of thousands injured. The material loss has been approximated at about \$600 billion for the region. Hordes of refugees and dislocated people have been created, affecting the lives of no less than two million people from nations within and outside the Middle East. Several countries have lost large incomes they used to receive from migrant workers in the Gulf region. Many of these workers have now been forced out of their jobs as the war destroyed oil fields and stopped production.

The impact of the war on the environment is nothing less than disastrous. Destruction of the infrastructure, contamination of the air and water, and pollution of the desert amount to national and international tragedies, the effects of which will take a long time to heal.

These negative effects must be weighed against the “positive” effects of the war in the Gulf. Unfortunately few positive indicators can be identified. The war seems to have been neutral on several destabilizing forces, having left those forces undiminished. For example, Iraq has been expelled from Kuwait, but its historic claims on Kuwait have not been settled. Iraq may have agreed (or forced) to abandon its claims, but there is little reason to believe that those claims will be abandoned permanently. No government of Iraq since the creation of Kuwait has been willing to abandon those claims permanently.

Iraq has been defeated, but the regime of Saddam Hussein is still in power. The archaic Kuwaiti regime has been restored, but little change in the political structure of the country has taken place. All the Gulf countries continue to exist under the rule of outdated, non-democratic, non-participatory regimes.

Some degree of stability and reconstruction has been evident in Lebanon, but its land is still occupied by Syrian and Israeli forces--Israel's occupation is largely by proxy through the South Lebanese Army. Iran's destabilizing influence has probably been enhanced. The Palestinians continue to stand on the sidelines, largely dissatisfied and unwanted.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has been heightened by the Gulf War, not only because of the SCUD missiles which fell on Israel, but also because of the role Israel was going to play in the internal affairs of the region, had the United States not interfered. Israel's destabilizing role is most directly reflected in its continued occupation of Arab land in Palestine and Syria.

The region's economic problems have been little affected by the alliance's victory in the Gulf. In fact those problems may have been aggravated by the economic losses suffered. For example, the population pressure has continued to mount -- in spite of the war losses. The rapid increase of population in the Arab countries, Iran, and Israel has continued, but the resources have barely increased.

The sustained or expanded arms race remains worrisome in Middle East and world affairs. The burden of external national debt has been reduced for Egypt and Israel, but not for the other countries, and for some it has grown. Israel, Jordan, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, and countries of North Africa still face major burdens of external debt.

With minor exceptions, all countries of the region face increasing inequality of income and wealth distribution. This problem is even larger and more threatening on the intraregional level.

Shortage of food and diminishing food security are among the most destabilizing factors, since land scarcity, backward technology, and mismanagement of water resources continue to be menacing problems.

Finally, cutting across both the political and economic are issues of religious conflict, minority aspirations, and the awakening of women in national affairs. None of these issues can be ignored in seeking stability, peace, and economic advancement -- the triumph of the Islamic Salvation Party in Algerian elections may aggravate instability in the coming months.

Despite the negative picture painted so far, the post-Gulf War dynamics contain a silver lining. As the first anniversary of the war approaches, new forces are active in Middle East affairs. Probably foremost among them is the peace encounter between Arabs and Israelis. While a final settlement can hardly be seen on the horizon, the change of attitude among all concerned is cause for optimism. Whatever form a

negotiated settlement takes, the effects are bound to be beneficial and stabilizing. A negotiated settlement will affect national boundaries, defense budgets, economic relations, demographic issues (especially those of the dislocated Palestinians), and such regional matters as water allocation and management.

Another major factor to be considered is the positive role being played by the United States, both directly and through the United Nations, to influence events in the Middle East. How long US involvement will last and how deeply it will penetrate will depend on how successful its current peace efforts will be. At the present time the US enjoys good relations with most countries of the region, and all of them, Iraq and Libya included, seem anxious to cooperate with the United States on regional matters.

Still another positive factor is the apparent tendency in various countries of the region to expand popular participation in government and exercise more flexibility in managing their economies. Even the traditional regimes are promising some form of popular representation in the near future.

However, these positive factors can be effective in promoting economic and political stability only if certain conditions are met. First, change can be effective and lasting only if it comes from within the individual countries and the region. Dependence on other countries and regions will not create peace and stability.

Second, concern with domestic economic and political affairs must take priority over involvement in international affairs by Middle East countries. The leaders will render the greatest service to their people by concentrating their efforts on domestic issues: population planning and control, agricultural and industrial development, job creation, building the infrastructure, and re-channeling resources from military war to a war on poverty, disease, and ignorance.

Third, since the problems faced by the individual countries are common to other countries in the region, regional or sub-regional economic and political cooperation is indispensable. Such cooperation, however, can be realized only if the people of the region seek it themselves.

Finally, these new dynamics are more likely to bear fruit if all countries of the region are given a chance to participate in the "New World Order." Putting an end to the isolation of Iran, ending the cruel treatment of defeated Iraq, extending a helping hand to reconstruct and rehabilitate Lebanon, and co-opting the PLO in the peace negotiations will go a long way toward increasing the prospects for peace, stability, and development in the region.

The forces against economic and political stability are many and formidable, but the new regional and international environments appear more favorable now than they were a year ago. With a new set of priorities by the countries of the Middle East, and more evenhanded cooperation by the international community, peace and stability may no doubt be within reach.

**ALGERIA: DEMOCRACY OR THEOCRACY IS NOT THE QUESTION**  
**HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS IS**  
**February 1992**

Last December's election results in Algeria have sent shivers through parts of the Middle East, Europe, and possibly the United States. Will there be another Khomeini-type regime in the Middle East? Will Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front broadcast its message and spread its influence to other countries in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere? Will the fate of "democracy" be doomed by the Front's victory? The answers to these questions are neither clear nor easily attainable. Prejudice, ignorance, fear, and misinformation distort the picture, poison communications, and render true answers next to impossible.

The Islamic Salvation Front's victory should not have come as a surprise. The Front achieved an impressive showing in local elections a year and a half ago. Since then it has pursued its objectives with confidence and self-discipline. It took advantage of former President Benjadid's multiparty free election system and seemed to play by the rules as a constitutional party. Until it is proven otherwise in a court of law or by some other constitutional mechanism, it would be a betrayal for the government or any other authority in Algeria to ignore the election results, or to try to void them by decree or military rule. To do so would be a major setback for democracy and the idea of popular participation in governance. It would also be a blow to experiments in free elections throughout the Arab world. How would the National Liberation Front react if it were the winner and another party wanted to overturn the results?

Indeed, applying a double standard and invalidating the elections to prevent the Islamic Salvation Front from forming a government, were it to achieve a majority, would demonstrate the immaturity and inability of the Algerian political system to face free elections and freedom of choice by its citizens.

Developments in Algeria since the elections have been discouraging. President Benjadid has resigned. A National Committee chaired by a leader repatriated from exile

has taken charge, with military collaboration. Run-off elections have been cancelled, and no new election plan has been announced. In place of a potential theocracy under the Islamic Salvation Front a pseudo-military totalitarian rule has been reinstated.

However, whether the Islamic Salvation Front forms a theocratic government, or the National Liberation Front forms a secular government should not be the main issue. The most important consideration is whether the government in office can solve the problems that Algeria faces. Will such a government be able to control population growth, overcome economic stagnation and unemployment, reduce the inequality of income and wealth distribution, and bring about some degree of economic and political stability? Though in power for the three decades since independence, the record of the National Liberation Front is not encouraging. But will a theocracy under the Islamic Salvation Front do any better?

The Islamic Salvation Front has presented no platform, nor has there been any discussion of its planned actions once in power, except to say that it will institute or impose a system based on Islam and *Shari'a* Law. Leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front insist that the answers to all problems can be found in the Qur'an. That assertion, however, is neither sufficient nor reassuring as a solution to the pending problems facing the country.

The leaders of Iran and of Sudan have made similar declarations and imposed political systems based on Islam. And so have the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and other religion-based political systems. But none of the governments of these countries has been able to solve the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, under-employment, backwardness, and dependence on the secular western countries in science, technology, and food production. While Saudi Arabia has enough oil wealth to hide its failures, all the other Islamic governments have demonstrably failed to promote development and stability. On the contrary, all of them survive by repression and military force.

The reasons for the failure of these theocracies to solve the persistent problems are not difficult to find. First, without platforms and set agendas for action, they can hardly be held accountable for their policies. Second, they may recognize but rarely acknowledge the gravity of the problems they face, especially those of rapid population growth, technological backwardness, and economic stagnation. Therefore, they feel little pressure to attack those problems. In fact some countries, including Algeria, consider population growth to be an asset, even though their resources are not growing as much, and the quality of life is deteriorating. Third, these governments invoke the Qur'an and Islamic principles as guidelines to manage their economies. But the Qur'an provides no operational guidelines for economic management and efficiency. Therefore, the text of the Qur'an and the teachings of Islam are often subjected to interpretation and reinterpretation which serve only to concentrate power in the hands of political and religious leaders who are rarely qualified to manage the economy rationally or efficiently. Fourth, by invoking the power of the Qur'an and Islam, these governments manage to find scapegoats to blame for their own failures, both within and outside their countries, and thus redirect attention away from the basic problems facing the country. Fifth, by imposing *Shari'a* law, these governments deprive their citizens of their civil rights, cause separatism within their own countries, and sow the seeds for sustained conflict and abuse of human rights. By imposing an Islamic theocracy, they alienate non-Muslims, secular Muslims, and women, all of whom are consequently deprived of their civil rights and

freedom of choice as citizens. Furthermore, by such imposition they waste vast amounts of resources while trying to enforce the law and by reducing incentives, active participation, and efficiency of those alienated citizens. Finally, given the demands of modern economy and society, invoking or reverting to theocratic fundamentalism can only perpetuate economic and technological underdevelopment and prolong the struggle for development and higher standards of living.

So far no Islamic (or other) theocratic government has managed to get out of the grip of underdevelopment and dependence on secular countries for their basic needs for survival. Neither Iran nor Pakistan can boast of success in solving the economic and social problems they face.

The Islamic Salvation Front may be different and more successful, but only under certain conditions. The Islamic Salvation Front is most likely to succeed if it can combine respect for the rights of individuals to apply the principles of Islam (or any other religion) to their own behavior with a secular form of government to take charge of the affairs of the country, along the lines France has left as its legacy in North Africa. Religion in this model is a personal matter, while affairs of the state are a public responsibility. If that is the plan of the Islamic Salvation Front, then its victory in the elections should be honored as a welcome development and a sign of political maturity in the country. Algeria could then prove to be a prototype of democracy, religious freedom, and national development in the region and the Third World.

The Islamic Salvation Front has the chance and the responsibility to announce a platform and commit itself to abide by the rules of democracy, which have brought it to the verge of assuming power. It also has the chance and the responsibility to declare its commitment to respect freedom of choice, and human and civil rights of all individuals in the country. By doing so, it would not only secure power, but it would also force the National Liberation Front to comply with the rules of democracy, abandon the program of ruling through the military, and schedule and honor the results of free elections. Algeria may then prove to be a model country, and set the stage for socio-economic and political transformation along lines of freedom, choice, and popular participation for all citizens, regardless of religion, race, ethnic origin, or gender.

## **WHO IS AFRAID OF SOVIET MIGRATION TO ISRAEL?**

### **March 1992**

Soviet Jews have been arriving in Israel by the thousands. Soviet immigration has been described as a miracle, as the greatest exodus, and as the largest peacetime transfer of human capital. Some people are worried, and they probably have a reason to be. Certainly the Palestinians are concerned because Soviet Jews “threaten” their jobs, resources, and possibly their mere existence in their land, which is now occupied by Israel. Israel’s Arab neighbors may fear Israeli expansion with the help of the newcomers. I, however, suggest that the Palestinians and other Arabs should not be concerned with Soviet migration. Their conflict with Israel is not one of population but of nationalism and ideology and as a result, one of real estate. If the conflicts due to nationalism and ideology were resolved, the issue of real estate or territorial expansion would be resolved too.

This does not mean that no one should be concerned. Soviet immigration is worrisome, but to a different community. Soviet mass migration to Israel should be a source of anguish to those who support it in the name of human rights when they see Israeli agents “recruit” immigrants, not just welcome and help them. They should anguish when they see them prevented from exercising their right to migrate to and settle in countries other than Israel.

Soviet migration does cause a threat to Israelis in general. First, among those who should feel threatened are people who might be crowded out of their jobs, homes, and privileges because attention is redirected to help the newcomers. Among these are the new homeless. Orthodox and conservative Jews who may be threatened by the secularism and liberalism of those brought up under socialism. Another threatened group may be the educated and intellectuals who will have to share the scarce opportunities with newcomers who are highly educated and intellectually sophisticated.

Oriental Jews who have been treated with discrimination by Ashkenazi Jews may now feel even more discrimination because of the larger numbers of Ashkenazis. On the other side, all Israelis are no doubt concerned because they are the ones who must pay

billions of dollars to bring over and settle the new immigrants. The population increases through immigration, but the resources do not increase accordingly. Foreign aid may help, but the standard of living of the residents is bound to suffer. It already has.

Back to the Palestinians and other Arabs. Soviet Jews are not a threat to the Palestinians because they have no history of enmity towards them. On the other hand, they are probably enlightened enough and experienced enough in suffering on account of human rights abuses to be on the side of rights for the Palestinians.

Soviet Jews are not a threat to the Palestinians, unless Israeli authorities use them as an excuse to provoke aggression and initiate territorial expansion. However, the Israeli leaders have never been short of excuses; when they wanted to expand they found excuses and Arab policies made it easy for them to do so.

Soviet Jews are not a threat on account of their numbers. There is enough room in Israel to absorb several millions without endangering the standard of living or health of the people. This is especially so, given that Israel is bound to be an industrial/urban rather than an agricultural/rural society, and the new immigrants will make that transformation easier.

Finally, Soviet Jews are not a threat as long as peace is a possibility and war is not imminent. Should war with the Arabs be imminent, Jews from around the world would be just as much a threat as Soviet Jews, for they quickly mobilize their resources to aid Israel.

Nevertheless, there are Palestinians and other Arabs who feel threatened, mainly because they are poorly informed regarding the economic capacity of Israel to absorb new people. Yet if they look deeper into the absorption capacity of an industrial Israel, they will have little reason to be afraid; the facts defy such fears. An industrial Israel can absorb several million more people within its space.

The most threatened group among the Arabs are probably leaders who feel too weak to influence Israeli policy or to prevent its expansion and who, therefore, take advantage of the advent of Soviet migrants and cry wolf in order to gain national and international sympathy. Unfortunately crying wolf does not stop migration.

Looking at Soviet migration in a more positive light, it is possible that Soviet migration will bring good tidings. For example, Soviet Jews may be more receptive and more understanding of the suffering of the Palestinians than the Israelis who have been causing them that suffering. Soviet Jews will be voters and could influence policy.

As new voters, Soviet Jews may change the balance of power in favor of liberalism and peaceful coexistence with the Arabs, in as much as they have struggled long for their own freedom.

Soviet migration is a form of expression of the right of return for the Jews. Respecting that right could be a forceful argument in favor of respecting the right of return for the Palestinians. Without respecting one, it is difficult to argue for respect of the other.

Finally, Soviet migration could be the best guarantee against war in the near future because it is bound to absorb large amounts of resources which otherwise could be devoted to war and aggression. Building homes and schools and hospitals for the Soviet migrants is better than spending on the military forces to keep them occupied and well armed.

Is it possible for the Palestinians and other Arabs to take a more positive approach toward new migrants into Israel? Yes, it is, and for good reason. The Palestinians know very well that a solution to their problem will not come by force. It must come in part through international pressure, but most of all it must come by changing attitudes within Israel itself, as attitudes have changed within the Palestinian and Arab communities. Therefore, it is most appropriate for the Palestinians and other Arabs to gear their policies toward creating a positive and sympathetic impression among the newcomers. Why not lobby these Soviet migrants and convince them that the Palestinians are willing and ready to conclude a peaceful settlement, that they are ready to coexist peacefully with the state of Israel, and that all they want is to have a national home of their own, like all other people?

The Palestinians and other Arabs would do well to save the energy they expend arguing against Soviet migration or the form of settlement, and concentrate instead on the peace process. They may be surprised to find that Israeli leaders are happy to see them dissipate their energies in fighting an irrelevant issue, Soviet migration, as far as the Arab Israeli conflict is concerned. The Palestinians must, of course, fight against Jewish settlement within the Occupied Territories, regardless of who the settlers are.

The Palestinians and other Arabs would do well to redirect energy from fighting Soviet migration to strengthening their own social, political, and economic forces within and outside the occupied territories. Helping to improve the social conditions of the Palestinians, their education, skills, and organizational and productive capacities would give them more competitive power and better defense against encroachments of new or old migrants than any other form of defense.

The Palestinians and other Arabs would do well to concentrate on building social, political, and economic strength also outside the occupied territories, especially within the neighboring countries, by promoting the freedoms being cherished around the world, including the freedom of mobility, migration, and settlement. They could do so by raising the quality of education and the systems of communication so that they would not be misled into believing to be a threat that which is not a threat, including Soviet migration. They could also strengthen the lines of defense against outside forces by promoting full and free participation of the citizens in the governance of their countries. They could also enhance and fortify their feelings of security within their own homes enough not to feel threatened by Israel or any other country.

However, in the final analysis only one defense can be effective, namely a peaceful settlement with Israel. That will be the defense against crowding out by the new immigrants, expansionism, and violations of human rights. It is time that efforts be expended to mobilize the Soviet immigrants on behalf of a peaceful settlement, coexistence, and equal human rights for Arabs as for Jews.

---

## THE “ART” OF MIDDLE EAST POLITICS<sup>11</sup>

April 1992

J. Green

According to the estimable, if somewhat provincial, Rudyard Kipling, “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.” Lamentably, this tired saw is actually given some teeth by the vast number of Americans who actually believe that non-Westerners, particularly Middle Easterners, are fundamentally different than they are. In this context different means far more than whether one says tomato or **tomahito**. For in the West, Arabs, Iranians, and Turks are generally considered to be genetically, morally, and spiritually different from Americans who, as a matter of course, regard themselves as infinitely superior to these peoples whose cultures are deemed backward and barbaric. It is fair to say that Middle Easterners, Israelis excepted, are viewed with a degree of ignorance, racism, and even hatred, which no other minority community in this country would tolerate for a moment. Let us consider some powerful evidence that helps to sustain this assertion as well as to fuel this trend.

Nowhere are Middle Easterners treated more inaccurately than in films, where they are portrayed almost in a cartoon-like fashion. For example, Sally Field recently appeared in an egregiously racist film entitled *Not Without My Daughter*. Based on the true-life experience of Betty Mahmoody, the film details the decline of an Iranian physician in the United States. Our anti-hero gradually reverts to type through transformation into an off-the-rack, genetic Islamic religious fanatic who beats his wife, steals their child, and forces his family to live in the Islamic Republic of Iran against its will. Before his decline, the husband is portrayed as a good, decent, sensitive, salt of the earth kind of guy who drinks whiskey, despite the fact that his Islamic religion forbids the drinking of alcohol, listens to opera, and calls his wife honey. The audience is horrified as this model middle class American is gradually transformed into a brutal and callous Muslim monster. The film-makers irresponsibly extrapolate from the behavior of this single, deranged individual to that of millions of others. Indeed, such logic makes us

---

<sup>11</sup>

wonder, given the behaviors of Jim Baker, Jimmy Swaggart, and others, whether all religions have an inherently corrupting and debilitating character to them!

Another popular if racist treatment of the Middle East is to be found in *Midnight Express*, an early film by Oliver Stone whose penchant for hyperbole is well known. This film chronicles the travails of a young American imprisoned in Turkey for trying to smuggle 2 kilograms of hashish out of the country. The prison in which he is warehoused lives down to everyone's expectations of a Middle Eastern hell-hole and, just like American prisons, is replete with corruption, drugs, brutality, and sexual predation. The father of the boy caught up in this horror speaks for all good and decent Americans when he flings his ultimate insult at the chief prison warden calling him a "Turkish bastard." What an epithet! Can one imagine anything worse than being called a Turk? Particularly in Turkey! Obviously Turkish prisons are not nice places. But if we were to recommend one film about American life to a foreign visitor would it be *Escape from Alcatraz*?

Film-makers are not completely to blame. Hollywood sells "entertainment" just as MacDonald's sells "food." The problem lies in the fact that Americans are so uninformed about cultures other than their own that they flock to see the worst kinds of garbage and are only too eager to believe whatever stereotypical claptrap they are fed. Remember that classic, *Iron Eagle*, where a teenager, listening to rock music on his Walkman, masters the intricacies of an F-16 and single-handedly uses it to rescue his father from Middle Eastern terrorists. I don't know who was more ill-used in this film, Arabs or F-16 pilots. Yet audiences loved it so much that when the real thing came along in 1991, Operation Desert Storm, replete with the death of more than 150,000 Iraqis, Saddam Hussein not among them, there was little public reaction as if real people were not being killed, just Arabs. The horror of the Gulf War was attenuated for most Americans by our traditional dehumanization of Middle Easterners. I am not criticizing Desert Storm *per se*, but rather the fact that we have become so inured to the human dimension of the Middle East that all critical faculties were suspended by our military action in the region. We went to war to save Kuwaiti oil. The suffering of Kurds, Afghans, and others has never elicited a comparable American commitment or sympathy. Instead of art mimicking reality, here reality mimics art and Middle Easterners don't really count for very much in the hearts and minds of most Americans, who are otherwise a compassionate and caring people.

This discourse should not be concluded without reference to the fact that Middle Easterners themselves are not totally without responsibility. Although I am not trying to blame the victim for the assault, it is important to observe that Middle Easterners, typically, are not terribly vigorous either in speaking up in their own defense or in criticizing others whose actions portray them in a negative light. For example, acts or terrorism committed by Middle Easterners are often viewed by the vast majority of Middle Easterners as reprehensible. Yet, outright condemnation of such actions is all too rare. Repudiation of terrorism by Palestinians, for example, should not be regarded as a rejection of the concept of self-determination. Indeed, condemnation of terrorism by Palestinians will only deprive those who attempt to dehumanize Palestinians with a valuable weapon in their arsenal.

It is also exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for travelers even to visit certain Middle Eastern states. For example, most constituent states of the Gulf Cooperation

Council are very difficult to visit. Lebanon is out of bounds except for the foolhardy, while Americans are forbidden from visiting Libya by American law. Somalia is in the midst of a brutal civil war, and Sudan continues to be convulsed by political and economic instability. Only prearranged visits to Iran are possible, and then only for those with a specific reason to be there. In short, much of the Middle East is closed off to foreign visitors, both expert and novice alike. In my repeated dealings with government officials in the region, I constantly emphasize the importance of access for visitors from the West. A byproduct of such access will be an amelioration of some of the problems I have discussed. Certainly, not all Americans will eschew Disneyland for the Middle East for their next vacation destination, but one would nonetheless be hard pressed to argue that improved access to the Middle East would not decrease ignorance about it.

In short, Kipling was very wrong. The twain can and do meet every day on college campuses, in exchanges with foreign universities, and in the market place. It is absurd to argue in this day and age that different cultures and societies cannot understand one another. And although I am not arguing that we should all convert to Islam or migrate to Oman, it is abundantly clear that our ignorance about the Middle East hurts not only those in the region, but also ourselves as a people. And ignorance cuts both ways. If one is a concerned and participatory citizen, it is one's obligation to be familiar with the Middle East. Unawareness about the region is inexcusable and destructive. It demeans not only those we demonize, but also ourselves. By denying the richness of the rest of the world, we concomitantly shrink our own universe. Arabs, Iranians, and Turks are remarkably similar to Americans. They want to raise their children, feed their families, and improve the quality of their lives. They watch too much television, worship their automobiles, struggle with diets and smoking, and know as little about us as we do about them. Yet as an American educator I have to start the process of education somewhere, and what better place to begin the eradication of ignorance than within my own community? Those who pay our salaries, the taxpayers, should not merely acquiesce to call for greater internationalization and multiculturalism, they should actively demand them as inherent components of any first-rate education. The alternative lies in the sort of resigned ignorance prescribed by our friend Kipling, who is less frequently remembered for his assertion that "You will never plumb the Oriental mind. And if you did, it isn't worth the toil."

Jerold Green, is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona, USA. An earlier version of this paper was to be published in the Arizona Alumni Magazine of his university.

**THE UNITED STATES, ISRAEL, AND PEACE  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
May 1992**

There is little doubt that the United States wants peace in the Middle East. I am convinced also that Israel wants peace. Yet, there is an apparent conflict between these two “addictively” solid allies. Israel wants peace on its own terms. The US wants Israel to compromise; at least so it seems. The maneuvering between the two countries has gone so far as to, at least on the surface, antagonize certain Israeli leaders and persuade some Arabs that the US has shifted to their side in the pursuit of peace. The truth of the matter is that the US and Israel are playing a game of international politics, and the Arabs are in danger of being taken in.

Israel wants a \$10 billion loan guarantee from the US to help settle floods of migrants from the former Soviet Union. The loan guarantee, presumably for humanitarian purposes, would save Israel about \$600 million a year in reduced interest charges. The US has insisted on tying the loan guarantee to the cessation of building settlements in the Occupied Territories of Palestine, on the assumption that the settlements are an obstacle to peace. Israel, on the other hand, rejects any connection between a humanitarian loan guarantee and Israeli policies towards peace with its neighbors. The Arabs are pleased, as if the loan guarantee were indispensable for the survival of Israel, and as if the US means business in its insistence on stopping the building of settlements. The dickering goes on, and so does the grabbing of Arab land by Israel and the building of settlements on it.

Actually Israel does not depend on the loan guarantee to settle the migrants. It can borrow from commercial banks, though at higher interest rates, but not so high as to be prohibitive. However, Israel wants the US loan guarantee as a renewed political statement of support of Israeli policies. Israel wants to ensure the security of the blind support and commitment it has enjoyed from the US for decades. Most probably Israel also wants the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, to believe that the loan guarantee is so strategically important to Israel that they would redirect their energies and political

efforts against it, at the expense of other and more pressing matters, including the achievement of favorable peace terms for themselves. The Arabs have apparently fallen into that trap while the building of settlements goes on.

Is the US serious in wanting Israel to stop the building of settlements in the Occupied Territories? Is it truly anxious to see Israel comply with UN resolutions 242 and 338, which call for withdrawal from the Occupied Territories? If so why does not the US use its strategic weapons to persuade Israel to stop the building of settlements, to comply with the UN resolutions, and to withdraw from the Occupied Territories?

The US can cut all or some of the approximately \$4 billion Israel receives every year, almost unconditionally. The US can refrain from using the veto in the Security Council of the United Nations almost at the pleasure of Israel. The US can regulate the sale of arms and the transfer of technology to Israel. The US can reduce or remove the trade privileges granted to Israel mainly for political reasons. The US can apply the same standards applied to other nations and impose a selective embargo on trade with Israel to force its compliance. The US has done nothing of the sort and has never hinted that any thought has been given to the possibility of applying such measures of persuasion.

When Pakistan declined to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the US cut aid to it. Israel has not signed the Treaty, but aid from the US continues. When Iraq failed to comply with UN resolutions on withdrawal, it became a target for a harsh and cruel war. Israel continues to occupy Arab land in violation of UN resolutions and the US has done nothing about it. On the contrary, the US came to its defense against the SCUD missiles.

When countries in Asia and Africa were caught violating human rights of their citizens, the US condemned them and threatened to cut off aid. Israel has frequently been cited for violation of human rights of the Arabs under its domain. The US has barely lifted a finger against it.

All Middle East countries are virtually embargoed or strictly controlled by the US regulations against imports of missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. Israel seems exempt from all such embargos or controls; on the contrary, it seems to play the role of enforcer, destroying nuclear generators, as it did in Iraq, and threatening to intercept carriers on the high seas, as was rumored when a North Korean ship was on its way to the Middle East. The US acquiesces or even supports these Israeli actions.

Can any one believe that the US gesture of tying the loan guarantee to stoppage of settlement building would balance this long-standing, conspicuous, unmistakable bias in favor of Israel? In fact it does not seem beyond belief that Israel and the US administration may be “together” in playing a misleading or misguiding game of politics, pretending to be at odds with each other. Not only does such a game allow the continuation of settlement building, but it also misleads the Arabs and lures them to a peace conference with an uncompromising Israel.

Israel, of course, cannot be blamed if it pursues its own interests with efficiency, or if it manages to excel in the game of international politics.

The US, on the other hand, can hardly expect to be able to mislead the Arabs forever into believing that it has changed its politics toward a more even-handed position in the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. A US change of mind or of heart cannot be farther from the truth, the rhetorical declarations and political maneuvers of US administrators to the contrary notwithstanding.

On their part, the Arabs should have learned by now that they and they alone can fend for their interests, especially in their conflict with Israel. The Arabs should have learned that influencing US policy is difficult but not impossible, and such influence is indispensable if they are to reach their goals in the international arena. The Arabs should have learned that the American public and the media are the best source of influence they can mobilize to affect US policy. The US President and members of Congress are elected officials who must respond to the views and demands of their constituents.

Finally, the Arabs should have learned that to succeed with the US public and media they have to reach them with clear, adequate, and relevant facts and explanations. They should be direct, precise, and convincing especially with regard to their conflict with Israel and the plight of the Palestinians. They should also be convincing that they have genuine interest in the peaceful coexistence of all states and peoples of the Middle East, a true commitment to an acceptable form of democracy, and an unwavering willingness to cooperate with others in the cause of international peace and stability.

The US administration may then find it hard to continue with its bias, and worthwhile to pursue an even-handed approach to make peace in the Middle East truly possible.

## **POVERTY IN ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES**

**June 1992**

The United States and Israel have a lot in common. Both pride themselves on being melting pots of multiple ethnic backgrounds, even though the melting has not been perfect. Both are relatively young and energetic. Both are superpowers in their different geopolitical frames of reference. Both are advanced in technology and war material production, and both don the mantle of having mixed, welfare economic systems. Now they have another common feature: both face a burden of widespread poverty that neither country can ignore. In both countries poverty seems to hit the young, the old, and the ethnic minorities.

The definition of poverty is a product of public policy. In Israel it is \$244 per month for an individual and \$680 for a family of four. One third of the country's salaried people live below the poverty line. One out of three large families lives below the poverty line. Half the heads of the poor families are unemployed, but the other half are employed and still live below the poverty line. The number of children living below the poverty line grew from 67,000 in 1980 to 249,000 in 1990, or from 8.4 percent to 22.3 percent of all children. For the Arabs in Israel the number of poor is far more staggering: sixty percent of the Arab children live below the poverty line.

Poverty in the United States is as rampant. The figures vary according to the surveyor, with a range of between 15 and 26 percent of the families being under the poverty line. The victims are mainly the old and the young. The majority of the poor children are whites, but in relative terms minorities suffer the most, with nearly half of the African-American children and over one third of the Hispanic children are living in poverty. One in seven white children lives in poverty. The number of children in poverty has increased by 22 percent as a result of the recession. As in Israel, a large number of the poor are fully employed, but they earn less than the poverty line income.

There are always "explanations" for such poverty: the people are lazy; they have large families; they spend their money on liquor, drugs, and gambling; they are new immigrants who do not know the language; they are unskilled or unskilled for the new technologies; they are single parents, or teenage single mothers; or they simply are victims of the recession. In all cases except the last, the victims are presumably to blame.

Yet, if we take a step back and review the situation, what do we find? We find Israel encouraging immigrants to come in vast numbers without having jobs for them. We find both countries encouraging business deregulation, restructuring, and withdrawal of protective policies, without ensuring that the new economy is capable of providing jobs for all who want them. Both countries, facing budget deficits, have embarked on cost cutting at the expense of the poor and the powerless: the aged, the welfare recipients, the unskilled, and the dependent children. Both countries overlook the fact that incomes based on minimum wage are below the poverty level so that even the fully employed and hardworking cannot spare their families from this biting poverty.

Who suffers as a result? No doubt the individuals and families who are surviving at below poverty incomes are the most affected, both in the short run and in the long run. Whether through malnutrition, loss of schooling, loss of training, or through psychological and moral discouragement, these people pay the highest price for the predicament they find themselves in, mostly due to no fault of their own. But the society at large suffers as well, and heavily.

The unemployed represent a wasted productive capacity that can never be recovered. National incomes go down as a result, government revenues go down as a result, government expenditure on health, education, and welfare go down as well, and the quality of life suffers as a consequence. The unemployed also become a drain on the government budget because they quickly exhaust the unemployment insurance funds. It takes much doing to replenish these funds, at the cost of other expenditure items that often have high priority, yet they have to be delayed because of the urgency created by unemployment.

Unemployment and wasted capacity tend to put the economy at a lower competitive advantage. Less is spent on training and research and development than under prosperous conditions because more of the available funds are used to assure mere survival of those who are in need.

The unemployed are more vulnerable to crime, drug addiction, and home neglect. As a result they end up suffering more and costing society more. In many cases their rehabilitation becomes almost impossible. Society suffers in the process.

Who is to blame? This is not a smart question. The results are the same regardless who is to blame. The more pertinent question is what can be done about poverty in these highly advanced countries? It is true that some cyclical fluctuations in these pseudo capitalist economies are to be expected, but the effects are supposed to be taken care of by the unemployment insurance system which prevails in the United States and better still in Israel. It is also true that a certain small percentage of the poor have failed to do what they could to get out of poverty. But there is little doubt, given the many surveys that have been conducted, that a vast majority of the poverty-stricken are employed or are willing to be employed but cannot find jobs. The former cannot earn enough and the latter do not earn at all.

Two facts are clear: society has a responsibility to protect itself, and solving the problems of poverty and unemployment is beyond the capabilities of individuals and families. This being so, only one agency can cope with the situation, both to help the individuals and to protect society, namely the government. Several steps can be taken, some to deal with immediate problems and others to protect the future. Both Israel and

the United States are capable of pursuing such policies to their own advantage, as follows:

1. Create incentives for employers and potential workers to contract for work that is adequately remunerable at least at the poverty level. In other words, the minimum wage income must be set as to allow the fully employed worker to escape the stigma and consequences of living below the poverty line.

2. Create employment through public services, such as building the debilitated infrastructure, schools, and public housing. These are the projects that are needed most in times of crisis; Israel and the United States are facing economic crises.

3. Protect the educational and training systems in order to avoid further declines in the quality of the labor force, a loss that may be virtually impossible to correct at a later date; this is a budget issue and it must be given high priority to avoid the disaster.

4. Guarantee full employment to all who are capable of and are interested in working, in the spirit of the economic welfare system, for such is a protection for both society and the individual. Unfortunately, the trend is away from this system of social and economic protection, but it is not too late for Socialist Israel and the so-called mixed US economy to adopt policies that preclude involuntary unemployment. The market has not and cannot provide that guarantee; public policy can.

The article of December 91 discussed poverty in the Arab world, especially of children and women. Most of the Arab countries are underdeveloped, traditional, unsophisticated, and poorly administered. But evidently poverty and unemployment are diseases, which hit both the developed and the underdeveloped. The underdeveloped countries have far fewer means to solve those problems. Will the developed countries show the way towards overcoming unemployment, poverty, and suffering of the young and the old? Let us hope they do.

**DISSOLUTION OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE:  
LESSONS FOR ISRAEL AND THE ARABS  
July 1992**

At first glance it may seem farfetched to see any relationship between the decline of the Soviet Empire and the dynamics of Arab-Israeli relations. However, deeper reflection will show that there are several direct and indirect policy implications for the Arab countries and Israel.

For the Arab countries, or at least for some of them, dissolution of the Soviet Union means that a “friend” has been lost, a superpower “ally” or a countervailing power against the West has ceased to function as such, and a major source of military and economic aid, advanced equipment, loans, and grants has been curtailed or lost forever. These negative effects might be offset by positive new international connections, or by a revived hope emanating from the dismal fate of the Soviet Empire and of empires that have threatened them in the past, as they contend Israel does now. The (false) lesson the Arabs may learn, to their disadvantage, is that waiting for Israel to disappear, as did those other empires, is not as fantastic or imaginary as it sounds. They might become convinced that if the Soviet Empire can go away, so can Israel, and all they have to do is wait.

Israel, in contrast, may feel triumphant to see the Soviet decline so total. Benefits for Israel may seem immediate and grand, especially in the form of open migration to Israel. Indirectly Israel may also feel gratified because the decline of the Soviets may have weakened the position of its Arab antagonists in the Middle East, especially Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the Palestinians, who had depended on the Soviets as a source of protection against the institutionalized bias of Western policies against them.

Israel, however, has many negative effects to contend with. First, the decline of Soviet power has signaled the end of the Cold War and obviation of the myth of Israel as a western fortress against Soviet imperialism in the Middle East. Now that the Soviet threat is no more, if it ever existed, the need for the avowed United States' alliance with Israel is removed. However, the main lesson Israel should try to learn is that no empire

or political power is immune. If Soviet power and dominance can dissolve, so can that of Israel.

The Arabs have often suggested that time is on their side. They feel that they have reached the bottom of humiliation at the hands of the imperialists and now they are on the rise; therefore, their power position can only become stronger. The Arabs emphasize that they have time and they can wait; Israel will eventually go just as the other empires, which have dominated the Middle East, have gone.

This simplistic interpretation and the false hopes built on it can be detrimental to the future of the Arabs and to the prospects of peace in the region. The relationship between the Arabs and the Soviet Union and its satellites was not a healthy relationship: the Arabs did not manage to graduate from dependence on their protector to independence, or to an alliance on the basis of equality. The aid they received was often misused; the protection they cherished was not dependable; the arms they acquired were not effective in defending them. Therefore, it would be a grave mistake to assess the loss of benefits from their "alliance" with the Soviets as in any way detrimental to their position in world affairs. If anything, it may have alerted them to the need to depend on themselves, first and foremost, and to screen their relationships with other powers more carefully than previously.

On the other hand, dissolution of the Soviet Union, though one of the major events of the twentieth century can hardly be perceived as an established precedence for all countries. Both the Soviet Union and Israel have been based on ideologies that have not been adopted universally by their respective people. Communism-Socialism in the Soviet Union apparently remained an alien ideology to a majority of the people in the Union. Zionism, as an ideology, is not universally accepted by all the Jews, even in Israel, and certainly not by all the people of Israel, where the population includes other than Jews. Both the Soviet Union and Israel have expanded their territories beyond the boundaries "recognized" by international agencies; both have depended on force to maintain dominance and continuity; both have devoted large amounts of resources to the military for domestic security and as a business; both have built their internal power by pointing to the enemy outside as a constant threat and unifier. However, the analogy stops there. The Soviets were under outside economic, ideological, and military pressure emanating from their ambition to match the other superpower. The Soviets faced dissension from within the top leadership, beginning with Nikita Khrushchev and ending with Gorbachev and Yeltsin. The Soviets underestimated the negative effects of suppressed nationalism and its explosive reappearance among the nationalities that were dominated by Russia. Thus, once a window of opportunity to change was opened, and once dissenting leaders of the stature of Gorbachev and Yeltsin were found, the decline became imminent, especially in the economy and the wellbeing of the people.

Israel may be different. No superpower is pressuring Israel to change its strategy in dealing with the Arabs, though some of its tactics may be questioned. All the big powers which had supported Israel in the past still support it, and probably more so if we consider the unchanged position of Russia toward Israel. The support Israel continues to receive from its powerful allies in the West testifies to the minimal pressure put on it to modify its strategy in dealing with its Arab neighbors.

Though based on Zionism as an ideology, Israel's survival can be independent of Zionism; in as much as the Zionist ideals have been fulfilled by the establishment of the

State of Israel. The State of Israel is now less dependent on the ideology of Zionism than were the Soviets on the ideology of Communism-Socialism. In other words, dissension from Zionism by Jews in Israel is far less threatening to the State than was the dissension from Communism to the Soviet State. In addition, the Israeli political system allows for dissension. The multiple party system and the freedom of expression enjoyed by Israeli Jews are formidable forces against any threatening dissension of the quality and force portrayed by Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Furthermore, though the Israeli economy has suffered in the recent past and continues to suffer because of its expenditure on arms and defense, and because of inefficiencies in its operations, the Israeli economy has enough reserve of good will and economic resources among its international private and public supporters to feel much less threatened by an economic breakdown than was the Soviet Union.

Given these arguments, a lesson the Arabs should learn is to be careful not to build false expectations that Israel will decline, in the course of time, as did the Soviets and other empires before them. Time by itself will not guarantee a decline, nor will the expectation of internal dissension, or the pressures from the outside as experienced so far. It is possible, however, that the Arabs, through their own resources and power, can generate enough pressure on Israel to cause it to falter as an “expansionist” empire. Through unity, technological advance, better coordination of their efforts, and more sophisticated diplomacy in world affairs, the Arabs can raise the economic, military, and moral costs of maintaining an Israeli expansionist empire. If so, the Israelis themselves will find it necessary to restructure their polity and economy, and put an end to expansion beyond what has been allocated to them by international agencies. A more constructive lesson to learn is to find ways of concluding a peace settlement with Israel, rather than wait for an imaginary settlement by the force of decline.

The Israelis, however, are not immune. World pressure for a peaceful resolution of the conflict with the Arabs, end of the Cold War, the declining significance of Israel as a fortress for Western domination in the Middle East, and the massive migration of Jews to the resource-poor Israel have already caused relatively severe economic suffering in the country. Furthermore, Arab pressures for withdrawal from occupied territories and the establishment of legitimate boundaries are bound to continue and cannot be ignored. Finally, it is possible that Arab nationalist sentiments within Israel will flare up and cause major dissensions within the Israeli society. The Israeli Arabs, most of whom would have been in a Palestinian Arab state had the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947 been implemented, may still seek autonomy and independence.

This is the lesson Israel should learn from the decline of the Soviet Empire: the imposition of an ideology and rule by force cannot sustain dominance forever. Israel must find constructive solutions to its conflict with the Arabs. It can still do so before it is too late.

**CALIFORNIA CAN SET A BETTER EXAMPLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR  
THE NATION AND THE WORLD**  
**August 1992**

When I came to the United States in the 1950s California had the reputation of being the leader in public education. It had opened the door to all who would learn, from kindergarten to the Ph.D. It led in spending on education, student/teacher ratios, quality and progressiveness, and in promoting open-minded secular education for all. From kindergarten through high school and from community college through the state university, to the University of California, public education was a sparkling light guiding the state into prosperity, leadership, and magnetism that drew others to California living. The people of California had the right to be proud of what they had, and they had the good sense to pay their taxes: they wanted education and they got it. California public education flourished in that period in spite of the witch-hunt carried out during the McCarthy era.

The late 1960s were a turning point in attitudes toward public education. The challenge posed by students, primarily in public institutions, to the established leadership, which had penalized the country by indulging in the un-winnable Vietnam War set the stage for the following years of decline. Changes in government administration signaled the downturn, best reflected in the loss of sympathy for the University of California and budget cuts for public education in general. The low efficiency of government administration and the downturn of the national and state economies, which led to state and federal budget deficits have ushered the present crisis in public education. They also provided an opportunity to impose conservative policies and Reagan-brand doctrines on all state departments, including public education.

The present crisis is far more serious than the players of political games seem to recognize. The gravity of the crisis is best reflected in the fact that all solutions being proposed center on what programs to eliminate and how much spending to cut. Hardly any thought is given to saving educational quality, generating revenues, or to increasing efficiency as alternatives to cuts in spending.

The proposed cuts are major threats to the future of the state and the nation, as well as to the future of the individuals and families that are bound to suffer directly as a result. Let us look at these cuts:

Teachers have been deprived of cost of living allowances to offset inflation, which means they have suffered cuts in salaries. This has been true of the State University System and the University of California.

Salaries of teachers in elementary and high schools have been cut, and of those in higher education are now threatened with absolute cuts, over and above the relative reductions they suffer due to inflation. Even duly earned merit salary increases have been suspended. The result of all this is that public education in California, at all levels, will not be able to attract and keep high quality faculties.

The burdens inflicted by these policies are heavier on students than on faculty. Fees have been raised recurrently in community colleges, state universities, and the University of California. Though the fees are still lower than they are in some other public education systems in the country, these increases do not reflect higher efficiency standards, nor are they based on critical analysis or rational recommendations. They reflect doctrinal biases by the state administrators and a trusting, though misled, public.

Cuts in spending are now contemplated by limiting access to public education by denying admission to kindergarten to children who do not reach the age of 5 in September instead of December. This policy would close the door in the face of 110,000 preschool children for one year. Another access limitation has already been imposed by four California State universities, which announced that no students would be admitted in midyear. If applied to the whole state university system, probably 30,000 prospective students will be left out next year. Total programs have been cut; many courses have been eliminated; various majors have been declared "impacted," having reaching artificially imposed ceilings.

The fact that earnings of public education faculty and staff have been cut, that programs and course offerings have been abolished, and that direct access to education has been severely limited has led to a high degree of demoralization among students and faculty, who are being penalized unjustifiably and made to pay for poor management, wrong policies, and biases of others.

The state administration and legislature are political animals. They would rather balance the budget to stay in office than sustain long-term leadership by the state. They would rather cut programs than raise taxes and risk losing an election. They would rather follow the mood in vogue, even a mood of despair and low morale, than take a risk and lead their people out of the crisis by reasserting their commitment to high quality, secular public education, and to California's leadership in the nation and in the world.

The crisis is real. The causes are known: poor administrative efficiency in the state bureaucracy and probably in public education; higher projected expenditures than revenues; a public that has been misled to believe that taxes cannot and should not be raised. The conclusion reached is that the only solution is to cut expenditures, programs, quality, and access. To follow this approach will have grave consequences. First, any reduction in the quality of faculty and students is a loss to the system of education, to the state economy, and thus eventually to state revenues. Second, any cut in quality and richness of the programs at any level of public education will result in a decline of quality of the product, namely the graduates, and that will reflect negatively on productivity,

efficiency, and on the state and national economies. Third, any limitation of access will no doubt reduce the number of graduates at all levels and thus reduce the size of the pool of qualified people who would sustain the economies of California and the nation, at a time when people in this country are complaining against the threatening encroachments of foreign competition. California cannot win such a competition by limiting access or reducing resources to public education.

The crisis in public education is grave, but the prospects need not be as gloomy as they appear. We still can take preventive and curative measures to avoid the disaster. We should, however, recognize certain facts and principles, which are critical in this enterprise:

1. State revenues can be generated only by higher taxes, deficit spending, improved efficiency, or a combination of these. The people of California, when faced with the facts, will no doubt adopt the necessary measures to reclaim their position of leadership throughout the nation and the world.

2. The costs of deficit spending are far less than the costs of a damaged public education. Deficit spending entails certain economic costs that can be offset by higher productivity and more efficiency. However, the costs of lower quality and limited access to education cannot be offset by any measures and the losses cannot be recovered.

3. Public education is indispensable in catching up, matching, or leading in education, economic performance, and the quality of life for all. The history of the United States and of the industrialized countries in general attests to this principle.

4. The collective benefits of public education entail collective responsibilities to provide facilities, funds, and good management, free of doctrinal and political biases that distort the mission of public education.

5. Ultimately collective funding can be generated only by taxation. Failing to accept that responsibility means abandoning the goals of state leadership in education and in the national economy.

6. Programs that advocate higher tuition and user fees are counterproductive. They limit access and drive highly qualified people and businesses out of the state--again a loss that cannot be recovered.

7. Programs that promote privatization and payment vouchers in the name of freedom of choice or to reduce government spending are not dependable. They are not based on scientifically established principles of education. They are doctrinally determined. And they can critically undermine public education, even though public education has been the most important single factor in the development and leadership of this state and this nation.

8. To build and maintain high quality education is a cumulative process. By the same token, it can be a cumulative process of decline: by letting public education in California slip downward, we face the danger of becoming unable to prevent its cumulative decline to second or third rate quality education.

We Californians are now at a crossroads: we can take steps to restore our confidence in and support for high quality public education, from kindergarten through advanced university degrees, and thus revive our role of leadership. Or we can let our education continue on a road of decline that will land us into an abyss of ignorance, obscurity, and economic stagnation. Let us hope that we will make the right choice before it is too late.

## **SEGREGATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

### **September 1992**

Segregation of ethnic or gender groups is illegal in American public places, institutions, and social services. Private institutions that discriminate lose public patronage, protection, aid, and sympathy. Nevertheless, segregation persists in many areas of daily life to such an extent that in a recent book Andrew Hacker describes the American society as “Two nations. Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal.” The most blatant forms of segregation appear in country clubs, golf courses, and housing. Segregation in schools is not uncommon, nor is it uncommon in occupations and work places, though it takes a less discrete form in these instances. However, the most widespread and effective but least noticed form in perpetuating separatism and conflict is social segregation, even though it may not be intended to do so. While segregation prevails in most countries of the world in one form or another, our concern is with the United States, which has the reputation and the potential to be truly a melting pot, but the facts say otherwise.

Country clubs are notorious for their exclusivism in the name of freedom of choice, the right to private ownership and disposal of resources, as well as the choice of people with whom to associate. Segregation in country clubs goes beyond any one racial or ethnic group. It involves African-Americans, Hispanics, Jews, Catholics, women, and whites in clubs of minority groups. Each of these groups excludes members of one or another of the other groups from its organizations or clubs. In fact, segregation of certain ethnic groups, e.g. Hispanics, is on the increase. Probably half of all country clubs in the United States have rules against inclusion of Jews, women, whites, blacks, or other ethnic groups. Ninety percent of all private clubs have no black members. In 1962, of 803 clubs, only 224 were non-discriminatory; 416 had no Jews; 71 were exclusively Jewish. The picture may have changed in the meantime, but only very little.

Most golf courses have limitations on membership, which tend to be enforced more against blacks than against any other ethnic group. Even in the 1990s, Jews, Hispanics, Asians, and certainly blacks have remained subject to exclusion from a large variety of country clubs and golf courses, although it is often claimed that the members

and guests are unaware of such exclusivism. That might explain the “apparent” shock of Vice President Quayle to find himself in a tournament in a club that excluded blacks from membership. Another was the shock of Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, who was to attend a dinner-dance at the Everglades Club in Florida when she found that the club excludes blacks and Jews from its membership.

Housing segregation is common especially in urban areas. Detroit is notorious for housing segregation but so are many other cities. Though illegal, segregation is implemented indirectly by real estate agents who “steer black clients away from white neighborhoods,” by the relatively high prices which most minorities cannot afford, and by sheer rejection of minorities in certain neighborhoods. As a result, according to Gillmor and Doig, segregation has become “a way of life in residential living.”

Occupational segregation is least evident, though there are major concentrations of ethnic groups in certain occupations, which seems to be an enactment of unspoken and illegal segregation. Whites, a few Asian groups, and males tend to be concentrated in the professions and high paying occupations, relative to the other ethnic groups and females. Occupational segregation is continuously being reinforced and perpetuated by the racially biased immigration policies, which favor European whites who dominate among professionals.

School segregation has been considered a feature of the past, but as late as 1992 a judge in Alabama ruled that school segregation persists “in financing formulas for historically black colleges and in the recruitment of black students and faculty members at some predominantly white institutions...” The movement for desegregation, which started in the 1950s was supposed to have brought an end to school segregation. The facts tell a different story. Some blacks seem to have given up on segregation, expressing preference for “separate but equal” schools if only to guard quality, in the absence of equality. As recently as last June, the US Supreme Court ruled that “Mississippi's state-run colleges and universities are unlawfully segregated by race.”

However, the most severe and damaging segregation is social. Ethnic groups may mix by necessity in the work place, in the market, and in public places. However, they do little mixing with each other once they are out of these situations and when they have a choice. Few whites socialize with African Americans, Hispanics, or Asians. Though it may seem natural for ethnic groups to congregate, the degree of separatism seems too extreme to be normal. The effects have been destructive to the principles of integration and the melting pot, and to the “democratic” economic and social fabric of the society. In its extreme, the failure of black-white integration is driving affluent blacks to create their own black suburbs where they can enjoy an affluent environment of their own, since they cannot enjoy an integrated one--admittedly some observers question the feasibility or even desirability of a melting pot in America.

Segregation is economically wasteful, socially destructive, and politically threatening. It not only reminds of early days of slavery and exclusion, but it tends to concentrate poverty, poor education, homelessness, and the underclass among minorities. Under-endowment of minorities because of segregation and discrimination is often compounded by underutilization of their human capital, thus resulting in lost output for themselves and for society as a whole. It also means lower efficiency because of limited resource mobility. It can incite violence and civil disobedience in protest against segregation and inequality, which also result in underutilization and lost output. If so,

why do segregation and discrimination persist in a society, which presumably promotes equality and democracy?

Segregation persists because of a number of reasons: tradition, perceived security of those who have the upper hand, relative weakness of the minorities and women, and, most important of all, because of the power of vested interests in the discriminatory *status quo*, as well as in the lax attitude of the US toward segregation in all three branches of government. Landlords who are afraid that the value of their property will go down upon housing integration, employers who fear the loss of relatively cheap labor, and job candidates and applicants for admission to universities and training institutions who fear competition in a larger pool of candidates -- all these may consider it rational to oppose desegregation. However, these also are usually members of the majority who control government and the courts, and who find little reason to expedite integration or infringe on the vested interests and privileges of their powerful constituents. Hence, in the absence of major shocks to the system of segregation, and given the benefits that accrue to the powerful segregationists, it is not surprising that segregation persists. Furthermore, unless major new steps are taken, segregation is likely to continue, with all its destabilizing effects on society and on individuals. Actually there are signs of retrogression toward more segregation, as illustrated by the rise of black suburbs and by a recent decision of the US Supreme Court to end "federal supervision over student enrollment even though schools have not been fully integrated."

Does this mean that nothing can be done about segregation? Not at all; much can be done in addition to what has been done. For example, full taxation of all benefits that accrue from segregation and discrimination, and thus removal of all economic incentives to segregate and discriminate, will be a major deterrent against this socio-economic ill. Additional penalties in the form of fines would make it costly and therefore economically irrational to segregate and discriminate. However, on the positive side, guaranteed equality of opportunity at birth is the most important single step that can be taken towards genuine integration. Reeducation at all levels in favor of integration is another strategic brick in the structure of an integrated society. Both public and private institutions must bear the responsibility.

All these steps are based on the assumption that segregation and discrimination are illegal and unwanted. Given this assumption, integration requires will, determination, and risk taking by policy makers on behalf of integration and equalization of all citizens regardless of race, color, ethnic origin, or sex. Whether US policy makers of the next few years will have these qualifications and will be willing to expend efforts to overcome segregation remains to be seen.

**THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS**  
**TIME TO DISCUSS THE BASICS**  
**October 1992**

The return of a Labor-led coalition to power in Israel has been hailed widely as a new window of opportunity for peace with the Arabs. The initial reaction in Arab circles, though guarded, has been especially encouraging and in some cases sympathetic. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has made several positive declarations, issued invitations to Arab leaders to meet with him in any capital they choose--though not to Yasser Arafat, leader of the most significant Arab party in the peace process -- and has convinced President Bush that a \$10 billion loan guarantee to Israel is justified by his actions on behalf of peace. Rabin has also taken specific steps toward improving relations with the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. For example, he commuted an order of exile to house arrest against 11 Palestinians, released 200 out of several hundred (some say thousand) prisoners, reached an acceptable settlement regarding An-Najah University students, and invited the Palestinian peace negotiators to meet with him prior to the negotiation session. He has also extended an olive branch to Syria in the cause of peace. All these measures are laudable and should be taken seriously as important signals of Israel's readiness to make peace. In view of these signals, observers are asking why the Arabs do not reciprocate as positively and help to expedite the peace process.

Rabin's declarations and measures should not be undermined, but nor should they be overrated for, on one hand, they fall short of expectations, and, on the other, they avoid and detract from the main issues that stand in the way of peace. Rabin's positions on the main issues also reflect the old-age expectation of applying double standards, one for a privileged Israel, and a lower one for undeserving Arabs.

While Rabin's government has taken several positive steps toward improving relations with the Palestinians, it has done little to relieve the pressures, reduce the abuses, or prevent human rights violations by Israelis and Israeli authorities against the Palestinians in every day life -- harsh military government, restricted mobility, sundry orders of arrest and detention, physical abuse and torture of prisoners, and usurpation of resources, especially land and water. It is true that certain measures may be necessary to

guarantee internal security, but certainly not all the harsh and arbitrary policies and abusive actions--security seems to be a handy excuse to invoke whenever deemed necessary by those same authorities. Let me hasten to add that all these actions cannot be considered insurmountable obstacles to peace, but nor do they help, either. The government of Israel can do a lot to improve the atmosphere for peace and build confidence between the two peoples by modifying its policies and paying more attention to the suffering of the people under its occupation.

In contrast, Rabin's avoidance of and detraction from the main issues can be major obstacles to peace. Five of these issues and Rabin's position on each of them will illustrate. First, Rabin's government has declared its readiness to offer autonomy to the Palestinians, but it never fails to emphasize its opposition to Palestinian self-determination and independence. It is ironic that while autonomy is supposed to be followed by a negotiated ultimate solution, Rabin precludes self-determination and independence from such a negotiated solution -- though the Israelis enjoy both as a right and as a reality.

Second, Rabin's government, as did previous governments, defends its cautious approach to peace in the name of guaranteed security for Israel, which is a legitimate cause, but no concern is ever shown toward guaranteed security for Palestinians or other Arabs. Apparently independent Arabs with weapons will be a threat to Israel's security, but independent Israelis with weapons will be peaceful and trustworthy. The fact that a small, relatively weak, future Palestinian state will always be at the mercy of its strong neighbors seems irrelevant.

Third, Rabin declares Israel's willingness to exchange land for peace, but always with the proviso that Israel will not give back all of the Occupied Territories and must hold on to certain parts for security purposes. Thus, in order to conclude a peace agreement, Israel must gain territory, but the Palestinians and Syrians must give up territory in order to achieve peace. Isn't there something wrong with the logic of Rabin's position? At no time has Mr. Rabin offered to adjust the boundaries for security reason by exchanging territory for territory. If Israel needs certain parts of the West Bank and the Golan Heights to guarantee its security, it would be most judicious for Israel to surrender equal territories in return. Evidently there are different standards for Israel and for the Arabs. Nor does it seem to matter to Rabin's government that the Occupied Territories have been taken by force, have been held by force, and have been settled by Jewish people by force, and in opposition to international law that prohibits permanent settlement or acquisition of land by force. In other words, the principle of "no territorial war gains" does not apply to Israel as it does to other countries.

Fourth, Rabin's government's position on Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories is somewhat confusing. Jewish settlers in an Autonomous Palestine are supposed to remain subject to Israeli law and exempt from Palestinian "laws" or regulation. In other words, they will enjoy full extraterritoriality in Arab Palestine. If so, then we should expect the Arabs in Israel to enjoy extraterritoriality if they choose to, especially those who reside outside the legitimate boundaries specified by the United Nations 1947 Partition Plan. Extraterritoriality for one would justify extraterritoriality for the other.

Fifth, Rabin's government has been adamant about the right of return, or compensation, for Palestinians as per UN Resolution 194. Israel's opposition may be

justifiable on political grounds. But is it any less justifiable for a Palestinian to claim a right of return to a homeland than for a Jew to make such a claim? Whether we look for history as a guide, or invoke logic, international law, or human rights and values, there is little justification to favor one right over another. The only justifiable objections are pragmatic, namely limited absorption capacity or threats to political stability and peaceful coexistence. Israel cannot absorb the Palestinians from the Diaspora and remain a Jewish state, but it can offer full compensation to those who are entitled for such. That, however, does not entitle Israel to interfere in the right of return of Palestinians to a Palestinian homeland side by side with Israel, whether that homeland is an autonomous entity or a sovereign independent state. Just as Jews can claim a right to return to Israel, Palestinians can claim a right to return to Palestine, both entities to be within boundaries defined in a peace settlement.

Last but not least in importance is the issue of Jerusalem. So far we have heard nothing other than that Jerusalem shall remain a united city and capital of Israel. But East Jerusalem is part of the Occupied Territories, and the whole of Jerusalem has been designated as an international city by the same authority--the United Nations--that legitimized the creation of the State of Israel. To ignore the issue or impose a unilateral solution can hardly help the peace process. Mr. Rabin would do well to declare a conciliatory position on Jerusalem as a genuine step toward an Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

Israel, in return, should justifiably expect the Arabs to reciprocate. The Arabs can do so by offering full cooperation to guarantee the security of Israel within internationally recognized boundaries. They can also guarantee an open door for the normalization of relations with Israel. While friendship cannot be imposed, the conditions for it can.

Mr. Rabin has charisma, almost a mandate, and probably sufficient commitment to peace to make a go of the peace process. But to do so, he should have the wisdom and the courage to adopt and make public a reasonable position on each of these basic issues.

For example, he should make it clear that subject to guaranteed security for all states in the region, Israel would respect the right of the Palestinians to self determination, the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland according to international resolutions, the principle of "no territorial war gains," and the right of Israeli Arabs to enjoy the same privileges that may be enjoyed by Jewish inhabitants of the Palestinian state or homeland.

By adopting such principles, Yitzhak Rabin will expedite the peace process, assure the security of Israel, promote harmony in the region, restore confidence in human rights, and help to bring an end to the suffering of both Arabs and Jews in Israel and the territories it occupies.

**HUNGER IN SUDAN AND SOMALIA**  
**WHAT IS TO BE DONE**  
**November 1992**

It is a great irony that Sudan, the potential breadbasket of the Middle East, and its neighbor, Somalia, are hungry. Starvation and death are common features in Somalia and are rumored to be so in Sudan. The hunger tragedy is ironic also because both countries are members of “powerful” groups of nations capable of aiding them to overcome hunger and prevent starvation. They are members of the Arab League, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the United Nations and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). The first two of these organizations are the most relevant in this discussion, especially to ensure food supply and distribution. The other organizations are significant in the long run to increase domestic food production. In spite of these affiliations, millions of innocent people in Somalia and Sudan have fallen prey to the assaults of hunger that have already devoured tens of thousands and threaten many more.

The reasons for food shortage in these countries include economic underdevelopment, low productivity in agriculture, underdeveloped infrastructures, poor transportation facilities, and inefficient government institutions. Both countries also suffer from internal strife that has crippled them and rendered them unable to cope with their human problems. Civil war and religious friction in Sudan and the feudal or segmentation in Somalia have precluded productive work in large parts of agriculture. They have made transportation difficult and the distribution of available food supplies highly uneven and undependable. Embargo of the South by the Sudanese Government headquartered in the North, as a military weapon against the Sudan Liberation Army, and division of Somalia as zones of influence and dominance by military leaders have deprived large populations access to food supplies and discouraged potential donors from extending adequate aid to the starving people. Countries that are capable sometimes expose their nationals and their material aid to risk and danger because of the domestic strife, factionalism, and corruption.

While there is truth in these excuses, there are other reasons for the limited aid that has been received by Sudan and Somalia. Both countries are politically and militarily weak, underdeveloped, and unthreatening. Both have poor lobbies on their behalf at the United Nations and in the capitals of the wealthy potential donor countries. It took direct intervention by the Secretary General of the United Nations to remind the international community that Somalia is desperate. Unfortunately aid has been too little and too late to save the hundreds of thousands of children who will most probably grow up with defects because of malnutrition and arrested development. The two countries are also too poor to offer high expectations of economic gain from helping them. Finally, both are African countries which carry much less weight than European or North American countries, as can be easily demonstrated by the history of international aid. To deliver food shipments to isolated areas in the absence of roads and other infrastructures is difficult. It is also threatening if such shipments are easy targets for armed gangs that seize the food and sell it on the black market. However, neither difficulty is insurmountable given the available transportation and delivery technology. West Berlin was sustained by air deliveries for a long time in the face of Soviet and East German opposition and threat.

These obstacles may discourage aid from Western countries, but the Arab League and the OIC have much less excuse to ignore their member countries. The Arab League is supposed to promote Pan Arabism, unity, cooperation, and mutual benefits to its members. Several Arab League members are well endowed and are able to help their co-members with little hardship on themselves. Saudi Arabia is planning to spend several billion dollars on 150 jets and Kuwait will spend about the same amount on 236 tanks. For a few less jets and a few less tanks, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait can fill the empty stomachs of the Somalis and Sudanese for months. The Arab countries can also help with supplies of food or grants and loans to purchase food. They can also mediate to bring about stability and facilitate food distribution to the various regions of the respective countries. Furthermore, they have military capacity to intervene and guarantee a certain degree of stability and safe passage for food convoys to the areas that are in need. The Arab League interfered in Lebanon; they can do the same in Sudan and Somalia.

The OIC is equally capable of influencing both countries to assure food supplies to the needy, if only in the name of Islam and the obligation to share responsibility for other Muslims and human beings. The OIC can in fact be a major force in reducing conflict within and among Islamic countries if it would take the lead and employ its moral and material resources on behalf of these objectives. The Arab League and the OIC can justly blame much on the former colonial and imperialist countries, but they can hardly blame them for their own failure to control conflict in their midst, prevent hunger, starvation, and death of innocent people in their own member countries, and bring about political stability and cooperation within and among them. If the Arab League and the OIC do not act soon, it may be too late for them to act effectively at all: the problem will become too complex and they will lose credibility.

Aid and mediation by these agencies can, however, be helpful only in emergencies. In the long run higher domestic food production and development of agriculture and the economy are the only means to prevent starvation and hunger. Sudan and Somalia have great potential for development, especially in agriculture. Appropriate

technology is available and capital investment for development would no doubt earn high returns. International agencies offer help to guide development and growth but they impose irrelevant conditions and restrictions such as prior restructuring, privatization, and direct control of expenditures, which makes their help counter productive. Even so, development can succeed only if the local people are determined to make it a success. The people of Sudan and Somalia, in public and private sectors, as government and individuals, must be willing to play their roles in developing their countries. It is true that they lack adequate education, technology, capital formation, efficient infrastructure, and access to a market in which they can be competitive. All these, however, are obstacles that can be overcome once the people decide to devote their energies to development, concentrate on their domestic affairs, and make self-reliance their major road to success. The people of Sudan and Somalia must want to develop their own agriculture and produce food; they must want to build their infrastructure; they must want to adopt new technologies, raise land yield and labor productivity, and they must want to improve the quality of the product they produce for themselves and the market. No one can do it for them until they are ready to do it for themselves. Unfortunately these characteristics are not evident in either country. The governments of Sudan and Somalia are absorbed more with politics and their own survival than with economic and agricultural development or food production. They look for outside help more than for self-help. They waste more resources on the military than they invest in their depressed economies. And they have little contact with their people to know when the tragedy is coming before it hits them. Therefore it is not surprising that more than a million people are presently facing death by starvation in Somalia, with little local effort to save them. It is not surprising either that Sudanese officials deny the existence of food shortage when in fact large segments of the population of Sudan suffer from starvation.

It is not too late for these governments and the people to combat hunger and starvation. While they need help from the outside, they can bring about order and safety to transport and deliver the food. They can declare their intentions to be self-reliant, invest in education and technology, in agriculture and food production, and in the human capital, which they own but is largely wasted. When they begin to help themselves, outside help becomes more effective and less necessary.

## **UNITED STATES ELECTIONS AND MIDDLE EAST PEACE**

### **December 1992**

The elections are over and a new administration is on its way to take over. Many people, especially Arabs and Jews, were apprehensive of the results: what would happen to the peace process if Mr. Bush did not win? What kind of policy would Mr. Clinton introduce, and would he take the side of the Arabs or the Jews? Mr. Bush did not win, but the peace process has continued. Mr. Clinton has announced that there will be continuity and there is much reason to believe him. As to whose side he would take, the side of the Arabs or the Jews, most probably he will take neither side overtly. Instead, Mr. Clinton will take the side of the United States, as has every president before him and every president after him will be expected to do. However, taking the side of the United States is fully consistent with a peace policy, which will be beneficial to both Arabs and Jews and in opposition to neither. The United States may seem to be siding with one party or the other from time to time, but such would be a matter of tactics rather than strategy. The United States policy may change approaches, cajole, aid, bribe, twist arms, and pressure one or more parties in the Middle East conflicts in order to achieve certain objectives. The objectives, however, will most often remain the same because they are designed to serve the interests of the United States and that of its friends and allies secondarily.

The Clinton administration should be expected to continue the peace process with vigor for a variety of reasons. First, it is a continuation of the policy, as already stated by the President-Elect. Second, the Democratic Party has a stake in Middle East peace. After all, Jimmy Carter pioneered the process, which led to a peace settlement between Israel and Egypt. Third, to achieve peace would look good on the record, both for the new administration and for the United States as a superpower setting the pace for a peaceful and liberal world. The United States has already invested heavily in the Middle East peace process, both materially and morally and expects a return on its investment through the achievement of peace agreements. Fourth, a peace settlement would reduce tension and the threat of renewed war in the region, which in turn would reduce the demands on the resources of the United States. Military aid to Israel and Egypt would

justifiably be curtailed with a peace settlement, and economic aid could be transformed into a program of investment with tangible benefits to the United States economy. Fifth, a peace settlement would reduce the human suffering and dislocation and as such would be fully consistent with the United States' emphasis on guaranteeing human rights and on improving the quality of life for people in the region. Sixth, a peace settlement would reduce potential instability and thus reduce opportunities for extremists to exploit unstable situations, increase conflict, generate schism and incite rebellion. Radical fundamentalists of all shades would no doubt find less ammunition for their propaganda and recruitment of members and other activists. Finally, the United States, regardless of the party or the person in the White House, would consider it necessary to pursue the peace process if only to please its allies in the region, both Arabs and Jews, because they are asking for help in the process. To do otherwise would be inconsistent with the declarations of friendship, commitment, and love of peace.

These arguments are in support of the continuation of the peace process by President- Elect Clinton, but they in no way guarantee that the new administration, or any administration for that matter, will be successful in concluding peace settlements. The United States can facilitate, support, finance, and pressure, but it cannot guarantee the success of the peace negotiations. The responsibility for the success of the negotiations falls completely on the negotiating parties. The Arabs and the Israelis are the people who can make or break the peace negotiations and the peace settlements. They and they alone can guarantee that the United States remains involved in peace making in the region. They and they alone can nurture the negotiations, if only by limited but continuous progress, and thus make it conducive for the United States to stay with the negotiations until success has been realized.

The potential peace dividends for countries of the Middle East are too obvious to discuss and therefore we should expect all the parties to the negotiations to proceed with keen interest and commitment to make the negotiations successful. They will be able to reduce their military expenditure, re-channel their resources into economic investments, and promote development and better quality of life for their people. They will be able to reconstruct, relocate, and rebuild their suffering economies. They will also be able to finally bring security and peaceful existence to two generations of Arabs and Israelis who have been born in conflict and have lived in conflict all their lives. It is, therefore, incumbent on the Arab and Israeli negotiating parties to make sure that the peace process will continue and succeed and that the United States will have good reason to remain involved until peace has been realized.

There are several steps the peace negotiators, and their policy makers can take to sustain and advance the peace process. Probably the simplest but most important step is for all parties to make a commitment that they will not withdraw from the negotiations short of being left all alone at the negotiating table. If all parties make such a commitment the peace negotiations are bound to continue and allow every option to be explored in order to make peace a reality.

The negotiators and their governments can advance the peace negotiations by deciding that the settlement of their conflict must be achieved by peaceful means. Although it is difficult for governments and liberation movements to denounce the use of force in advance, it is not impossible to make such a commitment, and still resort to force

to defend their existence or national rights if they become convinced that no other way is viable.

The negotiators can agree to small steps and advances, if only to test each other's commitment, without insisting on all-or-nothing objectives. It is always easy to withdraw from the negotiating table but it is not as easy to return because the table may not be there at one's return. Probably one of the biggest challenges, and probably one of the most effective ways to successful negotiations, is to put oneself in the other party's place for a short time to appreciate that party's position, its limitations, what it can give, and what it must have before agreeing to a settlement. Whether the demands are for security, peaceful coexistence, restoration of home and land, or the achievement of sovereignty, independence, and a membership in the family of nations, looking at the problem from the other party's perspective can be an invaluable way of finding out what each party can give and what it can expect in return. Such an approach can also help to avoid asking for or expecting the impossible from oneself or from the other party.

The negotiators and their governments, however, can advance the peace process by inviting help from other countries, keeping them informed, and seeking their counsel and aid in whatever form they are needed. Countries that are not directly involved in the Middle East conflict, nevertheless, have a stake in the peace process. They have allies in the Middle East, economic and business interests, and they have a stake in the peace dividend materially and morally. By keeping these other countries informed the negotiators and their governments would encourage them to remain involved in the peace process. This flow of information will also allow the negotiating parties to assess one's own positions before reporting on them to others. It is also a constant reminder that regardless of how closely and directly these outside countries are involved in the affairs of the Middle East, the conflict is sustained and can be solved only by the people of the Middle East. If a war breaks out, they and they alone carry the main burden and responsibility. And if a peace settlement is concluded, they and they alone are the primary beneficiaries, sparing themselves from the material and human suffering of war and conflict, and sparing future generations from the misery and hardship they themselves have faced all their lives.

**RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS**  
**THE CASE OF ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS**  
**January 1993**

“Anyone who says democracy and Islam are not compatible does not deserve respect as a scholar,” thus spoke a self-proclaimed scholar of Islam at a conference I attended last month in Washington, D.C. The opinion he uttered was apparently politically correct for a person in his position. However, being politically correct in one situation does not guarantee correctness in all situations. Whether Islam is compatible with democracy depends on the definition of each of these ideologies, its application, and the accomplishment that have been realized. Assertions without supporting evidence that Islam and democracy are compatible do not serve well either Islam or democracy.

Democracy means equality before the law, freedom of belief and expression, popular participation in governance, and equality in the sense of one person/one vote. As practiced by fundamentalist Muslims and by the self-proclaimed Islamic states, there is little indication of compatibility or harmony between Islam and democracy. This would be true of all religious and fundamentalist movements that impose religion on society and deny the separation between church and state.

Fundamentalist religious movements have much in common: they are usually based on faith, belief in a calling or mission, blind submission to a leader even though such leadership may not be institutionalized in a hierarchy, recruitment of members through delivery of favors, and apparent altruism. They also tend to use violence to spread their cause. Accordingly, whether it is Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, or Buddhist, a fundamentalist movement, based strictly on confessional principles, can hardly be democratic. Democracy is inconsistent with blind submission to a leader, or with patterns of behavior that do not seem rational even to the individual practicing them, or with blind discrimination against others who do not share the same beliefs.

Fundamentalism usually demands compliance with ground rules that are presumed to be revealed in the scripture, or imposed by the leader and therefore are not debatable. The leaders are always ready to invoke the power of faith and religion to

avoid debate or questions about the rules and expectations of the movement. If they acknowledge their commitment to democracy, the fundamentalists usually try to take advantage of what democracy offers but they restrict their compliance when it seems expedient for their objective. The National Islamic Front of Algeria was ready to take advantage of free elections, but was also ready to abandon democracy and impose an Islamic system of government once it was in power.

My concern in this essay is mainly with Islamic fundamentalism because of my interest in the Middle East and because Islam is the religion of the majority in that region, though not fundamentalist Islam. Islamic fundamentalists, like all others, have the right to enjoy whatever the socio-political and economic system of their country offers, including freedom of expression, participation in governance, and equality before the law. They have the right to elect and be elected, assuming elections are conducted, and they have the right to propose legislation and lobby the government and the legislators for passage of such legislation. But they do not have the right to impose their will or demands on the community, nor do they have the right to impose their religious principles and values on others who differ from them in belief and worship.

Probably few would disagree on the guarantee of rights to all, including religious fundamentalists according to the laws of the country, assuming that these laws were adopted in a democratic manner, although there may be disagreement on interpretation and implementation of the law. However, these rights carry obligations. Islamic fundamentalists, especially in the Middle East, have yet to demonstrate their capability or commitment to meet such obligations in the service of society. For example:

1. No fundamentalist movement, or Islamic government for that matter, has guaranteed freedom of expression, or freedom of religion and worship, especially for those who may disagree with fundamentalism or with Islam.
2. No guarantee has been given of equality before the law without bias of belief or religion. Such equality can be guaranteed only by separating church from state.
3. No concern has been shown for the state of society beyond the establishment of a theocracy. Many ills of society cry for solutions but no solutions seem to have been implemented, adopted, debated, or even formulated.

Religious fundamentalists in the Middle East, especially Islamic fundamentalists, have been active for decades pursuing power. However, Islamic fundamentalists and governments have yet to propose viable plans to deal with the population time bomb threatening their countries. In fact they may have compounded the problem by ruling that reproduction is an act of God that should not be interfered with; the problem continues to brew.

Islamic fundamentalists and governments have yet to raise the quality of education and increase access to education for all. Little has been done to overcome illiteracy, raise the level of education, or promote analytical power and freethinking. While the number of students has increased throughout the Middle East, the number and percentage of illiterates are not much on the decline; in some countries they have been increasing.

Islamic fundamentalists and governments have yet to overcome the backward technology in their countries. No Islamic fundamentalist movement or government has come up with a plan to develop advanced technology, increase industrial production, and reduce technological dependence on the more advanced countries.

Islamic fundamentalists and governments have yet to show their commitment to the freedom of expression. Censorship, violence, jail, and other forms of suppression are common instruments to keep a lid on the freedom of expression.

Thus, poverty, illiteracy, inequality, and economic underdevelopment are still the rule rather than the exception in all Islamic countries. To suggest, as some do, that if only people live by the teachings of Islam (or Christianity or Judaism) the problems will be resolved is more fantasy than reality. Not only is it unlikely that everybody will live by the teachings of religion, but those teachings themselves are subject to interpretation. The way Islamic governments and parties treat each other nationally and internationally is bound to dispel any confidence that adopting an Islamic government will solve the problems facing these societies.

Neither in Pakistan or Iran, nor in Nigeria, Egypt, or Sudan are the Islamic movements and governments equipped with plans for resolution of the problems facing their countries. Pakistan has had an Islamic government for decades, yet economic underdevelopment, poverty, illiteracy, and lack of freedom are still common features. The revolution in Iran has changed regimes but it did not solve the problems. In fact it may have compounded them by depriving the country of some of its best minds, of a large amount of material and human capital, and of good will in the Middle East and outside it. The Sudanese theocracy has helped to perpetuate a civil war, imposed starvation on its opponents, deprived the country of much needed capital, and precluded any chance of economic or social development for years to come. Nigeria has dissipated its oil wealth but has hardly solved any of its internal conflicts, which emanate from religious revivalism. On the contrary, it has proceeded to impose religion on the state, fan civil war, harbor corruption, and put the country back on the road to sustained underdevelopment. Most glaring of all is the failure of Islamic regimes to help other Islamic people to cope with their basic human needs, as in Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Palestine, and Bangladesh.

All this is not to say that the Islamic movements and government cannot solve the problems facing their countries, but they must show how a confessional state can promote freedom of expression, critical thinking, and equality before the law for all people, as well as develop the economy. Short of a separation between church and state, and short of plans based on feasible, economically efficient, and internationally acceptable standards, Islamic fundamentalists and governments can hardly expect to solve the problems facing their countries, raise the quality of life for their people, and free themselves from dependence on non-Islamic more advanced countries. The use of force and political rhetoric has failed to heal the ills of society. If they want to lead, Islamic fundamentalists and governments must address the challenges and formulate peaceful solutions to the problems facing their countries. Only then can they claim that imposing religion on society is a viable approach to the sociopolitical and economic problems that are waiting to be solved.

## **PLANS AND OBJECTIVES IN PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS**

### **February 1993**

National movements usually are guided by their unity of purpose, strategic plans, and sensitivity to changing situations, to determine their tactics and day-to-day activities. While numerous factions and splinter groups always exist, the vision, shared goals, and strategies provide guidelines to all these groups, thus avoiding waste of resources, duplication of efforts, and destructive internal conflicts. The Palestinian national movement, led by the PLO, presumably has all these features, which should give it both longevity and effectiveness. If so, it should not be difficult to identify the PLO's common objectives and plans of action. This, however, does not seem to be the case. Various groups and individuals, formally or informally, speak on behalf of the movement. These groups and individuals often behave at crosscurrents from each other, initiate duplicative projects, make contradictory declarations and statements, and carry out activities that are not always consistent with the presumed strategy and objectives of the national movement.

I am not referring to splinter groups that openly separate from the PLO and resort to armed violence against Israel and against Palestinians, nor am I addressing fundamentalist movements that reject the idea of coexistence and peace with Israel. I am concerned with groups and individuals who act as mainstream members of the national movement, acknowledge the leadership of the PLO, and consider future peace and Palestinian coexistence side by side with Israelis in two independent states as their objective. These are the groups and individuals whose activities and statements seem lacking enough in coordination and unity to enhance the national leadership and unity of action.

Take, for example, the present and future economic and political conditions of Palestine, presently within the Occupied Territories and in a future State of Palestine. Several groups are concurrently acting on behalf of or with aid from international agencies and foreign governments to develop the economy or to plan its future development. Equally numerous are the groups trying to plan the economic transition of

the Occupied Territories from occupation to autonomy to independence. However, few of these groups deal with the total economy or approach it from the standpoint of Palestinian national objectives. Few of them consult with each other to avoid duplication. And few of them apply sufficient scientific rigor and thoroughness to make their reports truly useful. The result is a collection of incomplete reports, which add little to the fund of knowledge already accumulated.

That such activities are taking place is not an issue. Experts are free to study and publish in their fields of expertise and there is room for many more people to be involved. What is at issue is the degree to which these activities are consistent with and utilized by the national movement. Whether the PLO has a department of economics that prepares its own studies and synthesizes the findings of others is not clear. Nor is it clear whether a dynamic up-to-date plan of action on the economy is in place to be implemented when the time comes.

The problem is complicated further by the fact that individuals in positions of power in the national movement make statements that seem contradictory with the presumed national objectives. For example, one such statement by a high ranking official is that no more than seventy five to one hundred thousand refugees are expected to return from the outside to an independent Palestine. Since reliable estimates of the expected population are critical to any plan of action in the State of Palestine, such an undocumented statement can be highly misleading. It also contradicts the Palestinian national principles and the United Nations resolutions giving all the refugees the right to return or be compensated, and they are the ones to decide. Another such confusing statement is that a State of Palestine would have inadequate water and economic resources to be viable, but such is not the case if the State of Palestine commands control of all its land and water resources. Certain Palestinian experts have tended to echo biased opinions and declare that a State of Palestine would not be economically viable without some form of integration with its neighbors. Such a statement is neither valid nor based on careful study. There is little doubt that a State of Palestine can be economically viable by current international standards.

Many damaging and probably unauthorized statements are often made on the political level. For example, high-ranking officials of the PLO have suggested that the 1967 boundaries may be modified in peace negotiations, but they have failed to emphasize that any such modification must be made by exchanging territory and not by surrendering it. They have also failed to recall that the 1947 Partition Plan has not been revoked and any national movement that negotiates boundaries must take the boundaries specified by that Plan as a point of departure in accordance with the principle that no territorial war gains can be retained. On other occasions Palestinian leaders have stated that the 1988 Palestine National Council (PNC) declarations superseded the Palestine National Charter, specially the articles which threaten the existence of Israel. If so, it would be more effective if the PNC issued such a declaration or revised the Charter rather than let individuals speak contemporaneously on its behalf, leaving the matter vague and confusing. These hints and “statements in passing,” on major issues, such as the role of the Palestinian National Charter, are not convincing nor do they add clarity to the situation.

One of the problems facing the Palestinian national movement is an apparent embarrassment of riches: too many self-appointed experts, leaders, and spokespersons

speak on all kinds of issues. And they all seem to think that they should be at the head of the line. One looks in vain for a sort of division of labor according to expertise or by delegation of power or responsibility. As a result, one hears contradictory viewpoints, sees specific actions delayed, and no one is held accountable.

I remember one expert who was to be the representative Palestinian speaker at an international conference in Rome. Arriving at the airport and finding no one formally meeting him, he turned back and left, forgetting his commitment to speak on behalf of Palestine. A more serious example of this lack of streamlining and division of labor occurred when a certain agency responsible for the joint publication of a volume on Arab-Israeli issues failed to deliver on time because its leaders were preoccupied with the peace negotiations. That an expert should be designated as editor responsible and held accountable, regardless of the negotiations, did not seem to matter.

The problem I am raising is not rhetorical. It relates to every day life in the Occupied Territories and to the future of Palestine. For example, one Palestinian has wondered as to who makes decisions whether to go or not to go on strike in the Territories. In fact one should wonder about the wisdom of the strike altogether, given that the Palestinians themselves are the only party hurt by the interruption of their business and economic activities. If the strike were a moral instrument and an expression of protest, a predetermined one-minute strike a week would serve the purpose. Except for the potential violence that flares up during strikes, Israel has little to complain about these strikes since all they do is weaken the Palestinian economy and dissipate its resources at critical moments in its struggle for survival and independence.

The Palestinian national movement is no doubt at a critical juncture in pursuing its objectives. Unity of purpose and planning for the future are two indispensable conditions for its success. The freedom of expression and participation in governance are basic to the prospective democracy in Palestine. Disagreements, debates, and suggestive individual statements should precede decisions on policy and action. For a democracy to succeed, a measure of coordination, true national representation, and unified, purposeful actions are indispensable. The PLO has the responsibility to coordinate, synthesize, and guide. It also has the responsibility to plan in detail and with rigor for the time when it can put those plans into practice.

**THE COLD WAR IS OVER: ARE WE BETTER OFF?**  
**March 1993**

The first response to this question should be “Yes,” we are better off than we were. The world is faced with less threat of a hot world war than it was before. The countries that were preoccupied with the Cold War should have less reason to continue the arms race and thus will have additional resources to devote to productive purposes. Rival countries should have more opportunities and more incentives to promote international cooperation, expanded trade, and more rapid development and growth. Friendly market competition should replace military threats and political domination. And internationally minded leaders should be able to focus on fighting the social ills plaguing society such as ignorance, disease, poverty, and hunger. Therefore we ought to be better off than before the end of the Cold War.

Unfortunately the facts belie the expectations. It is true that it may be too soon to realize the expected results, but the available indicators tend to lead to disappointing conclusions.

First, the end of the Cold War was accompanied by the dissolution of the Soviet Union into 16 separate republics, all wanting to be free and democratic. Instead, many of them have been at odds with each other, sometimes violently, or they are facing internal conflicts that are nothing less than civil wars. And most of them are experiencing economic deprivation, increased crime, and uncertainty about their economic and political futures.

Second, as the Cold War has declined, internal conflict seems to have increased in other areas, (such as in India, the Middle East, and Africa) because of religious fundamentalism and ethnic differences. Here again the conflict has turned into violence and destruction. Forty-eight countries are presently segmented by war-like activities, suppression, and sustained discrimination. These violent conflicts range from the Black-White struggle in South Africa, to the Protestant-Catholic battles of Northern Ireland, to the intra-Semitic war between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East. No continent or region in the world is spared ethnic and religious strife. Millions of people are being dislocated

and turned into refugees. Instead of the Cold War between the superpowers we have many little hot wars, several of which have the potential to turn into world wars.

Third, the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union have let the Western powers loose, under the leadership of the United States, without a countervailing power. This has given them license to deal with little countries as they see fit, as they have done in Iraq. Shedding the blood of Iraqis, destroying their economy, and blockading them into dangerous ill health and malnutrition have seemed of no consequence to their leaders. Iraq's leaders, no doubt, provoked the attack on them, but the severity and magnitude of the destruction and killing are the responsibility of the unchallenged remaining superpower and its allies.

Fourth, there may seem to be some consolation that international efforts to cope with conflict have expanded. However, although the United Nations peace efforts have come to fourteen countries, they have had only limited success because of the constraints facing the United Nations. At the same time the nature of the conflict and the behavior of the antagonists have worsened. Not satisfied with killing and dislocating their enemies, the antagonists have resorted to sexual assaults against women and children, presumably following orders of their leaders to instill fear and panic and drive their enemies out of the disputed territories, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Or they starve them by blocking the transfer of food (or medicine) to the areas in which their enemies reside, as in Sudan, Somalia, and Bosnia. The United Nations can do little without the help of the major powers, which have been dragging their feet and allowing atrocities to continue.

Unfortunately, international intervention to control conflict has in some cases served the objectives of the aggressors by indirectly endorsing their retention of war gains. Israel has held onto much more territory than allocated to it by the United Nations. Kuwait has been awarded disputed territories by its victorious allies, (with concurrence of the United Nations) at the expense of Iraq, thus sowing the seeds of future conflict. The United Nations has endorsed the Owen-Vance peace plan for Bosnia, which is expected to leave the Serbs with more territory than they had before their "ethnic cleansing" war with the Muslims. The Cold War may have ended, but the danger of hot war has not subsided.

Fifth, the end of the Cold War should potentially have released additional resources for peaceful use. Unfortunately there is little evidence of any flows of resources to the needy districts, nationally or internationally. This is understandable since, contrary to expectations, the end of the Cold War has brought a slow-down rather than an expansion in most of the economies of the world. Poverty has increased. Starvation has been widespread, and health services have shrunk. International efforts to fight these declines have been admirable, though always less than needed, and never soon enough to forestall the tragic effects, thus leaving permanent scars on the countries inflicted.

The Cold War is past and we should be happy for that, but we should ask where the expected positive effects have gone. We should ask why the death of the Cold War has unleashed deadly enmities and hatred that for long had remained dormant. We should ask why it has aggravated envy, greed, and the lack of tolerance. We should also ask how we can replace the Cold War with a war on poverty, ignorance, and disease, and against racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination. And we should ask: where did we go

wrong and how can we mend our ways to render the end of the Cold War also an end to national conflict and human suffering?

#### A Tribute to a Voice of Peace

This month the curtain sadly falls on *New Outlook*, the monthly progressive medium, which for thirty-seven years has carried the banner of peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. I have had the privilege of being associated with *New Outlook* for 27 years. I have worked closely with Haim Darin-Drabkin, Simha Flapan, David Shaham, and Chaim Chur. We did not always agree but we always had a mutual understanding of and respect for each other's views. *New Outlook* was a forum for constructive debates and ideas in the cause of peace. Its closure will leave a gap in Israel and in the international media. It has served a purpose and hopefully its mission will be carried through by dedicated and enlightened people who will disseminate their constructive ideas for peaceful coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis by whatever means at their disposal. As a tribute to *New Outlook*, its editors, and to one of the contributors to the last issue, Uri Avenery, an excerpt from his article "Germany: History Repeating Itself?" is being reproduced below.

Having lectured Germans on their past and the signs of neo-Nazism in Germany, and their responsibility to prevent a repeat of past mistakes, Uri Avenery addresses his own people, the Israelis, to remind them of the mistakes they are committing against others:

"Yet even today I am not pessimistic. I do not believe that Germany is destined to repeat its mistakes, that a Fourth Reich is in the making. But the danger exists, and it would be shocking irresponsibility to ignore it.

"Only the Germans themselves can undertake this struggle, and to do this they must at last confront their past. But the voices coming from Israel, the 'country of the victims,' are important for strengthening the positive forces among the German people. They could have had even more importance if Israel did not have its own storm troopers who shout 'Death to the Arabs;' if former government ministers had not preached 'transfer' which means the expulsion of millions; if rabbis in Israel had not decreed that there is no place for 'strangers' in the country; if Israel had not shut the gates of the occupied territories to the 'foreign' wives and children of their Palestinian inhabitants; if Israel itself had not refused to admit the 'Falshmora' relatives of the Ethiopian immigrants who converted to Christianity. A German who sees pictures of the intifadal on television is liable to say: 'First remove the beam from your own eye!'" [*New Outlook*, January/February 1993, p.36]

**THE PALESTINIANS MUST DECIDE:  
TO GO OR NOT TO GO TO WASHINGTON  
April 1993**

Is it true that the Palestinians never miss a chance to miss a chance, or that they are always at least a decade late in agreeing to what they end up agreeing to, or wishing they had agreed to in the first place?

The Palestinians are again at a critical point in decision-making: should they accept the invitation to go to Washington to join the peace negotiations on April 20th, 1993? So far they have insisted that they will come to the negotiating table only after Israel repatriates the remaining 396 Palestinians expelled to Lebanon, or at least establishes a timetable for their return and promises not to apply expulsion policy in the future. The decision whether or not to accept the invitation is a difficult one, but it must be made and only the Palestinians themselves can make it.

Before a decision is made, however, the Palestinians must consider a number of critical points. For instance, Israel may appear willing and anxious to negotiate, but the truth is that Israel is neither under great pressure nor truly anxious to negotiate with the Palestinians -- in contrast to its eagerness to negotiate with the other Arab countries. While a peace agreement is stalled, Israel is proceeding with settlement construction in the Occupied Territories, and the longer peace is delayed the more territory will be settled and the higher will be the costs of withdrawing. In the meantime, Israel has the backing of the Western powers, and the economic and military aid it requests from them. Furthermore, Israel knows that the other three major Arab parties to the negotiations, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, have accepted the invitation and therefore the negotiations can go on whether the Palestinians attend or not. Egypt and Saudi Arabia, though not directly involved in the negotiations are also in favor of their continuation. All these issues, however, are external and the Palestinians cannot base their decision solely on them. Despite these and other important external issues, the most significant considerations are internal.

Suppose the Palestinians accept the invitation to Washington without realizing any new concessions to their demands, what would be the implications? First, their presence at the negotiating table will reflect a certain degree of solidarity with the other Arab parties to the conflict, especially those bordering Israel. By attending, the Palestinians will also make sure that no decisions are made in their absence to which they may be bound by default; e.g., an Israeli agreement with any of the other parties could have direct effects on the Palestinians, as did the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement.

Second, to attend will mean that the way to a negotiated peace is kept open, and that cooperative relations with the conference hosts are maintained.

Third, by participating in the negotiations the Palestinians will show that they are politically and diplomatically mature and are able to isolate immediate problems, such as the fate of the expelled Palestinians, from more basic long-term problems, such as creating peace and security for all the Palestinians. Dealing with both issues simultaneously by specialized committees is a more sophisticated and fruitful way to deal with these various issues.

Finally, to participate in the negotiations will keep the pressure on Israel to make the necessary compromises that are indispensable for the achievement of a peace settlement. Then the Israelis will not be able to use the Palestinian refusal to negotiate as an excuse not to implement UN Resolutions 242 and 338.

There are, however, internal implications of attending the Washington negotiations before their demands regarding the expelled Palestinians are met, which are unique to the Palestinian context. For instance, to accept the invitation could be interpreted as abandoning those people who are being punished collectively for presumably nationalistic activities. Moreover, to change their position and accept the invitation could seem like a humiliation for the Palestinians. The Arab world does not act kindly towards such compromises, regardless of the reasons behind them.

Yet, if there is any hope of a peaceful settlement, attending the negotiations could bring relief to millions of Palestinians. It is necessary, therefore, to weigh the potential benefits to the vast majority of Palestinians against the fallout of the charge of abandoning small groups or individuals.

Let us look at the consequences the Palestinians may face if they continue to reject the invitation to participate in the negotiations. First, they will miss the chance to influence the process of negotiation itself. Some observers suggest that there can be no peace without the Palestinians. That, of course, is a truism in the sense that no *comprehensive* peace can take place without them. But partial and separate peace agreements can certainly be concluded without the Palestinians; Egypt signed a peace agreement with Israel without the Palestinians, and other Arab countries can do the same. Thus, by staying away from the negotiations the Palestinians will be running the risk of isolation from the other Arab parties to the conflict, which can only weaken their own position vis-à-vis Israel and other countries.

Second, by tying their participation to the repatriation of the expelled, the Palestinians will be running the risk of setting a precedent and making themselves and the peace process hostages of small extremist and fundamentalist groups that may choose to sabotage the peace efforts altogether. Continuing to refuse to go to Washington on account of the expulsion can only strengthen Hamas and other extremist groups that might resort to the same tactics in the future, at the expense of the main stream of the

Palestinian liberation movement. Can the movement afford to fall under the control of one splinter group or another?

Third, failing to attend the negotiations carries the risk of more isolation and abandonment by the international community, including some Arab countries, which are anxious to see the Palestinian Israeli conflict resolved by one means or another. Such isolation could result in the loss of material, political, and moral support.

Do these arguments mean that the Palestinians should accept the US-Russia invitation unconditionally, regardless of Israel's policy of expulsion, collective punishment, and the violation of their human rights? Not necessarily. The Palestinians have some policy choices they can exercise. They can formally request a postponement of the conference date while they continue to negotiate compliance with their conditions for participation.

The Palestinians can declare the peace negotiations and the issue of the expelled as two separate matters which can and must be dealt with separately but simultaneously. By this means the Palestinians can maintain their position against the treatment of Palestinians by Israel in the Occupied Territories without losing an opportunity to negotiate peace or becoming hostage to the will of splinter and extremist Palestinian groups and organizations.

The Palestinians can also accept the invitation to participate in the negotiations under protest. They can go register their symbolic protest in various ways, such as sending a delegation one member short, or joining other delegations five minutes late every day of the negotiations.

The Palestinians will have to decide soon and this is neither the last nor the most serious setback they will meet. Will they boycott the negotiations every time an obstacle arises? It would certainly be more diplomatic and constructive to find ways to stay within than to be left alone outside the negotiation arena. As the history of the Middle East conflict shows, little can be gained by rejectionism, and much can be hoped for by patient, sustained, and intelligent diplomacy. The ball is in the Palestinians' court. They have a chance, though not a bright one, to achieve a settlement. Let us hope that they will not miss it.

**ISRAEL SEALS THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES  
IS THERE A SILVER LINING?  
May 1993**

Israel has closed the OT indefinitely and will review that decision weekly. Closing the OT means that the Arab residents of the OT will have no access to Israel-- Jewish settlers will remain free to come and go. It also means that Arabs who commute to Israel to work will no longer be able to do so. Trade from Israel to the OT probably will continue, while the Israeli administration will remain in charge.

The first reaction an Arab is bound to have is that the closure of the OT is a severe, inhuman, collective punishment of the whole population. It entails hardships of unemployment, a dangerous reduction of the living standards, and an incitement to desperate actions. The closure will also interfere with the already unstable peace process.

Israelis would also suffer because the closure deprives certain sectors, especially construction and agriculture, of relatively cheap submissive labor that has no institutional protection against unfair employment within the Israeli system.

Israelis, however, may see certain benefits in the closure. First and foremost is the expected reduction of violence and risk to life of both Israelis and Palestinians within Israel and in the OT. Less exposure presumably reduces the risk of fatal encounters. Although the Israeli armed forces and the Jewish settlers will still be in contact with the Palestinians, the risk of encounter may be reduced because of the reduced interaction between the two peoples.

The closure may also please Israelis who would like Israel to get out of the OT, both to spare themselves the agony of occupying other people and because they respect the rights of the Palestinians to be free and independent. This attitude may reflect a silver lining: the closure may lead to functional autonomy, which may lead to Palestinian independence and peace with Israel.

The Palestinians can hardly welcome the closure openly because it is perceived as a punishment and entails severe economic hardships on them, especially in the short run. This is particularly so if the closure orders are not accompanied by positive measures and

institutional adjustments that permit the generation of substitute sources of income for the displaced workers. Nevertheless, careful reflection on the major objectives of the Palestinians facing the Israeli forces in the OT would reveal that the closure might be one of the most positive steps the Israeli government has taken, however inadvertently. For example, closure of the OT forces the Palestinians to face the economic and social challenges of autonomy and independence sooner rather than later. While the costs of closure are formidable, they are not totally uncontrollable. While the institutional framework in which the Palestinians must function is not favorable, it is not immutable. And while positive effects cannot be felt in the short run, it is the long run effects that count in the Palestinians' struggle for independence and peaceful coexistence with their neighbors.

The costs of the closure are primarily the loss of employment inside Israel. Unless Israel exports the jobs to the OT, Arab workers who traveled to Israel may remain unemployed and face severe economic hardships. Such a situation was bound to come one day. It would be illogical for the Palestinians to claim independence and remain dependent on Israel for the employment of one third of their labor force. Hence it is a challenge for them to seek ways of replacing employment in Israel with domestic employment as soon as they can.

The loss of income because of the closure may be estimated at less than half of a billion dollars a year. Assuming the commuters are 120,000 workers, earning about \$500 a month each when fully employed, the total annual loss will be \$720 million. However, it is rare to have all of them fully employed at any one time in the year. Some travel and do not find a job, or find only a part-time job. Others may work one day and be told to come back days later. Often they go on strike and not show up. And all of them are sometimes kept out by temporary closure of the OT for political and military considerations. The commuters also spend some of their earnings on transportation, in addition to the long hours they spend on the road and waiting to be cleared for crossing the borders. A rough estimate of these adjustments indicates that an average net income of \$300 per month for each of the commuter labor force may be reasonable. That would bring the estimated loss down to \$432 million for a whole year.

For the unemployed and their families in the OT this is a lot of money. But for the independence movement, the PLO, the Arab countries, and for those seeking peace between the Arabs and Israel this amount is relatively small. Furthermore, it does not have to be secured all at once, or in the form of aid or a grant. It can be in the form of loans and investments on acceptable business terms.

The problem, of course, is more complicated than suggested here. Who will take the risk and invest in occupied territories whose fate is in flux? Who will extend loans to populations under occupation who are engaged in a semi-violent struggle for independence? To what extent will the occupying country allow the flow of funds to alleviate the hardships on people it may be trying to contain and punish? What investment opportunities exist in these territories, which have little access to the outside, few resources of their own, and a badly damaged economy?

It is easy to raise objections and concentrate on the obstacles that may stand in the way of coping with the closure and the rehabilitation of the Palestinian economy in the OT. It is more fruitful, however, to look at the possibilities.

First, Israel should have little reason to block the flow of funds to the OT if these funds are to be used for purely economic and social developments. A wealthier and highly economically and socially preoccupied neighbor is far easier to live with than a deprived, dependent, and politically frustrated neighbor. Israel would probably be willing to let trade flow more smoothly between the OT and other countries in the Middle East and Europe, whether through Jordan, Israel, Egypt, or an improved Gaza port.

Second, the PLO is supposed to command large stocks of capital and pledged contributions from other countries. Re-channeling some of the capital to the OT may be possible. Even more important may be the contribution of Palestinians in the Diaspora in the form of investments and loans. The Palestinians boast of their successes, the wealth they have accumulated, and the number of millionaires in their ranks. It should be within their capabilities to invest--not donate--in the economy of the OT, in spite of occupation, as long as Israel is willing to cooperate and facilitate.

Third, the Arab countries, even those that were angered by certain Palestinian behaviors during the Gulf war, may be persuaded to extend their help in the form of loans and investment, though grants would also be appreciated.

Finally, other donor countries may be counted on for loans, investments, and grants for the OT. Indeed, it is possible that Israel and Israeli business people may want to invest in the OT and there is no reason not to allow such investment if peace can prevail and Palestinian independence can be anticipated.

It may be argued that the Palestinians have few investment opportunities to offer and Israel has little reason to forego the cheap labor they can count on from the OT. A little reflection, however, would show that investment opportunities do exist. The infrastructure needs to be rehabilitated. Processing agricultural and food items offers many opportunities. Manufacturing and crafts offer opportunities as well. Israel, on the other hand, can do without Palestinian cheap labor by importing other labor, inducing its own people to work and get off the unemployment lists, or mechanizing. Most of the work in construction and agriculture can be mechanized, which may be cheaper than Palestinian labor if considered in a political economy context.

In conclusion, while closure of the OT may be condemned because of the immediate hardships it entails on the people of the OT, the Palestinians should be able to turn it into an opening of the way toward economic, social, and political autonomy and independence.

**MIDDLE EAST PEACE:  
BETWEEN OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM  
June 1993**

It is easy for members of my generation to be pessimistic about peace in the Middle East. It is not that I am ancient or that my generation is grounded in pessimism, but rather that Palestinians and Israelis of my generation have lived with the Arab-Israeli conflict all our life. We have witnessed hints and skirmishes at peace agreements, all of which have turned out to be empty daydreams. The Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement was a shocker and few believed it would hold, but it did break the mold and allow the Egyptians and Israelis to live next to each other without the constant fear of attack by one side or the other. And if it could happen between Egypt and Israel, why could it not happen between Israel and its other Arab neighbors, including the Palestinians? Israel gave up occupied land to reach an agreement with Egypt. Egypt abandoned its threatening posture against Israel. Israel can do the same in dealing with Syria, and Lebanon, and it can reach an agreement easily with Jordan, since no occupied territory is involved between them. By the same token, nothing prevents Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan from abandoning their threatening postures and signing a peace agreement with Israel. The stumbling block, according to most observers, is the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Can these two people resolve their century-old conflict and live in peaceful coexistence in the Middle East? Members of my generation would no doubt like to think they could, because we still daydream of peace during our lifetime. As a Palestinian, for example, I would like to be able to visit Israel without being treated as a suspicious character upon entry and exit from the country. I would like to invite other Arabs, including Diaspora Palestinians, to visit Israel and see what has been accomplished without fear of being suspected, humiliated, or rejected entry altogether. I would like to have my Israeli friends visit the Arab countries and see for themselves what has been accomplished in these countries in economic and social development. And most of all I would like to see the Palestinians secure in a home of their own, as independent people, side by side with the other independent people in the region, without fear of attack,

deprivation, poverty, and without dependence on charity and handouts from others. That is why I look for any glimmer of light that could signal hope and optimism that an Arab-Israeli peace agreement is on the horizon.

This optimism, however, goes beyond daydreaming or wishful thinking. There are signs that the Arabs and the Israelis are tired of war, mellowing, and waiting impatiently to find a way to break the deadlock and reach an agreement. The signs may be only diplomatic utensils to dish out blows or realize gains that make the respective parties feel good about themselves. But they may also be genuine signals that a substantive change is in the offing.

For example, both Israel and the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, have modified their positions to be able to go back to the negotiation table. Both have made favorable gestures toward each other. Israeli cabinet ministers have stated more than once that withdrawal from the Golan Heights is certainly possible in return for a peace agreement with Syria. The Israeli Foreign Minister has noted a possible confederation between Jordan and the Palestinians, and economic cooperation between Israel and its neighbors. Syrian officials quickly decided to continue the negotiations and may have been highly instrumental in convincing the Palestinians to do so. The Palestinians have agreed to compromise regarding those expelled to Lebanon and Israel has reciprocated by returning some expellees from earlier times. The Palestinians have also reacted mildly to the closure of the Occupied Territories, in spite of the economic hardships entailed by the closure in the short run, and Israel has reciprocated by initiating programs to create jobs in the Territories. Furthermore, all the parties have welcomed the roles played by the United States, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in making the return to the negotiating table possible. I do not know what went on behind the scenes, but I am certain that any party that was not willing to continue the negotiations could have stayed home, but none did.

Some observers suggest that fear of violent fundamentalism in the Middle East may have spurred these parties back to the negotiating table. If such influence did make a difference, it could not have been a major difference. The fundamentalists in the Middle East are not such a force that they can scare governments and states in the region to do what they do not want to do, especially in their relationship with Israel. It is more a change in attitude and higher interest in resolving the conflict that have led them back to the negotiations.

These are important gestures, but they are not sufficient to create enough optimism to begin peace celebrations. The road to peace is replete with hurdles and formidable obstacles. Will the negotiators be able to overcome these obstacles? Will the Arab-Israeli war come to an end as a result of the present negotiations?

Much as I like to say "Yes" I can only express hope that peace will come. There are, however, steps that may be taken to enhance the chances for peace, even while the contents of a peace agreement are being negotiated. First, it would be highly encouraging if all parties to the negotiations, especially the Palestinians and Israelis, make unilateral decisions to reduce violence against each other while the negotiations are in session. The PLO would make a major contribution by declaring a "cease fire" against Israel as a good will gesture on behalf of peace. Even if the PLO cannot control the extremists who may want to sabotage the negotiations, such a declaration would gain many supporters for the peace efforts inside and outside Israel and the Arab world. Israel would do just as well by refraining from the violent and harsh treatment of the Palestinians, especially arbitrary

detention, collective punishment, and gunfire. One way to reduce the excuses for such behavior is for Israeli soldiers in the OT to stay out of the way of the residents as much as possible. Fewer encounters would result in fewer casualties.

Second, the negotiating parties would dramatically increase the chances of success by deciding to stay in session as long as it takes to reach an agreement, thus insulating themselves from external influences that may threaten the continuity or pace of the negotiations.

Third, both Israel and the Palestinians would show good will by allowing the Palestinians to build institutions, secure outside capital, and begin to rehabilitate their economy. Though this process may be very slow to bear fruit, even minor steps in that direction would make a difference by enhancing the chances for a peace agreement.

The last and most important step is for Arab and Israeli leaders to hold summit conferences in the Middle East and directly discuss the principles on which peaceful coexistence can be built. The negotiators can deal with procedures and details, but the leaders must set the framework for the solutions. Mr. Rabin has expressed readiness to meet with King Hussein, President Assad, and other Arab leaders. It is time for him to show readiness to talk with Yasser Arafat who, no doubt, holds the main key to a Palestinian-Israeli solution. Yasser Arafat has offered to come to Jerusalem and meet with Israeli leaders. It is time for him to state his readiness to lead the Palestinian people in the recognition of and commitment to peaceful coexistence with the state of Israel.

The Arabs and the Israelis have a chance for peace, which gives my generation a reason to be optimistic. Let us hope that our optimism will be justified and that peace will be celebrated not too long from now.

**Bosnia and Somalia:  
Inconsistencies of the New World Order  
July 1993**

The end of the Cold War has presumably heralded the advent of a new world order in which harmony will replace conflict, peaceful coexistence will replace aggression, and negotiations will replace force in resolving conflict. The small and weak countries should feel secure in this new world order because the large and powerful countries will have no designs on them and would protect them against violators of the new doctrine.

Although the time since the end of the Cold War has been too short to pass judgment on the new world order, and the promise may still become a reality, the signals are less than encouraging. Disharmony and violence have spread among the former Soviet republics, in former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Afghanistan, and various parts of the Middle East. The United Nations, the United States, and certain European countries have made attempts to restore peace and stability in these trouble spots to no avail, and there are signs that these attempts will not succeed. One reason for the lack of success is that the causes of the conflict are often camouflaged so as to avoid facing their real implications. Another reason is the apparent inconsistency, which has been evident in the way in which the United Nations, the United States, and the Western European countries have dealt with these conflict areas.

The conflict in Yugoslavia illustrates the first problem, and a comparison of the policies in Yugoslavia with those in Somalia illustrates the second problem. The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is described as a war between Serbs and Muslims, or between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. This description is based on the assumption that the Serbs come from Serbia, the Croats from Croatia, but from where do the Muslims come? The Muslims also come from Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. They are Slavic in origin like the others. Yet the Serbs and Croats are associated with a nationality and a country while the Muslims are identified according to their religion. And here lie the

seeds of sustained conflict: the policy makers, the journalists, and the peace champions seem reluctant to acknowledge that the conflict in former Yugoslavia is based on religion as much as on territory and nationality. It is a conflict between Christians and Muslims, and it is also between Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs. The implications of this inconsistency are grave. To identify the Muslims only by religion, rather than by nationality and country like the others, deprives them of a basic right in home and country. In contrast, identifying Serbs and Croats by nationality and country seems to establish for them basic rights in Serbia and Croatia. This inconsistent and apparently biased identification lends credence, most probably unintentionally, to the campaign for "Ethnic Cleansing" carried out savagely by the Serbs against the Muslims. The implications are grave also because there has been little more than a faint protest or criticism of ethnic cleansing by the United Nations, the United States, or the powerful Christian countries of Europe, the champions of the new world order.

The bias in the policies of the United Nations and the powerful countries of Europe and North America is evident in their policies toward Somalia, especially when contrasted with their approaches to the conflict in former Yugoslavia. The United Nations and the United States and other countries went to Somalia presumably to restore stability and protect food convoys and deliveries to the innocent and starving people of that country. The war in Somalia is between Muslim warlords, not much different from the civil war in Yugoslavia, except that the Somalis are all Muslims. There has been more dislocation of people in former Yugoslavia than in Somalia. There have been equally serious problems of delivering food to Muslim communities in blockaded towns and isolated areas in Yugoslavia, as in Somalia.

The approach of the United Nations, the United States, and Western Europe has, nevertheless, been different in each of these two situations. The leaders of the United States and United Nations did not hesitate to use force in Somalia. They not only have tried to create stability, but they have apparently decided to take sides in the internal conflict and punish certain leaders for their actions. There is little doubt that General Aidid's forces did a horrible thing by attacking United Nations troops, but for the United Nations and the United States to "avenge" those horrible acts by bombarding areas in which innocent civilians live raises questions as to whether the United States and the United Nations are following international law any more than General Aidid does. They have inflicted harm on innocent civilians in Somalia and now they have decided to punish General Aidid as if he had been judged and found guilty, though the "judge and jury" are intruders in his own country.

The United Nations should be able to stop violence and restore order in different parts of the world, but its actions would make sense only if they were applied in a consistent manner. Unfortunately, no such consistency is evident in its dealing with Bosnia-Herzegovina. There has been great reluctance to use force against the Serbs because force is regarded as impractical. Yet, an embargo on arms is imposed on the Muslims of Bosnia, and ethnic cleansing and Muslim suffering continue. One explanation for the different policy, compared with that applied to Somalia, is that the terrain of Yugoslavia is too rugged for air power and using ground troops would be too risky against the well armed, and well trained Serbs. Another explanation is that the United States and Western Europe cannot agree on a policy to apply to Yugoslavia. A third is that there is a peace plan on the table and it should be given a chance.

These are weak explanations or excuses, which betray deep-seated biases. Is it the policy of the NWO to apply force only against the weak and small countries? Is it the doctrine of the NWO that the big powers may act on behalf of the victims only if there is a fully agreed upon policy among them and thus any one of them could veto such action? Is it the policy of the NWO to refrain from action just because there is a peace plan on the table, even when it is evident that the peace plan is not workable?

It is not far-fetched to suggest that the use of force would be more likely against the weak than against the strong; Somalia is the weaker of the two countries cited. It is also more likely that force would be applied against a Muslim than against a Christian country; Somalia is a Muslim country. It is more likely that force would be applied to a non-Western than to a Western country; Somalia again fits the description. Finally, it is more likely that force would be applied to a non-European than to a European country; Somalia is a non-European country.

In this framework the different policies applied to Somalia and to former Yugoslavia make sense but they also generate discomfort. Even when considering proposals regarding Bosnia that would suggest consistency in policy, the proposal seems to emphasize the lifting of the arms embargo on the Muslims of Bosnia, rather than on disarming or containing the more powerful Serbs who are pursuing ethnic cleansing.

If these observations have any validity, they should be quite disturbing, for then the new world order would not be new after all. It means religious bias will continue to prevail. Western-European colonialism will continue to shape policy. And conflict will continue to find fertile soil in various parts of the world.

However, the NWO can become more real and effective than implied so far. Recognizing the sources of conflict for what they are, and applying consistent and unbiased measures by the United Nations and the big powers are the minimum preconditions for the realization of a peaceful and stable new world. The time is ripe for adopting new approaches in world affairs. The small, weak, non-Western, and non-European countries are still hopeful that a viable NWO will prevail. The United States and Europe can still make that hope come true.

**IS THERE A NEED FOR A BREAKTHROUGH  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE TALKS?<sup>12</sup>**

**August 1993**

**H. Adelman**

Professor Herbert Kelman of Harvard characterized the beginning of the Middle East negotiations in the fall of 1991 as having the “quality of a breakthrough,” but it was only with election of the Rabin government that the talks offered an actual opportunity. There were four reasons for this optimism: these were the first negotiations since the Geneva conference of the 1970s aimed at a comprehensive settlement; the Palestinians were at the table as an independent party, although appearing under the formal auspices of the Jordanian delegation; most of the Arab states, including the Gulf states, excepting Iraq, are part of the negotiations; and, finally, the United States is taking a very activist role.

Rabin stated that he wanted the negotiations to conclude with a peace agreement within a year. The Palestinians, though they welcomed Rabin’s election, did not expect any breakthrough because of Rabin’s “assertions of Israel’s commitment” to the Camp David terms of agreement. Some, in fact, found that his stance at the resumed negotiations fell even below their expectations. Not only did Rabin not change the make-up of his negotiating team, but also the Palestinians “could not find anything that could serve as a good starting point for moving forward with the negotiations.”

The new United States administration expected and wanted a breakthrough. On the first day of the renewed peace talks following Clinton’s inauguration, the Secretary of State invited the leaders of the various delegations to his office where he stressed the urgency of negotiating a breakthrough.

As the bilateral talks failed to achieve any significant breakthrough, Shimon Peres proposed focusing on the multilateral talks as a means to a breakthrough. He was afraid that, “if there is no breakthrough at the coming ninth round of bilateral talks in

---

<sup>12</sup>

Washington, the process might unravel. We have to move ahead quickly, not only because time is running out, but because hope is running out.” With the bilateral talks stalling, hopes for a breakthrough focused on the multilateral talks.

Why is there an asymmetry between the apparent expectations of the Palestinians and those of the Israelis and the Americans? Secondly, what is the relationship between the multilateral and the bilateral talks? Finally, can the multilateral talks produce a breakthrough?

These questions are critical to providing a context for any recommendations or proposals made by the participants in the multilateral talks. If there is an urgent need for a breakthrough, then the proposals made must be short term and have an immediate and direct impact on the talks. If, however, the need for an immediate breakthrough is misplaced, then more thoughtful and long-term proposals can be formulated.

The parties were very far apart when they entered the talks. The Palestinians wanted the talks and are using them to set a foundation for establishing a Palestinian state in the entire Occupied Territories, including East Jerusalem. The Israelis entered the talks with the explicit condition that the negotiations would begin in the third year of that interim self-government.

In addition to the goals, the conditions driving the parties to participate in the talks are also very different. The existential plight of the Palestinians, particularly those living in the various Arab states had become desperate. In that sense, the Israeli closure of the OT was merely a final blow in narrowing the options for the Palestinians. When the 20<sup>th</sup> Palestine National Council accepted the very stringent conditions for entering the talks in 1991, their major supporter, the former Soviet Union, had fallen apart. Their regional champion, Iraq, had been ignominiously defeated. Because of the stand the PLO had taken on the Gulf War, the PLO had been estranged from its Saudi financial supporters and others in the Arab and European world. Further, remittances to the financial coffers of the PLO had begun to dry up with the expulsion of the Palestinians from Kuwait and other Gulf states.

One would have thought that the Palestinians would be far more desperate than the Israelis for a breakthrough, given the relative desperation of their position and the way in which Hamas was barking at the heels of the PLO. Certainly, they welcomed Rabin’s victory over Shamir because they felt that now they could play chess instead of boxing. There was, however, a downside - the rapprochement between Israel and the United States.

But the PLO was not starry-eyed because of the election of Rabin. As viewed by Nabil Shaath, “the Rabin victory was a very important change in the political scene less perhaps for the victory per se than for the defect - the resounding defeat of Shamir, the Likud, and the whole Greater Israel current,” as well as for the new more dovish make-up of the Knesset. According to a recent poll, a majority of the cabinet is now in favor of direct negotiations with the PLO.

Given the Palestinian goals, the assessment of the change in the Israeli government, and the changes in the Knesset and the outlook of the Israelis, the Palestinians were ready to enter the talks. They also felt that things could not get worse and they might be able to reestablish the credibility and recognition of the PLO in the eyes of the Westerners by participating in the negotiations. On the other hand, the Israelis wanted to press their advantage. A quick conclusion to the talks on the

conditions set by Israel and the United States would provide a basis for stability and long-term security of Israel in the Middle East. Thus, the language of a “breakthrough” seemed more attuned to the Israeli stance than to that of the Palestinians. Thus, the Americans, perhaps because of temperament and the desire of the Clinton administration to concentrate on domestic issues, and the Israelis seemed to be aligned in expecting a breakthrough, while the Palestinians and others, such as the Canadians, had no such expectations.

The multilateral talks were advertised as a complement to the bilateral talks to assist in developing an appropriate atmosphere and encourage small practical steps, which could utilize the expertise, experience, knowledge, and resources of others to enhance the peace process (Option 1 - Complementarity). As the talks developed, Shimon Peres became convinced that the multilateral talks could serve as an alternate route to the same goal (Option 2 - Alternative). The multilateral might, at least, serve as a catalyst to allow the bilaterals to overcome obstacles (Option 3 - Catalyst). I myself have selected Option 4 - Parallelism, as I have come to interpret the multilaterals as fulfilling a parallel purpose and operating on a parallel track to bypass the issue of a Palestinian state or political entity - the central political question. In addition I see them as helping to develop the conditions for a peaceful and prosperous Palestinian society, as a civil society with its sense of itself, as a nation and a people. I see them also as a way to develop the relationship between all the parties to the negotiations and the limited but endangered natural environment in which they all operate and function. In this sense, the multilateral provide more than just atmospheric and small steps subservient to the bilateral talks.

If the multilateral talks have a complementary or a parallel function, then one cannot expect or even desire a quick breakthrough. If, however, they are expected to perform as a catalyst or as an alternative to the bilaterals, then expecting and desiring a breakthrough by that route is understandable. Given the variety and difficulty of issues at stake in the multilateral talks - that they will often be used as stalking horse for issues not being dealt with, that a wide gap exists between the positions of the main parties to the negotiations, and given my interpretation of the real purpose of the multilateral talks, I do not believe one can expect a quick breakthrough. Nor should the proposals and expectations of the multilateral conference be based on any such expectation.

If this analysis is valid, then the focus should be on projects that will enhance the economic variability of the Palestinian territories and serve as confidence measures for both sides. Thus, a bulk port in Gaza, which would be of economic interest to Gazans, Israelis, and Jordanians, building the infrastructure for a network of industrial parts, humanitarian reunification of families, etc., are all steps which would enhance the long term viability and financial security of the Palestinians, and increase the level of trust between the contending parties.<sup>13</sup>

H. Adelman is a Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Center for Refugee Studies at York University, North York, Ontario, Canada.

---

13

PALESTINE REFUGEES AND MIDDLE EAST PEACE<sup>14</sup>  
ANOTHER VIEWPOINT (AVP) 73  
September 1993

Don Peretz

As the Middle East peace negotiations enter the tenth round, one of the most difficult issues has yet to be confronted head on, that of the Palestine refugees. The problem is difficult, not only because of its size, but because of its many complications, including compensation, repatriation, resettlement, and economic rehabilitation.

Recent estimates place the number at over 2.7 million, approximately half the total number of Palestinians living in the Middle East and elsewhere. Almost half the nearly two million Palestinians under Israeli jurisdiction in the West Bank and Gaza, - the territorial base of a future Palestinian state - are refugees, as are a third of Jordan's three million inhabitants.

One of the five multilateral committees engaged in the peace negotiation deals with refugees, focusing mainly on alleviation of distress such as reunion of broken families, health measures and the like. The refugee issue cuts across most others in the conflict including Jerusalem; it is involved in the bilateral negotiations between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians; it is also related to the concerns of the four other multilaterals (water, economic development, environment, and security).

One of the most difficult and controversial problems is repatriation. But repatriation to where? Every Israeli Knesset faction from right to left, except the two small Arab parties, adamantly opposes the return of large numbers of Arabs to Israel; even Palestinian negotiators have accepted the concept of repatriation in terms other than return to Israel. The territory of the future Palestinian state is already overburdened with refugees so it will be years before large numbers can be absorbed there. Jordan has taken in more than its share, especially since the 1991-92 Gulf War when some 300,000 Palestinians expelled from Kuwait found refuge in the Hashemite Kingdom. This leaves

---

<sup>14</sup>

over 700,000 Palestinians in Lebanon and Syria whose future location has yet to be determined.

The compensation issue is no less a dilemma. Estimates of property abandoned during the 1947-48 war in Palestine range from a few to several tens of billions of dollars. However, the need to accurately evaluate that property, to locate its present owners, and to deal with Israeli counter-claims, greatly complicates the issue. Most abandoned Arab property has long since been absorbed into Israel's economy, often passing through many successive owners. It has been classified and reclassified under a variety of Israeli land laws. Much farmland of fifty years ago is now urban with high-rise apartments, business and government buildings. Property values of 1948 are no longer realistic. Many of the property and land evaluation records of mandatory Palestine have been mislaid or destroyed, so tracing ownership is often difficult. Since Property was owned jointly, some communally, with many missing partners. Furthermore, much of land ownership in mandatory Palestine was not "settled" by cadastral survey, but according to old Ottoman customs that left many ambiguities and uncertainties about precise boundaries and location.

Israel has linked the problem of compensation to counter-claims by Jews from Arab countries, such as Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. There are strong pressures by Jewish immigrants from these countries to place their property claims against those of the Palestinians who departed in 1947-48. Estimates by some Jews from Arab countries place the value of the property abandoned in their former homes at more than that left by the Palestinians in Israel.

Given these complications, resolution of the refugee component of the Palestine conflict will take a long time and negotiations will be arduous indeed. The refugee problem will not be settled in a year or two, even after the parties sign peace agreements; its resolution will probably continue well into the twenty-first century. Nor can the problem be dealt with in isolation, since there are many other controversial issues yet to be settled in Arab-Israeli relations.

A substantial proportion of the refugees will have to be integrated into communities where they now live; this means transformation of present-day refugee camps into more permanent, economically viable communities. However, such transformations cannot take place without an overall uplifting of the surrounding economies. Without major progress in economic development of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza, there will be little possibility of ending refugee dependence on United Nations assistance. Thus, ending the refugee status of half the Palestinian community depends on regional economic development. One path to regional economic development with emphasis on the refugee problem might be to transform the United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) from a welfare and relief organization into an agency for regional economic development. Since UNRWA was established in 1950 its expenditures have totaled more than \$4 billion, rising from \$33.6 million a year to nearly ten times that amount in 1992. The agency itself has already taken the first steps toward making refugees economically self-sufficient through vocational education programs and small loans to individual entrepreneurs.

An integral component of regional economic development is agreement on rational and equitable distribution of the area's scarce water resources. Present shortages are one of the many causes of tension in the region; dispute over the resources of the

Yarmuk-Jordan system was a primary cause of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. While it appears that Jordan and Israel are close to agreement on distribution of water along their common border, agreement has yet to be worked out over the headwaters of the Jordan River. Regional agreement on water involves not only Israel and its Arab neighbors, but must include Turkey as well, for it controls the principal water sources of both Syria and Iraq.

Transformation of the two-dozen refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza, with nearly half a million residents, into economically viable communities is no small task. In addition to the half million camp residents, another 600,000 West Bank and Gaza refugees outside the camps must be provided with permanent homes and employment. One proposal for confronting this problem is resettlement of refugees in the more than one hundred Jewish settlements now located in the OT. The several billion dollars invested in these Jewish settlements might be used in lieu of compensation payments for abandoned Arab property within the border of Israel. A large number of the more than 120,000 Jewish settlers in the Territories are there for economic rather than political or ideological reasons. With the conclusion of a peace agreement and establishment of a Palestinian self-governing political entity, the overwhelming majority of Jewish settlers might be enticed back to Israel with offers of inexpensive housing.

Obviously the cost of these long-refugee rehabilitation projects will reach hundreds of billions of dollars, far more than Israel, the present host countries, or the refugees themselves can generate. However, the present international environment is not conducive to raising such sums. With proliferation of refugee problems around the world, in Somalia, Sudan, Cambodia, Kurdistan, and the Balkans, the needs of Palestine refugees are overshadowed [The Palestine refugees are uniquely the responsibility of UNRWA]. Nor is the current world economic recession conducive to the large contributions required for economic take-off in the Middle East. Although the West, especially the United States, was in large measure responsible for the problem, after half a century Americans have become indifferent to the plight of the Palestinians. The many demands of other conflict crises and the current world economic recession mean that the Palestine refugee problem will probably have to be resolved by Middle Easterners themselves.

Most funding, therefore, must be generated within the region, principally from the oil producing Gulf States and Libya. Another source should be reduction of the military expenditures by Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. Each of these nations is pouring down the drain several billion dollars a year in military expenditures. If each Arab nation and Israel were to reduce its military expenditure by ten percent a year for contribution to regional economic development, they will make it possible to absorb several tens of thousands of refugees within a decade.

Don Peretz, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the State University of New York, Binghamton.

## **Discrimination, Affirmative Action, and Civil Rights?** **February 1996**

California is in the throes of a regressive revolution. Many of its leaders and decision makers seek to turn back the wheel of history. They want to abolish laws that protect against and guarantee civil rights to minorities and women. They are opposed to affirmative action and to policies that promote diversity and equality of opportunity, claiming that such measures are nothing but reverse discrimination. They insist that merit should be the only basis for economic, social, or political opportunity. These California leaders are not alone in the nation or around the world in opposing affirmative action. But eyes are set on California, which has prided itself on its relatively progressive and equalitarian history. What happens in California will echo in other states and other countries.

The attack on affirmative action is neither original nor creative. Initial objections to affirmative action, half-hearted implementation, and frequent abuses have rendered its impact relatively weak and unconvincing. The critics, however, have gone farther to declare affirmative action no longer needed because discrimination no longer exists. Even if it exists, they argue, constitutional laws of the United States and of California are capable of protecting against it.

The facts belie both assertions. Federal and state laws have not succeeded against discrimination and affirmative action is still needed. Discrimination continues to prevail in the job market, housing, education, credit, and business opportunities. Color, race, ethnic origin, and gender still give license to discriminate, and to permit inequality of opportunity to persist and reproduce itself. The critics of affirmative action need to observe the following:

Equality of opportunity in the market place is meaningful only if the members of society are accorded equality of opportunity from the beginning of their life. Equality of endowment is the first step toward equality of opportunity. Unless the child is guaranteed the minimum education, health, nutrition, and social benefits necessary for normal functioning in society, that child can hardly compete on equal footing with others upon entering the market. Such low support because of race, ethnicity, or gender is the first expression of discrimination that faces minorities and women.

Other expressions of discrimination follow from the beginning: once a person is under-endowed, that person is most likely to be underutilized through unemployment or underemployment. Underutilization, as a belated expression of discrimination, is usually explained simply as the result of the merit system of employment and utilization. In as much as a minority person or a female may be under-endowed, that person loses in competition with the more endowed. A tragic consequence of the low merit explanation is that minorities and women are usually stigmatized as under-endowed, less qualified, and less efficient than others and thus may be underutilized in the market place. Thus, prejudice prevails and discrimination is institutionalized.

From this another expression of discrimination follows. The under-endowed and underutilized are now under-rewarded because of their relatively lower productivity. What is not acknowledged is that the presumed lower productivity is itself due to the initial forms of discrimination which minorities and women face in early childhood. Even those who are fully qualified may fall victim to institutionalized prejudice and discrimination.

Critics of affirmative action argue that the market mechanism, free enterprise, self-interest, and competition preclude the survival of discrimination. However, the market mechanism is neither perfect nor does it equalize opportunities or eliminate discrimination. In fact it was the failure of the market mechanism and of the private sector to remove discrimination and equalize opportunities that led to affirmative action and civil rights legislation.

Finally, the critics of affirmative action correctly argue that reverse discrimination is harmful to the majority and to society. Discrimination, whether in forward gear or in reverse, inflicts harm on its victims and on society at large. To be denied an opportunity because of race, ethnicity or gender, or to be constrained to opportunities below their qualification, for the same reasons, not only harms the victim but it also reduces the contribution those victims are capable of making to society. On the other hand, had there been no discrimination in the first place, there would be no need for affirmative action, nor a place for reverse discrimination.

California may be at a crossroads in dealing with civil rights, minorities, and women. Serious decisions have to be made: do we want discrimination to continue, inflicting costs on individuals, groups, and society at large, or do we want to maximize the opportunities for all according to their natural capabilities to acquire the necessary endowment and thus enrich themselves and society at large? If we want discrimination to continue, then let us roll back the wheel of history and abolish affirmative action and all existing measures of equalization. But, if we want to equalize opportunities and eliminate discrimination, remove the need for corrective measures, and prevent reverse discrimination, then we should retain affirmative action, strengthen it, and implement it rigorously and diligently.

### **Israel and Palestine: Alternatives to Violence March 1996**

The violence in Israel against civilians in the last few weeks has been deplorable. Only ultra fanatics and bloodthirsty people would condone attacks on civilians and innocent people, as has been happening in Israel in recent weeks. Israel's reaction has been to declare a war on the perpetrators, which means more violence; only this time it will be against Palestinians. World leaders are rushing to a summit meeting in Egypt to condemn terrorism and give backing to Israel. Various policy proposals have been suggested to combat violence, such as: putting pressure on Chairman Arafat to rein the killers; imposing tighter security by Israel; pursuing and apprehending the suspected terrorists, wherever they are; pressuring Arab countries and Iran to reduce support for and protection of the extremist groups; and, in the worst case, suspending the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians indefinitely.

These policies will not succeed in combating attacks by Hamas and Islamic Jihad or by Israeli extremists. Not only are these policies difficult to implement, but also they fail to deal with the causes of continuing violence. Implementation will be difficult because the perpetrators are not easily identifiable. The Palestinian police are not equipped well enough to smash a popular movement without inciting a deadly civil war among Palestinians. And international attempts to pressure other countries to reduce their support for terrorist groups are more rhetorical than operative. Israel, with all its power, has not been able to prevent the suicide attacks; how can the PNA do so? The United States, with all its might, has not been able to influence Iran's policy in the Middle East; why should it succeed now? Furthermore, most of the proposed measures seem one-sided: they aim at disarming Palestinians but not Israelis, containing Palestinian extremist groups but not Israeli groups, and punishing Palestinian violence more severely than Israeli violence. Therefore, it is unlikely that these approaches will put an end to violence.

A more serious problem with these measures is that they do not deal with the causes of the continuing conflict and the declared grievances of the militant groups. For example, there are charges that implementation of the peace process has been too slow and that the parties to that process have failed to deliver what was expected of them. On the Palestinian side, economic conditions remain desperate, unemployment rampant,

social and political freedoms curtailed, and foreign influence is on the rise. In the meantime, aid promised to the Palestinians is being doled out in installments that are barely enough for the survival of the Arafat regime. On the Israeli side, Israel has grabbed about a third more territory than was allocated to it by the United Nations; it continues to occupy Syrian and Lebanese lands; it continues to drag its feet in the withdrawal of its occupation forces from the West Bank and Gaza; it continues to exploit Palestinian resources; and large numbers of administratively held Palestinians are still in prison. Furthermore, Israeli policies on opening and closing the borders between the Palestinian and Israeli entities continue to be erratic and heartless, as if the workers who commute to Israel for survival do not count. Therefore, the most promising way to reduce violence is to expedite the peace process and remove the underlying causes of violence. Four major steps may be recommended:

First, Israel can and should complete withdrawal of its forces from all the occupied territories as soon as possible, thus removing the argument that the withdrawal is incomplete or not genuine.

Second, Israel can and should release all political prisoners and send them home without delay. As long as they are held hostage, there is little that can convince Hamas and other extremist groups of the honesty or good will of the Israeli government in trying to reach a genuine peace with the Palestinians.

Third, Israel can and should stop promoting, officially and unofficially, economic and social programs that aim directly or indirectly, to force integration of the Palestinian economy with those of Israel, Jordan, and other countries. These programs, though they may have an element of good will toward the Palestinians, can only be perceived as ways of controlling the Palestinian entity and diminishing its newly created identity as an independent people.

Fourth, and most important, Israel can and should implement full separation between the two entities: Israel should stop acting as a big brother or as an occupying power over the Palestinians. Israel still controls large segments of the Palestinian economy, polity, and communication system. Such a relationship would undermine the value of autonomy and prevent the Palestinians from taking charge of their own domestic affairs as fully as they should.

The proposed programs and policies for integration tend to be patronizing and restrictive, and serve mainly to keep the Palestinians under control. To illustrate, keeping the Israeli job market open to Palestinian labor sustains the latter's dependence on Israel. To make aid to Palestine conditional upon some form of integration with Jordan or Israel deprives the Palestinians of the freedom to manage their own economy and choose their partners in any cooperative or integrative program. Industrial zones on the borders with Israel could lead to a system of Bantustan, which assures cheap labor for foreign owners of industrial capital. These various programs can be counterproductive. In place of these policies, Israel and Palestine should explore total separation between them at least for a cooling off and reorganization period.

Total separation between Israel and Palestine will have several positive effects. It would reduce insecurity, leave less room for violence by extremist groups and reduce the costs of security in Israel. It will also give Israel a chance to do without Palestinian cheap labor and an assured market for some of its products. On the other hand, separation would give the Palestinians a challenge to rebuild their economy, rehabilitate their

society, and establish economic and social relations with other countries as they see fit. They also would have the opportunity to deal with international agencies as an independent party, rather than as adjunct to Israeli or Jordanian interests.

Israeli critics of the peace process may argue that separation would be a step toward a Palestinian state. That, however, is a matter of semantics. The permanent relations between Israel and Palestine are subject to negotiation. Palestinian critics of the peace process may charge cruelty if Israel closes its borders to commuting labor. It is high time for the Palestinians to realize that autonomy and independence entail responsibility and self-reliance and that Israel has no obligation to keep Palestinian labor employed.

The proposed policy of total separation is not immutable. Once Israel and Palestine have adjusted to their new positions they may choose to gradually lift the barriers, negotiate new relations, or even open the borders for totally free mobility between them. Such voluntary measures would be true expressions of willingness and readiness to cooperate with each other. In that case there would be no room for enmity or violence.

## **THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES: WILL PEACE BRING A SOLUTION?**

### **April 1996**

The Palestinians and Israelis have finally decided to make peace. The Israelis have almost withdrawn their forces from the Occupied Territories. The Palestinians have their pseudo government or PNA in the shadow of the Israeli authorities. Some Israelis and Palestinians in both sides of Palestine are unhappy but the majority is satisfied and hopeful that the ultimate solutions will be permanent and mutually favorable. One major segment, the majority of the Palestinians, however, seems to be left out so far: these are the Palestinian refugees. The Israeli-Palestinian agreements have deferred negotiations on the refugees until later. In the meantime a multilateral committee and several other non-governmental agencies and institutions are searching for solutions to the refugee problem.

The refugees are primarily of two origins: those displaced as a result of the 1947/8 war and those who were displaced, some for the second time, as a result of the 1967 war. They are disbursed inside and outside camps in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the WBG. Small groups also live in Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and outside the Middle East region. Those in the WBG probably feel fortunate because they are already within the boundaries of the Palestinian territory. Their grievances center on the socio-economic conditions. Those outside the WBG are not as fortunate. Very little has been said about their future or political status. Israel has little incentive to deal with these refugees: they are outside its boundaries; they have little leverage to influence its policies; and they are no longer a threat to its security. Palestinian and Arab leaders are also dragging their feet. The Palestinian leaders presumably have more urgent concerns, while other Arab leaders have apparently decided that it is for the Palestinians to deal with that issue. The Palestinian refugees thus have become victims of war and lack of attention from their leaders.

The Palestinian refugees, as recorded by the United Nations Rehabilitation and Welfare Agency (UNRWA), are about 3.2 million people. About 1.3 million are in Jordan, .346 million are in Lebanon, .337 million are in Syria, and the rest are in the WBG. Thus, almost 2 million Palestinians are recorded as refugees living outside the jurisdiction of the PNA. About half a million live in refugee camps. While the quality of life of those outside the camps is similar to or in some cases better than the quality of life of the average citizen of the host country, living conditions in camps are much worse, especially in the camps of Lebanon. However, all the refugees, in and out of camps, are

deprived of certain political rights compared to citizens and permanent residents. Even those living in Jordan, who have been awarded citizenship, are still discriminated against in various ways, such as the duration of a passport, or treatment by the government when there is an economic or social crisis.

Until recently the Palestinian refugees had hopes of repatriation, fair compensation, or resettlement in independent Palestine. Now all three options seem to have evaporated. Few Arab or Israeli leaders are willing to continue to entertain the idea of repatriation of the refugees to homes and lands they left behind within the state of Israel. Ethnicity, nationalism, limited economic capacity, and the goals of Zionism are invoked to preclude the return of Palestinians to Israel. Suggestions of symbolic numbers of returnees are being floated around within the framework of reuniting families, good will, or as a mechanism to seal the fate of repatriation forever. The loss of hope to return to home and land in Israel has been compounded by fears that compensation also may be nothing but an empty promise. Various groups working on the refugee issue have been hinting that claims for compensation are not legally warranted, and are unfeasible to process, verify, or implement. Hence, these groups propose that certain funds be established to rehabilitate living conditions in the camps, help the PNA to develop the economy of Palestine, or help individual refugee families to resettle and integrate in the rest of society within or outside the host country.

Probably most painful is the loss of hope that these refugees would be able to settle within the Palestinian territory and help to build the new Palestinian national home. Not only is Israel taking a strong stand against an open door policy for these refugees to resettle in Palestine, but the Palestinian leadership itself has pronounced that no more than 750,000, or less than a third of the refugees outside the territories, will have a chance to come home. Most probably the returnees will be close to the PNA, wealthy individuals coming in with large investment capital, or people whose families are split and reunification seems justified.

The Palestinian refugees deserve better treatment by Palestinian and Arab leaders, by Israel, and by the international community at large. Israel should pay more attention to the legal claims of these refugees. The United Nations has played the midwife role in the birth of the state of Israel. That same agency has resolved that the refugees should be able to return to their homes or receive compensation for their losses. No demographic, political, economic or social argument should absolve Israel of its responsibilities toward the refugees. The United Nations and the Great powers, the United States, Britain, and France, which were responsible for the creation of Israel, should see to that. Even more serious is the responsibility of the Palestinian and Arab leaders. If every Jew has the right of return and is entitled to Israeli citizenship once on Israeli territory or under Israeli authority, should not the Palestinian refugees be welcome in the new Palestinian entity? Should they not have an opportunity to participate in the building of that economy and society? And do they not deserve to have an opportunity to rebuild their economic and socio-political future among their own people and in a country they can call theirs?

It is unlikely that a majority of the refugees living outside the camps would opt to return to Israel or to the WBG, given their achievements in the host countries. Even those living in camps may choose to stay in their present countries of residence. The Arab countries, both host and non-host, have a moral responsibility toward these refugees to help them cope with the crises that have been crystallized by the peace process. It is

also to their own benefit to do so since the refugees embody valuable human capital. And because of their apparent rejection by Israel and Palestine, they are most likely to become loyal citizens of the country they settle in permanently. By welcoming and helping the refugees resettle, these countries would no doubt benefit the refugees, but they would also be accumulating highly valued human capital in their economies. Permanent residence and full citizenship are mechanisms of social, economic, and political integration among people. The United States has set the example for people of different languages, religions, and cultural backgrounds to live together and has succeeded. Israel has followed that example, even though it has restricted its openness only to Jews, but Jews have come from different cultures, backgrounds, with different languages, and it has succeeded. The Arab countries can do the same with more ease: the Palestinians share their culture, language, and in most cases religion. Most Arab countries are also well endowed with resources. All these are good reasons to believe that the Arab countries can absorb and integrate all those who wish to come and settle, and that they will also succeed.

**ISRAEL AND LEBANON:  
A SHOWDOWN OR THE BEGINNING OF A SOLUTION?  
May 1996**

Israel's rain of fire onto Lebanon was as much an attack on civilians as were the missiles of Hizbullah aimed at Northern Israel. Both were blind, cruel, costly in life and material, and disruptive of the peace process between the Arabs and Israel. The governments of both countries say they want peace. Bombs, unfortunately, are a tragic expression of the desire for peace.

It may be true that the Lebanese government is not in full control, but it must take responsibility for what goes on within its borders. Israel may be correct in wanting to protect its citizens, but it must not infringe on the sovereignty of Lebanon, occupy its land, or destroy the life and property of its people. Hizbullah may be the villain, keeping the barrage of fire on both sides flowing, but the causes go deeper: it is occupation of the Lebanese land that lies behind that violence. Israel occupied what it calls a security zone when Palestinian guerrillas used to penetrate into Israel and cause harm to Israelis. The Palestinians in Lebanon no longer infiltrate into Israel to carry out military activities. The presumed rationale for the occupation of a security zone no longer exists, but Israel continues the occupation. Is it logical to expect the Lebanese to accept the occupation as if it did not exist?

Days of killing and destruction went by before the international community began to notice. Even then it took seven more days to stop the shelling, put an end to the displacement of civilians from their homes, or seek a permanent solution. It was only after the "embarrassing" Israeli rockets hit a United Nations compound and killed about a hundred people did some of the big powers try seriously to mediate a cease-fire. Strangely enough, mediation seems to have been directed primarily toward a cease-fire and a return to the prior status quo, even though that condition represented neither a solution nor a stable relationship in the region. A permanent solution must be found so as to remove the causes of violence and not just the symptoms.

The leaders of Israel and Lebanon have frequently declared their interest in peace and stability. This is as good a time as any to search for that peace. The leaders' declarations, taken seriously, mean that the two countries are halfway on the road to a solution. It remains for the experts on both sides to come up with an acceptable solution, and, no doubt, they are capable of finding one. As an expression of support and encouragement in their search, here are some points for consideration:

1. Negotiations for a permanent peace should be held between the Israeli and Lebanese governments, directly or through an intermediary, but not between Israel and Hizbullah. Israel cannot and must not negotiate with Hizbullah or with any other militia or feudal force in Lebanon. Nor should Iran be considered a party to the negotiations. Similarly, Syria should not be considered the main counterpart to Israel in negotiating a settlement, as the United States seems to have concluded. Treating Syria as the major negotiator can only dilute Lebanon's sovereignty even farther than it has been. The decision makers and activists in the conflict at the Lebanon/Israel borders are Lebanese and Israelis and the territory involved is Lebanese territory. Therefore, Lebanon and Israel should be the primary negotiators.

2. Now that a cease-fire has been arranged, representatives of Israel and Lebanon should take responsibility for implementing the cease-fire and declare their readiness to negotiate a permanent settlement.

3. Israel should declare its willingness to withdraw fully by a certain date at the same time as the Lebanese government declares its readiness to maintain security on its borders.

4. As a measure of maintaining security, the Lebanese government may co-opt a Hizbullah leader as one of its negotiators with Israel. Lebanon may also mobilize Hizbullah fighters into its army, both to maintain discipline and to strengthen its armed forces.

5. To assist the Lebanese government in maintaining security on its southern borders, the United Nations and the Arab League may be expected to cooperate in the most efficient way to make it possible for the Lebanese government to fulfill its obligations. Syrian forces came into Lebanon to create stability on behalf of the Arab League. Syrian or other Arab forces may again be co-opted by the Arab League. Israel and Lebanon have little choice: if they want peace they have to take the necessary steps in that direction. There is a wealth of ideas on how to end violence and initiate a peace process. What is needed is the will and determination to choose the ideas and implement them.

## **The Elephant and the Mouse**

### **June 1996**

The mother of all elections just took place in Israel. It was closely watched and debated in the United States. Media programmers, analysts, and commentators lost no opportunity to report, discuss, evaluate, forecast, and at least indirectly endorse one candidate or another. The prize elections are now over but the watchers are still devoting much attention to the results. Probably the reason is that the US elections are not yet in full gear and the campaign is bound to be dull any way. The Russian elections are uninteresting and not that close to home. The Indian elections have come and gone with little fanfare. Indian elections actually belong in a different world, which few Americans would know or appreciate. It is not the size of the country, or its commitment to democracy, nor its relevance to national security that drives American fascination with all things that are Israeli. American fascination with and commitment to Israel are beyond rational explanation, except that the Israelis did in Palestine what the Europeans did in America, though less successfully. Probably flattered by the imitation, the United States offers Israel a reward by changing the roles: the mouse has turned into an elephant and the elephant into a mouse.

The Mouse has roared, the Elephant has surrendered.  
The Elephant has gone blind, the Mouse has become its seeing eye.  
What one sees, the other sees and where one goes, the other goes.  
No questions asked.

Israel invades, the US protects the spoils.  
Israel grabs, the US pacifies the loser.  
Israel challenges its neighbors, the US says bravo.  
No questions asked.

Israel creates Arab refugees, left and right, the US mounts its aid.  
Israel bombards its neighbors, the US provides jets and artillery.  
Israel violates international law, the US says it is a matter of interpretation.  
No questions asked.

The peace broker has turned into Israel's protector.  
Challengers of Israel beware.  
Jewish immigrants settle by the thousands where Palestinians ought  
to be, but are not allowed.  
American dollars flow in just the same.  
No questions asked.

Israel hits a UN compound and sheds the blood of civilians.  
The US barely whispers disapproval.  
The UN complains and the US screams:  
Mend your ways and rewrite your report. Israel must be right.  
No questions asked.

Objectivity, fairness, and honest mediation: whither have they gone?  
The Arabs wonder, the French ponder, and the British stand asunder.  
Even the Israelis are puzzled!  
The Mouse has roared, the Elephant must surrender.  
No questions asked.

The Arab leaders know.  
Their own people are their best and only friend.  
Large number, empty rhetoric, even bursting oil wells  
Cannot create reliable friendships, respect, or awe.

Knowledge, technique, and true concern  
Produce the backing, support, and diplomatic scores.  
No one ignores the achiever,  
Whether friend or foe.

Learning for all, male and female, rich and poor;  
Equality, self-reliance, and free thinking;  
These bring wealth, independence, and much more.  
A new light may shine and an Arab star may glow.

The mouse will cease to roar, the elephant will stand big and tall.  
The Arabs will have learned.  
Serious questions will be asked.  
Prejudice, unfairness, and aggression will be delivered a deadly blow.

## **Natanyahu, Arab Summitry, and Peace July 1996**

The election of Bibi Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister has sent shivers in the Arab world, and has caused concern in countries that had played a role in promoting peace in the Middle East. The Arabs fear that Mr. Netanyahu will be more hawkish, more Zionist, and less cooperative than his predecessors. These fears might seem justified by Netanyahu's pre-election statements, his preliminary guidelines for the new government, and the composition of his cabinet. The guidelines restated previous Likud positions against a Palestinian state, a divided Jerusalem, and withdrawal from the Golan Heights, but in favor of more Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The Arab countries lost no time in overreacting. They held mini summits as well as a summit of all Arab countries except Iraq. They issued one statement after another urging Israel to abide by the previous agreements, respect the land for peace principle, and continue the peace process.

Political rhetoric is to be expected in the Middle East, but that rarely reflects policy substance or expected action. My hunch is that there will be little policy change by Netanyahu. Both Labor and Likud have publicly opposed a Palestinian state, a divided Jerusalem, and withdrawal from the Golan Heights (except in return for full peace). Both also have favored more Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Netanyahu has simply restated those positions. To illustrate:

1. Sadat, Begin, and Carter initiated the principle of exchanging land for peace at Camp David. Syria was offered similar terms as those offered to Egypt: full Israeli withdrawal from the Golans in return for full peace, which became the standard motto of Israeli governments since then. There is little reason to expect Netanyahu to deviate from that policy, although he may replace the "full peace" term with "full security" to please his supporters.

2. All Israeli governments have declared their opposition to a divided Jerusalem. Netanyahu has just reaffirmed that position.

3. Since the Palestinians rejected the two-state solution of the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, no Israeli government or major political party has agreed to a Palestinian state. The Labor party came closest to making a concession last April probably to influence the election results, when the party stated that it might not be opposed to a Palestinian state. However, neither Peres nor the party did anything to institute a basic change in the party platform. Netanyahu's statements on the issue are

neither new nor different, nor are they binding, given his willingness to negotiate all issues with no preconditions.

4. Labor and Likud have regularly promoted and subsidized Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories. When the United States stipulated a halt to settlement building in return for a \$10 billion loan guarantee, Israeli governments resorted to expanding existing settlements to circumvent US conditions.

5. There has been little difference in treatment of the Arabs by Israeli governments. Both Labor and Likud detained people and held prisoners for long periods without trial in the name of security. Both demolished homes, uprooted trees, bombed villages, and attacked civilians as collective punishment. Both also have continued to hold territory in Lebanon illegally. Given his background, it is unlikely that Netanyahu will be more harsh or cruel than his predecessors

6. Both Labor and Likud have consistently objected to a Palestinian right of return and to repatriation of Palestinian refugees. They also have raised obstacles against payment of compensation. Netanyahu's position can hardly be more negative.

7. Concern about withdrawal from Hebron may be legitimate. Peres had the authority and the responsibility to deploy troops out of Hebron, but he did not. Netanyahu has inherited the problem and it is not evident that he would deal with the problem carefully and wisely.

Why then are the Arabs so worried about Netanyahu's future policies? First, Netanyahu may have overplayed the role of a tough leader before and during the elections. Second, the Arabs have few cards left to play to offset any tough policy he may initiate. They are disunited, relatively weak, and the Palestine National Authority and the PLO leaders are virtual hostages under Israeli domination. Hence, taking the initiative may have been a way to cover their weakness, and to secure reassurance from the United States and other countries on the peace process.

While these observations might be sufficient to raise concern, political rhetoric and summitry can hardly change the results. The Arabs would probably have done better by considering the change of government in Israel as a matter of fact and declaring their willingness to negotiate with any government in office. They could have pursued silent diplomacy to clear the air and proceed with the peace process. They could have declared readiness to negotiate all issues at any time or place without any preconditions. And they could have challenged Mr. Netanyahu to meet with them face to face in Cairo, Damascus, Beirut, or Jerusalem to discuss the outstanding issues and expedite the peace process. Mr. Netanyahu would have found it difficult to say no to such an invitation. He wants to guarantee security and he knows that without peace with Arab neighbors there can be no security. The Arabs may still take such steps and Mr. Netanyahu may still prove himself a statesman and peacemaker.

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST**  
**A CRITICAL SOMETHING IS MISSING**  
**August 1996**

Education in the Middle East (M.E.) has undergone a revolution in the last half-century. From Morocco to Iran and from Sudan to Syria, the numbers of students and teachers, and, in some cases of schools, have exploded. Education budgets have risen in absolute and relative terms. There are more libraries and material in print for people to read and be better informed than ever before. College graduates continue to multiply even though large numbers cannot find productive jobs.

This should be a flattering picture of education in the region, but the reality belies the perception. For example, if the M.E. is so well educated, why are foreign experts in such high demand in the region? While exchange of experts is highly desirable, the M.E. countries, with the exception of Israel, tend to be importers of foreign expertise and hardly ever exporters, unless the experts leave as emigrants. This imbalance is particularly significant in science, technology, engineering, and construction. If M.E. education is so well advanced, why are the M.E. countries exporters mainly of primary goods and importers of manufactured and industrial goods? Why is labor productivity so low, relative to labor productivity in over half of the nations of the world, as measured by real per capita income?

The fact is that M.E. education is still lagging quantitatively and qualitatively. A close look at the educational profile of the region, except for Israel and possibly Lebanon, would uncover a rather pessimistic picture. While the level of achievement varies widely, certain features seem common. For example, adult literacy remains relatively low, especially among women. In nine M.E. countries more than 50% of all women over age 15 in 1993 were illiterate, and in six countries more than 50% of males and females combined were illiterate. Even the modest apparent levels of literacy are highly exaggerated because of the method of measurement. For instance, anyone who could sign a name might be counted as literate.

Budgets have increased but the needs of education have increased faster. Students are supposed to be attending school, but enforcement is lax and absenteeism sometimes is considered a blessing to relieve over-crowdedness. Those who attend often have to be tutored in order to pass the national exams; the tutors frequently are their own teachers who try to enhance their incomes by tutoring. Schools are institutions of learning, but in many cases they have been made into political instruments. Strikes, demonstrations, and stone throwing often take the place of classes. The authorities

encourage such behavior when the demonstrations are supportive and they penalize the students and the teachers if the protests are against government policies.

Child labor is still common. Discrimination against female education is widespread and evident in both the level of literacy and the degree of specialization. Para-military training by splinter groups and militias often supplants regular schooling. The children are usually the losers.

To be literate is essential, but literacy and education are not the same thing. Education in most M.E. schools is still based on rote learning. The analytical power of the mind is rarely activated and students are not encouraged to be critical, analytical, or creative. These limitations, which obstruct critical thinking, are compounded by the imposed systems of censorship and control, which tend to regulate what teachers teach, what students read, and what writers write and publish. Professors are under control of the politicians. Even the media is subject to spoken and unspoken limits on the freedom of expression and reporting. The students are in this way rendered passive consumers of distorted or manipulated knowledge, while their minds remain arrested in political, traditional, and religious cages. Their free thinking potential is circumscribed by the political regime in power, and by the social, religious, and traditional forces as well.

The limitations on education are best demonstrated by the superficial elections practiced throughout the region, and the lack of elections altogether, again Israel is an exception. Pre-election approval of candidates, the virtual absence of secrecy in balloting, and full control by the ruling regime render these elections an insult to free thinking and rational free choice. Students and teachers, intellectuals and the media experts are taught to accept this state of affairs, and most do.

Another reflection of the lagging quality and quantity of education is the limited flow of foreign investment capital in spite of the incentives made available by M.E. governments, as in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt. It is not only the fear of instability, or the underdeveloped infrastructure that has discouraged foreign capital. It is also and primarily the relatively underdeveloped human capital that reduces the flow, both at the middle technical level, as well as at the higher scientific and managerial levels.

It is hard to imagine the M.E. out of the dilemma of underdevelopment and backwardness without free, critical, and analytical education. Without radical change in their educational systems, they are condemned to economic and political backwardness, low productivity, low per capita earned real income, and chronic poverty. However, these conditions are not unchangeable. They can be altered for the better by policy and determination.

A very first step toward productive education is to advocate and promote a “new enlightenment” education based on a free, rational, and analytical system of learning. An equally important step is to separate education from religion and encourage secularism as a way of dealing with economic, political and social affairs, free of religious control or influence. This is not to ignore the importance of religion, but to revere it as a matter of personal and individual conscience. Religion should not be used to manipulate or control education, or inhibit intellectual growth. A third precondition for productive education is to develop a disciplined sense of time, respect for contract, and a habit of meeting deadlines. At present there is a great deal of waste of resources and loss of opportunity by putting little value on time, contract, and deadlines. One of the ironies of this situation

is to hear someone explaining such behavior as “this is the M.E., or this is Egypt.” Neither Egypt nor other countries of the M.E. are bound to accept time as free or the contract as breakable without a cost. The educational system is responsible for this attitude, which is common to the literate and the illiterate.

These steps are some of the preconditions for coordinating education with economic development and modernization. However, these same conditions can be sustained only if the educational system itself undergoes serious reform. The relationship between education and the environment that makes it productive is a dynamic one. Each supports the other and if one fails the other fails, and both can stagnate together, which happens to be the tragedy of M.E. education at this time. Neither Arab socialism nor the market system, nor the theocratic and traditional systems of the region have managed to obliterate illiteracy or revolutionize education. Generations of students have become literate, but they have grown to be conformist, blindly obedient, and non-analytical. Their potential creativity has been suppressed, and their productivity and inventiveness have been dampened. In contrast, their compatriots who have managed to emigrate to countries with freer environments and more stimulating institutions have been great achievers and creators. Without radical changes in education in the near future more generations will be condemned to the same fate.

The M.E. countries have a long way to go before they can boast of a free, dynamic, and developmentally supportive education. They have the potential and the resources. Their leaders have the ability to break the stalemate and initiate a dynamic cycle of freeing and radicalizing education. The people and their leaders are at a crossroads. Let us hope that they will take the necessary steps, revolutionize their education, and liberate themselves. Only then will they be able to meet the challenges of development, modernization, high productivity, and competitiveness in the modern global economy and society.

**STRUCTURAL REFORM. PRIVATIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
September 1996**

It has been fashionable for over two decades to preach structural economic reform and privatization, on the premise that such policies would encourage economic stability, private saving and investment, and growth. Another premise for the sermon is that loans may be extended by international agencies as the immediate reward for compliance. Structural reform has come to mean policy change toward free market competition in both the domestic and the international market. Privatization is intended to reduce the public sector and the role of government in the economy, and enhance private ownership and the role of the private sector.

Most of the Middle East non-large-oil exporting countries have tended toward “conversion” but they have found the costs too high. They are still trying, with high hopes that the rewards will be forthcoming soon. Unfortunately neither the proposed policies nor the timing nor the pace of implementation have been justified by rigorous studies of the individual countries, or by early rewards. All available arguments for these policies tend to be based on ideal situations, unrealistic theoretical assumptions, prescribed economic policies, expert assertions, and a follow-the-leader mentality. The leader in this case is the unchallenged superpower, the United States, which holds the key to aid, loans, and rhetorical backing.

Several questions should be asked regarding the purpose and function of structural reform and privatization in countries like Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Israel. First, whose idea is it to privatize, remove subsidies on consumer items, or let the market play havoc with the economy? The proponents of these policies have presented little evidence to show that such policies would cure the ailing economies in the respective countries. The people in these countries have not voted in favor of the reform or privatization policies, assuming they had the option to do so. If anything, the people have in most cases voted against such policies by demonstrating, sometimes violently. Evidently pressure from the outside has been a major factor in promoting these policies. Jordan provides the latest example of imposed reform and the demonstrations against it.

Second, what are the chances that privatization and structural reform would increase investment and enhance economic development and growth? With the exception of Israel, these countries have poorly functioning markets: their markets are highly

fragmented; their facilities are institutionally and physically underdeveloped; economic rationality is overpowered by socio-political and cultural influences; and traditional and religious values loom large over the economy and society. Furthermore, ideas imported from or “imposed” by the outside are bound to face opposition during implementation.

Third, do the Middle East people want government out of the economy, and do the governments actually want to get out? All indications suggest the contrary, not only in the Middle East, but also in developed countries. Not only do governments in the industrial economies control large parts of the national income and expenditure, but they also are called upon by the private sector to play major roles on its behalf in the economy. Governments give subsidies to private business; they give it protection in the international market; and they give it tax breaks. The presidents of the United States and of France, as well as the prime ministers of Britain and Japan have often acted as salespersons to promote the products of their countries--actually they promote profit making by the major corporations. In this sense, structural reform seems to mean shifting public support from the consumer to the producer or from the worker to the profit maker, all in the name of reform and privatization.

Fourth, is government participation in the economy always or absolutely bad? Efficiency and inefficiency exist in both the public and the private sectors. The consumer pays the cost for inefficiency in both cases, in the form of taxes in the former and in higher prices, unemployment, or low wages in the latter. Nor is it true that privatization will increase national saving and investment. Of course it should increase private saving and investment. However, by the same token it would reduce government revenue, a part of which is saving, and government expenditure, a part of which is investment. Certain government expenditures are strategic investments, which may not exist if the private sector were totally in charge, as history shows clearly. What would happen to public education, health, and the environment if public expenditures were cut off? What shape would the Israeli economy be in were it not for the government and semi-government agencies, such as the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut (Labor Union)?

Fifth, has there been a rigorous assessment of the real costs of structural reform and privatization? To begin with, there is bound to be much dislocation, redistribution of wealth, and unemployment. There is mounting evidence that unemployment results from such policies in both the developed and the developing countries, and not only in the short term. There is evidence of increasing inequality of income and wealth distribution. There is evidence also of accumulation of national debt in developing countries, generated by the promise of easy loans upon implementation of these policies. Furthermore, the less-than-market value proceeds of privatization have often been dissipated by governments, which consider the revenues as windfalls to be utilized as they see fit, including expenditure on obsolete weapons which the Arms Exporting Countries (AEC) are anxious to sell.

All this is not to say that privatization and structural reform should be rejected offhand. Rather, it would be appropriate to carefully study the problems facing the specific economy, weigh the options, and decide whether privatization and structural reform are the best cure.

Second, careful assessment should be made of the success of the public sector in achieving its objectives, rather than how it compares with the private sector, which has different objectives and methods of achieving them.

Third, careful assessment should be made of alternative policies to strengthen the economy, such as reduction of expenditures on arms, especially imports, channeling expenditure into employment creation, technical advancement, and productivity enhancement.

Fourth, it would be appropriate to promote competition between the private and public sectors, rather than decimate one to nurture the other on the basis of ideology and demands from the outside.

Fifth, it would be appropriate and more promising of success to survey the peoples' understanding and opinions regarding such policies before they are adopted, both to gain confidence and to promote popular participation.

Finally, if structural reform and privatization policies are to be adopted, it would be appropriate, efficient, and even necessary to compensate the losers, prevent increasing inequality, and realize full market value for the privatized properties.

**The Amir and the Fly**  
**October 1996**  
**W.Y.<sup>15</sup>**

With each new riot and bombing or other sign of unrest in the Gulf, I think back to life there more than a decade ago when oil prices were high and the public coffers were flush. The Shi'a majority in Bahrain and al-Hasa, eastern province of Saudi Arabia, were already waging their quiet war against the status quo, flavored with Islamic undercurrents that have waxed and waned over the years. In a separate, coexisting world, a more secular, professional bourgeoisie was angling for more political rights and representation. Now these two groups have found each other and are singing the same chorus. The autocratic princes have monopolized power and plundered their national treasuries for too long. With the surpluses of the 1970s having turned into deficits in the 1990s, there is no money left to maintain the generous subsidies of the past. Now, faced with tough fiscal choices, the best the monarchs of these countries can offer is a "consultative council."

Listening to recent news reports of unrest, I am reminded of one monarch's alienation from his subjects, and his classic story of the fly. "Sheikh Isa's Beach," named after His Royal Highness the Amir, and on the southwest coast was a waterfront compound encompassing one of the Amir's palaces. It had a lovely garden of date palms, fruit trees, and a large green lawn bordering an extensive stretch of private beach. The compound was enclosed by a high wall and at the entrance stood four armed guards who scrutinized every patron.

Asians, Africans, and Arab nationals were not allowed in. Only Western expatriates were welcome. Here they could expose themselves, in various degrees of undress, without being ogled by natives. Some went wind surfing on breezy days, but most of the time "we lazily roasted and toasted our pale bodies, pausing only occasionally to quench our thirst and replenish our fluids at Sheikh Isa's bar." The natives could only hear of the bar but could not share in the excitement. Their resentment was evident and it made no difference that the bar did not serve alcoholic beverages.

The Amir was too busy to enjoy his seaside playground. But on Fridays, he would discreetly arrive in an unmarked car, pace back and forth in the courtyard for his exercise, and then attend to business of the day. The business consisted of informal meetings with distinguished expatriates from the diplomatic and commercial communities. When a guard approached a chosen party, in accordance with an unwritten

---

<sup>15</sup>

protocol, they would quickly cover their bare bodies and proceed to the courtyard where a large canopy had been erected. Beneath the canopy the Amir sat in front of a small glass coffee table surrounded by a few garden chairs. Under the table was a small tissue box and a hand mirror. The Amir was extremely conscious of his appearance.

One day a new visitor arrived on the island and was brought along as guest of one of the chosen parties. It was the visitor's first time to the Middle East and the Amir was most interested in hearing his early impressions.

Precisely on cue an Indian servant came with tea and Sara Lee cake, the Amir's favorite. Minutes passed and some guests had proceeded with their third round of tea. The new visitor was conspicuously not joining in for when he lifted the cup to his lips he noticed a dead fly floating on the surface, and froze.

Observing the young man's mortified expression, the Amir peered into the cup and a barely detectable grin formed across his face. He glanced around at his guests and proceeded to tell his story. "Every Friday morning I must rise up at 6 a.m. to make a formal appearance at the Mosque. One day the ceremony was being broadcast on national television. It was a special holiday and all the media were represented. The cameras were pointed at me and everyone was watching. Just as the prayer was about to begin, a fly flew up my nose. I was mesmerized for there was nothing I could do. I sat there without a move for an hour with that fly in my nose." Everyone laughed except the Amir.

A metaphorical fly has been stuck up the Amir's nose for the past twenty years, angrily tickling him to make a move. The Amir continues to sit still on his throne refusing to budge. If he squashes the fly it will be martyred and worshipped. If he does not, he will continue to be bothered. However, waiting will not make the fly go away. It will lay its inconspicuous larvae and sooner or later will multiply into many flies, and it will be impossible to shoo them away.

The royal family in Bahrain continues to blame the buzzing agitation on Iran, but this excuse has worn thin. In 1981, after a failed coup attempt, they blamed Iran. When hidden arms caches were discovered in outlying Shi'a villages, they blamed Iran; they did so again and again, but trouble continues just the same.

Why is the discontent so vocal in Bahrain? The Bahrainis have a long history of unrest and activism, and they have had a taste of democracy. In 1973 they had free elections of a national assembly, but only a year it was dissolved by the Amir's brother.

It would be foolish to limit the explanation to these factors. The Bahraini ruling family is Sunni while 75 % of the population is Shi'a. It is no accident that many of the Shi'a population are relatively impoverished. The children, who were raised in dilapidated shantytowns, next to luxury expatriate compounds, are now fully grown, graduated from school, but unemployed.

Just next door, across the causeway, lies the eastern Saudi province, al-Hasa. The majority of the population is also Shi'a while the Saudi ruling family is Sunni. The Saudis too have been running fiscal deficits, and unemployment among recent graduates has been high.

All the ingredients of trouble are in place. Yet the ruling families in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, as in other Middle Eastern countries, are reluctant to bring about change. They are unwilling to implement even the kind of compromise solution adopted by Kuwait—a partly elected national assembly with strict restrictions on suffrage.

Why the intransigence? The Bahrainis have the most plausible excuse. Their hands are tied by their dependence on the Saudis. They depend heavily on the financial assistance they receive from the Saudis, who have direct influence on Bahrain's policies.

The options are few. If reforms are not undertaken soon, there are likely to be more disturbances, coup attempts, and acts of sabotage against domestic and foreign institutions. This will seriously bring into question the continued American presence in the region and jeopardize the security guarantees that these monarchies have from the West.

The only way to head off the rising tide of violent zealots is for the ruling families to introduce moderation and implement, if only slowly, some new ideas. An elected legislature would be a great first step, women's suffrage would be ideal, and more freedom for the press would be great. Even an open dialogue with the opposition seems overdue.

Let us hope reform will come and the fly will be there no more.

W.Y. is a pseudo name for the author whose name is withheld by request.

## **THE STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PALESTINE**

### **November 1996**

Economic development has been a struggle in most developing countries and few have succeeded, within their desired time horizon. Lack of resources, backward technology, and difficulty of entering the international market are among the major obstacles. These and other obstacles plague the Palestinian economy, whose problems are aggravated by the special circumstances that surround the new “autonomous” economy. These special circumstances deserve special attention, if the Palestinian economy is to make headways in its efforts to develop.

1. Incentives and False Expectations. There is a problem of sustaining incentives among the various actors in the economy, for a variety of reasons, as follows:

a) The Palestinian people seem to have adopted high economic expectations since they began the process of peace with Israel. While these expectations have been difficult to realize, it has been equally difficult to maintain the hopeful, who generated those expectations; the failure in this case is both political and economic.

b) Expectations and attitudes toward economic activity have tended to fluctuate according to the mood in the political arena. Setbacks to the peace process have led to pessimism and signs of progress to optimism. Unfortunately, the frequency of pessimism has been high enough to dampen incentives and frustrate economic activity.

c) Expectations have been influenced also by a general conviction that the economy is so rich with human resources that its development should be easy. The failure to advance the economy, therefore, has tended to dampen incentives further.

d) Finally, expectations have been exaggerated, in part because the Palestinian people have suffered long periods of deprivation and, therefore, any gleam of hope has tended to reawaken feelings that the good days are not far away.

2. Realities of the Palestinian Economy. Whether high expectations are justified or not, the expectations have rarely been discussed in public. The reality of the Palestinian economy raises questions regarding those expectations.

a) Contrary to the general belief, there is a poverty of resources, both physical and human. The physical resources are limited because of poor natural endowment, political restrictions on access to the existing resources, and the relatively high population growth. The human capital is also mistakenly considered abundant. Though formal education has been widespread and college graduates are in surplus supply, there is a shortage of relevant qualifications, technical knowledge, and the spirit of creative enterprise.

b) There is a poverty of institutions. This, of course, is understandable since the Palestinian National Authority has had little time to establish the right institutions. The leadership is short of experience, resources, and qualified technical staff to handle a new

developing economy efficiently. The problem may be a matter of time before it is overcome, but in the meantime it is a serious handicap in the way of development.

c) There is a poverty of freedom in decision making by the Palestinian authorities. The leaders are overwhelmed by the extraordinary harmful meddling by outside agencies, which are connected to the donor countries and institutions, in one form or another.

3. The Future. Though the road is rough and windy, there are certain steps that can help to pave the road and facilitate development

a) The most obvious step is to try to attract investment capital, both domestic and foreign, especially Palestinian and Israeli capital. Israeli capital may be particularly significant because it may smooth the political atmosphere, create jobs within the Palestinian territory, transfer technology, and promote truly viable interdependence between the Israeli and Palestinian economies.

b) Improvement of the institutional framework is indispensable for streamlining responsibilities among and within ministries. There is need for a division of labor according to logical and technical capabilities. That would reduce confusion as to who is responsible for what, and contain the irrational competition among individuals within and among ministries. There is a great need also for a master plan of economic objectives, activities, and projects so as to create complementarities instead of duplications in the economy.

c) Finally, it is imperative to reduce foreign intervention and let the Palestinians make their own economic decisions, including mistakes, especially in setting priorities and implementing projects. Donor countries and agencies may have good intentions, but they do not have to face the various constituencies or deal with day-to-day problems of the economy. The apparent impact of such intervention has been to create dependence rather than independence, and economic and cultural occupation in place of true democracy and freedom. Foreign intervention has also tended to breed competition for favors among individuals, ministries, and institutions, at the expense of public interest.

In spite of these difficulties, better days may still be on the way. Many Palestinian leaders work hard, with full dedication, and a clear vision of the road ahead. Let us hope that these people will prevail and realize their vision for all to enjoy.

## **ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **December 1996**

The call for economic cooperation is loud and clear. International agencies, institutions, and many governments are busily trying to promote economic cooperation among Middle East countries, for both economic development and peace. The third economic conference, held this year in Cairo, has just concluded. More than 3,500 business, government, and academic people, from 92 countries and 26 NGOs, participated. The objectives of this and other programs have always seemed grand, the rhetoric overwhelming, and the expected results overly exaggerated. Few projects have materialized and little continuing cooperation has been generated. The reasons are both structural and behavioral. The former are built-in defects that render successful cooperation difficult. The latter reflect attitudes, policies, and behaviors of the leaders and their constituents toward cooperation in general and specific projects in particular.

Among the structural reasons three are prominent, lack of complementarity, underdevelopment of institutions and infrastructure, and poverty of natural and human resources. 1) The countries of the M.E. have similar endowments and economic products, enough to be competitive with rather than complementary to each other. They import manufactured products and export raw material and agricultural products. Israel may be the only exception, but its complementarity tends to center on labor and technology, both of which suffer from restricted mobility, because of political and military considerations. 2) Another handicap is the underdevelopment of economic and legal institutions that could foster cooperation in the region. For example, the systems of tariffs, labor and capital mobility, communications, transportation, and marketing are not yet developed enough to cope with expanded cooperation among countries of the region or with other regions. The same limitation is true of the physical infrastructure in most countries of the M.E. 3) These handicaps are augmented by the poverty of human capital and technology. Though education has expanded widely in the region, the quality of education and the technical proficiency of the labor force tend to be inadequate to fulfill the needs of regional and international cooperation.

The behavioral obstacles are probably more serious because they can be overcome only from within the respective economies. Three obstacles may be highlighted: the perception of cooperation, the influence of tradition, and policy-making regimes. 1) The meaning of cooperation is hardly ever clear. The word cooperation is used interchangeably with integration, globalism, liberalization and expansion of trade, and regionalism. Strictly speaking, cooperation means a willful decision to act jointly with others on specified projects for specified objectives. A willful decision to cooperate can be effective only if its makers commit adequate resources for cooperation, and if they are supported by a large constituency in their respective countries. Furthermore, cooperation may be in trade, marketing, or production. Most international agencies and

promoters of cooperation tend to focus on trade liberalization and expansion. They probably would oppose cooperation in marketing since that might lead to cartelization; e.g., OPEC-like organizations. At the same time, few agencies or countries explore cooperation in commodity production, except for Israel, which always comes with a long list of potential projects for cooperation with its neighbors. Unfortunately, the response from those neighbors has been less than encouraging for various political and social reasons. Another discouraging aspect of the idea of cooperation is that it tends to be presented by foreign agencies and hence does invite a negative reaction, as a reminder of past colonial and imperial penetration in the region. 2) The idea and act of economic cooperation find little support in the traditions of the region. Middle East countries and their educational systems encourage nationalism, individualism, and local loyalties, all of which generate cynicism toward cooperation. It is frequently asked: If cooperation is so beneficial, why has it not developed yet? 3) A third behavioral obstacle is the quality and variety of political regimes in the region and their distance from their constituents in policy making and implementation. While the various economies are so similar as to restrict cooperation and promote competition, the political regimes are so varied as to also restrict cooperation and promote competition. Islamic regimes, radical military regimes, traditional and anachronistic monarchies, and Western-type democracies may find it difficult to trust each other enough to surrender some of their own sovereignties, in order to cooperate with each other. Yet, without such action cooperation can hardly succeed. On the other hand, it is not evident that these regimes have enough popular support to take radical steps in favor of cooperation with other countries. Popular reactions in Jordan and Egypt are telling examples of the distance between the regimes and the people with regard to economic and social relations with Israel. In these circumstances the signing of agreements and the issuing of proclamations are sterile instruments for promoting cooperation.

Does this mean that cooperation efforts among M.E. countries are doomed and should be abandoned? On the contrary, it means that more efforts should be expended and new approaches should be attempted. For example, it may be useful to explore popular attitudes toward cooperation before delving into the process. That would serve both to learn about readiness of the people and to educate them with regard to cooperation. It would also narrow the gap between policy maker and implementer of the policy. Another step may be to highlight the economic benefits of cooperation relative to the costs, separately from the political implications. Economic cooperation should be justified on its own merits and not as a means to political or military agreements. The people will respond more positively when they expect net benefits from cooperating with other countries. Still another step may be to put aside the grandiose programs for massive cooperation in the region and focus on small, vital, and feasible projects that would give visible results within a reasonable period of time. This may be the most fruitful approach to projects involving countries that need to build mutual trust and respect for each other. Arabs and Israelis, Arabs and Iranians, Iranians and Israelis, and Arabs and Arabs may still find ways to cooperate with each other.

## **PALESTINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE**

**January 1997**

The Palestinians have often prided themselves on their educational achievements. The growth in numbers of students, teachers, and institutions has been impressive. The rate of literacy has gone up and college graduates have multiplied, but much remains to be accomplished. In this regard, education in Palestine is similar to education in the rest of the Arab world. All seem to measure achievement by numbers, often at the expense of quality. They glorify degrees, titles, and certificates, though all three could be misleading. The Arab countries, and most developing countries, have been caught in a trap while trying to establish their identity and achieve independence from colonialism. In the process they seem to have used institutions of higher education as one of the instruments. The results have been less than satisfying. Quantity has triumphed over quality, and rote learning over analysis and critical thinking. The high rates of population growth and the promise to extend educational opportunities to all have spread the resources too thinly to realize the ideal objectives. The Palestinians are now at a strategic stage in their socio-political and economic development and therefore have a great opportunity to avoid the mistakes of others and build a solid, viable, high quality system of higher education.

The Palestinians have established at least eight universities in the West Bank and Gaza, spread out in areas of population concentration, and more institutions and programs are being contemplated. As far as can be determined, all these institutions are private, although they may be receiving support from the Palestine National Authority. This means that they individually determine their curricula, orientation, and standards. They are under no obligation to coordinate their programs with each other, and so far there is little evidence of coordination to avoid duplication and meet the demands of society and the economy. Large numbers of graduates are unemployed. This no doubt is due in part to the depression of the Palestinian economy, but it is also because of the perceived low quality and relevance of the education and training of these graduates, some of whom were educated outside the region. The impression is common that many of the graduates are poorly trained and unemployable in their declared fields of specialization. Some foreign experts working in Palestine claim that it is hard to find two good engineers or city planners in the country. High officials in the Palestinian Authority complain that you cannot find three good economists to serve in government. Furthermore, the quality of research products by these professionals rarely meets international scholarly standards. Whether true or not, such charges are often used to justify the employment of foreign experts in positions that would be coveted by Palestinians. Higher education in Palestine deserves serious attention before it is too late.

Probably the first step in that direction is to establish some coordination between the various institutions of higher education in order to reconcile objectives, promote

complementarity, and avoid duplication and redundancy. By careful coordination and division of labor it will be possible to create high quality graduate and research programs in some of the institutions, without undermining the academic programs of the others. Coordination and specialization would also help to adopt standards and build programs that would graduate scholars and professionals and produce research products that would compete internationally, in corporations, research and academic institutions, and in scholarly journals.

Educational resources in Palestine are scarce. Coordination among institutions would help to pool and allocate resources efficiently, and enhance division of labor, both horizontally and vertically. For example, one institution may offer a doctoral degree program, another a BA/BS degree, and a third may offer a preparatory 2-year program, still considered as part of university education. Or the two-year program may lead to a terminal vocational certificate. Such coordinated specialization will allow screening of students, offer flexibility to students and instructors, rationalize expenditures, and harmonize educational programs with demand in the economy and society.

A second major step, which coordination will facilitate, is to create a secular depoliticized system of higher education. Planned coordination will obligate institutions to render their programs compatible with those of others on the basis of educational objectives, merit, and resource availability. Failing to secularize and depoliticize higher education will condemn it to mediocrity and conformity, and obstruct creativity and intellectual independence. In this process, Palestinian academicians in the diaspora may be an invaluable resource, still waiting to be tapped at minimum cost to the Palestinian institutions.

The system of education in Palestine needs help to avoid irreparable damage. Emphases on numbers at the expense of quality, political/confessional education at the expense of secular, rational, free intellectual thinking, and on duplicative programs at the expense of highly specialized quality programs are already apparent. It is also apparent that failure to reform and build up higher education will lower the quality of the educational system as a whole since the graduates of higher education will be in charge of elementary and secondary education. The damage will be reflected in an uneducated labor force, and a smaller pool of students well prepared for higher education. Luckily there is still time to arrest the damage and prevent its recurrence, and build a high quality system of education the Palestinian people deserve.

**HEBRON AGREEMENT AND FINAL SOLUTIONS**  
**LESSONS TO BE LEARNED**  
**February 1997**

It took about ten months, depending on who does the counting, for the Israelis and Palestinians to work out the details of an agreement that had been concluded in substance about two years earlier. Both Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu must now feel that they have done the best they could for their people. And both probably believe that they have achieved more than they would have, had they signed the agreement sooner than they did, which is doubtful. They could reach a conclusion only if they were to consider the short run at the expense of the long run, the direct effects at the expense of the side effects, and their own immediate political circles at the expense of the majority of the Israeli and Palestinian people, who want peace as soon as possible. They also could have reached such a conclusion by considering only the benefits accrued while ignoring the costs incurred in the process. It is not inconceivable that both parties could have achieved the same results sooner had they decomposed the contents of the agreement and dealt with each part separately or incrementally.

Mr. Netanyahu managed to clarify and establish details regarding security in Hebron, relations between Israeli and Palestinian security officers, the weapons they will carry, how they conduct peacekeeping jointly, as well as the schedule of redeployment in areas outside Hebron. Mr. Netanyahu might have benefited from the delay by assuring support of his cabinet and preparing the Hebron settlers for the pending redeployment. He might have benefited by trying to lower Palestinian expectations from the tough negotiations for final solutions. He might also have wanted to gain time in order to expand Jewish settlement in the Occupied Territories. He might even have planned prolongation of the negotiations in order to gain concessions and aid from the United States in return for complying with US requests for compromise. However, all of these potential benefits could have been realized or at least guaranteed by an earlier agreement. On the other hand, an earlier agreement would have spared Israel the costs incurred in the process: loss of human and material capital, time and effort of the negotiating team, energies and efforts of the leaders, and the detrimental effects on relations between Palestinians and Israelis because of the mutual incriminations they aimed at each other. Israel also could have avoided worsening relations with Egypt, Jordan, and other Arab countries.

Mr. Arafat has not fared any better. He might have gained some benefits by bringing the deadline for total withdrawal a few months closer, but he delayed the start of the withdrawal almost by the same length of time. He might have gained some footage by reducing Israel's authority within Palestine after troop withdrawal, but he had to agree to a reduction in the power of Palestinian security officers in Hebron, and to cooperation

in fighting terrorism beyond what had been practiced before. He also had to agree to negotiate a probable loss of territory to Israel in the final settlement. However, none of these so-called benefits could not have been realized by approaching them incrementally, through a quick agreement on redeployment in Hebron, nor were any of these benefits of great enough substance to justify the costs incurred in the process: loss of life and material, deeper strangling of the Palestinian economy, and waste of time, energy, and capital which could have been invested more productively in the economy. The Palestinians had finally to agree to surrender twenty percent of Hebron to Israeli settlers and the troops that would guard them.

Of course, most of these observations may make sense only in retrospect. However, there are lessons to be learned from the protracted negotiations. First, it has become evident that a delay in the process does not guarantee the desired benefits, such as expansion of Jewish settlement or securing more land or more concessions from each other. Second, it seems obvious that once the two parties had agreed on Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, there was little to gain by prolonging the process. On the country, expediting the process might have won cooperation and reciprocity by both parties and appreciation by the international community. Expediting the process would also have released energies on both sides to be utilized in other and more productive functions for their prosperity and happiness.

However the most important effects of the prolonged negotiations relate to both Palestinians and Israelis. On one hand, they seem to have accepted the reality of their relationship. On the other, they have established precedents that are bound to influence their future and final solutions of the pending conflicts between them. Israelis have shown that they did not want to rule others. The Palestinians have shown that they have accepted Israel as a neighbor. Both have found that they must coexist in Hebron, and that they can by joint effort safeguard peace and order, and fight terrorism on both sides.

Most important of all is that both have accepted the principle of extraterritoriality as it is applied in Hebron. But if Arab Hebron can accommodate an Israeli sector in its midst, on religious and historical grounds, why could not Jerusalem accommodate both Israelis and Palestinians, as citizens of two separate countries, on religious and historical grounds? And if Arabs and Jews can coexist peacefully in towns and cities in Israel, they can learn to coexist peacefully in Jerusalem, Hebron, and elsewhere in Palestine.

## **LAND FOR PEACE OR EXPANSIONISM IN DISGUISE**

### **March 1997**

It has been fashionable to call for peace by reciting the slogan “Land for Peace” as the Oslo formula. The Arabs are enchanted; the Europeans are proud; the Americans are lukewarm, and the Israelis play the game of being unwilling but anxious. Unfortunately this formula of land for peace, as it relates to the Arab-Israeli conflict, is deceptive, biased, and embodies potential instability in the future of the region. If the parties truly want peace with each other, why not trade peace for peace? If they want land of each other, why not trade land for land? The fact is that all parties want both peace and land, but do not know how to go about it in a legitimate manner. The formula of land for peace may turn out to be nothing but a mechanism for disguised Israeli expansion at the expense of the neighbors.

The land for peace formula, as commonly understood, would have Israel give back occupied land in return for peace with its neighbors. Within that framework, politicians, media experts, and academicians go on debating how much land Israel would or might give back in return for peace. Israeli authorities, in the meantime, ridicule the idea of land for peace, assert again and again that they would never return to the pre-June 1967 boundaries of the West Bank and Gaza, or to the prewar boundaries between Syria and Israel. More bluntly they state that they would never give up the whole of the Golan Heights. The fault with this formula and the logic of the perpetual debate is that peace is not a commodity you trade on the market, nor is the land Israel is supposed to trade for peace legally its own. That land belongs to Arab neighbors. Thus, the land for peace formula seems to say that Israel would let her neighbors have back some of their land and surrender the rest in return for peace. Accordingly, the Palestinians would give up parts of the West Bank and Gaza; Jordan would give up parts of the Jordan Valley; Syria would give up parts or all of the Golan Heights for the privilege of having peace with Israel. And Lebanon! Lebanon does not have to give up any land because the whole country is an open stage for Israeli forces.

Another problem with the common understanding of the formula is that it assumes that the Arabs want and need peace more than Israel does. It also assumes that land is more precious for Israel than it is for its legitimate owners, the Arabs. The fact is that Israel has been trying, with a certain degree of success, to expand its domain, while pretending that it is making a sacrifice of land in the cause of peace. The rest of the world watches, some with admiration and high expectations, while others seem indifferent as Israel scores a diplomatic coup on behalf of the land. Unfortunately the impact of such action is that any such expansion will legitimize territorial war gains and, by the same token, will encourage the losers to prepare for future rounds in order to recover any territory they might lose in the process.

Israel has several arguments to justify its continued hold on occupied territories. Certain parts of these territories may seem essential for Israel's security; other parts may seem necessary to safeguard water resources; still other parts may be considered necessary to allow Jews to settle in the "land of their forefathers." These arguments might make sense to Israel, but they do not justify expansionism, nor do they make sense to owners of the occupied land. Furthermore, such arguments are in contradiction with international laws and conventions regarding occupied territories.

However, Israel's arguments for more land may be justified on the basis of need. If so, there should be other ways to satisfy the need. An alternative approach may be the following: peace for peace and land for land so that both Arabs and Israelis enjoy land as well as peace.

There is little doubt that both Israel and the Arabs are tired of war and are anxious to have peace. There is also little doubt that the Arabs can appreciate Israel's needs for security and water resources, since they too feel the need to attain security and safeguard their water resources. If so, then there should be room for negotiation and agreement as follows. First, the parties to the conflict will conclude peace for the sake of peace. They start with an agreement of non-belligerency; Israeli troops will then withdraw from the occupied territories; the Arabs will at the same time renounce all means of violence and forms of threat against Israel. This will achieve peace for peace between the parties.

As to the land Israel needs, there are three legitimate ways to secure the land: leasing, trading, or neutralizing the strategic areas while sharing the economic resources. Israel can approach its neighbors with proposals of leasing the vital territories for such periods that security will be guaranteed long enough to become a normal condition. Israel can approach its neighbors with proposals to trade land for land. Given that the most common perception of legitimate boundaries is the pre-June 1967 boundary line, any reduction of Arab land within those boundaries in favor of Israel would be offset by Israeli surrender of land of equal value. Finally, if leasing and trading do not meet the requirement, security can be achieved by demilitarizing equal areas on both sides of the boundaries between Israel and its neighbors while the shares of economic resources can be negotiated. It is true that demilitarization does not guarantee security, given the nature of arms available to both Arabs and Israelis, demilitarization will minimize the risk and remind the parties of their commitment to peace, and of the benefits of enhancing security for each other.

The Arabs should have little reason to argue against this alternative approach. They will recover the occupied territories and have peace. Israel will attain peace and security and possibly the use of areas it considers strategic for its viability and survival. Israel will in either case be a winner: it will have secured legitimacy within the 1967 borders which gave it almost a third more land than had been allocated to it by the United Nations. Israel will also be a winner in the sense that its neighbors will no longer feel that a part of their land is still under occupation (in spite of a signed peace agreement) and therefore should be liberated. Stability will prevail instead of instability, peace instead of war, and potential harmony and cooperation would replace suspicion, intrigue, and conflict.

## **ISRAEL'S SECURITY, PALESTINIANS' RIGHTS OR ETHNIC SEGREGATION?**

**April 1997**

At one time the Palestinians wanted a unified, democratic, secular state in Palestine for Arabs and Jews alike. The Jews (before Israel) wanted a Jewish state. Both may be getting a part of what they wanted and a lot of what they did not want. Palestine is ending up as a mix of Arabs and Jews, partly secular, partly democratic, and partly unified, with emphasis on “partly” in all three cases. The end result may turn out to be a fragmented mix of the two ethnic groups, intermingled but separate, in proximity but far apart, secular in name, and democratic within each community but not toward each other.

Israel is probably one of the most democratic countries in the world, mainly for Jews. Bring in the Arabs and the state becomes a colonial power, dominated by prejudice, patronization, and imaginary equality. The executive branch and the military sometimes circumvent even the law courts. The Palestinians talk of democracy but they have been unable to practice it even among themselves because they have not had enough education, time, and practice in democratic institutions to experience it as normal behavior in daily life.

Unification is a hazardous wish. Israelis would like to see the whole of Palestine unified as an Israeli state, but without Arabs. They have been working in that direction but their success has been limited. The Arabs simply will not go away. In the meantime Israel practices some form of unification by force, with the hope that eventually the Arabs will give up and go. In contrast, the Palestinians can only dream of a unified Palestine with an Arab majority as they had once wanted. However, even dreaming of that objective has become dangerous under Israeli rule. Now the Palestinians look for unification of the two segments of the Occupied Territories, the West Bank and Gaza strip, which they hope to make their own sovereign state. Even so, they can realize that goal only by dealing with Israel in one form or another since Israel has the power and it occupies the buffer zone between the two parts. This new Palestinian goal (dream) seems to have replaced the old and more ambitious goal (dream).

Secularism in Israel/Palestine is an odd concept. Both Israelis and Palestinians deserve high recognition for their ability to fool themselves, and many others, for so long by pretending to be secular. In virtually all aspects of life they act as Jews, Muslims, or Christians, rather than just as Arabs or Israelis. One hardly sets foot in Israel/Palestine before people inquire about one's religion. They compete vigorously in displaying their emblems and religious symbolism, and they leave all personal status matters within the domain of “religious” authorities. And all of them talk of the Holy Places as their own territory. Faith has turned into proprietary rights, territorial imperatives, and a most dangerous source of sustained friction between the affiliates of these religions.

The conflict over Jerusalem epitomizes this double-faced pattern of both people. If Palestinians and Israelis want secular states, why should Jews not live in East Jerusalem and Muslims and Christians in West Jerusalem? If Arabs want to sell land to Jews or Jews to Arabs, why should they not be able to do so? Why should communities be either exclusively Jewish, as in Tel Aviv, Naharia, and Kfar Shmoneh, or exclusively Arab, as in Jenin, Bethlehem, or Qalqilia? Of course if individuals choose it that way, it should be within their right to do so, but when the authorities plan segregation by religion and ethnicity, or when they promote exclusion and ethnic purity by subsidy, legal procedure, intimidation and confiscation, they can hardly be secular or democratic.

The current flare-up on account of Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem is symptomatic of the deeper conflict between the two people. Israel continues the practice of crowding-out, dislocating, and evicting Arabs to appropriate their space. The Arabs continue the sterile protests through ineffective violence, costly and often violent demonstrations, wasteful general strikes, and self-deceiving rhetoric against Jewish/Israeli expansionism. Obviously the Arabs can hardly be expected to sit idle in the face of Jewish/Israeli encroachments and violations of international conventions, which protect occupied people and territories. However, it would probably be no less effective to stick to non-violent demonstrations, peaceful protests, intensive well-placed diplomacy, and symbolic strikes of a few moments at a time. But their greatest efforts should be focused on building internal strength and power through high quality technical and literary education, self-confidence, and unity of purpose and strategy. These could be the most effective and least costly instruments in negotiating with Israel and with the international community at large.

A unified Palestine/Israel is not impossible. Confederation or federation is feasible, without ethnic or religious exclusion from any part of the unified area. If Jerusalem is to remain unified, it should be possible for Palestinians and Israelis to have offices in the City, and share residential areas. They should also cooperate to guarantee security, democracy, and freedom for both people. But they need the will to find the way. Otherwise, conflict will continue and all their dreams will remain unrealized.

## **RECOGNIZING REALITY: BETTER LATE THAN NEVER**

**May 1997**

Confusion between illusion and reality or between miscounted perceptions and observations based on facts has been costly in Middle Eastern affairs, especially to the Palestinians. Illusions of Arab unity, power, reliable alliances and own ability to combat Israel and its allies have been largely responsible for the Palestinian state of affairs. Unfortunately, discovering reality and facing facts have tended to occur after tragedies. Even so, it is better late than never.

Fouad Moughrabi's "A Year of Discovery" (Journal of Palestine Studies, XXVI, #2, Winter '97), is a breath of fresh air with a potential to create a storm of deep thinking and self-evaluation among Palestinian intellectuals and policy makers. Professor Moughrabi deserves thanks for candidly sharing his observations, and for using the Journal of Palestine Studies as the platform. Having admitted a shock to discover that the reality and his vision of life in Palestine were far apart. Moughrabi presents a few anecdotal details of his year's experience in the home country he had left thirty years earlier. Among these observation are: 1) A tendency of Palestinians to separate private from public space, take good care of the former and carelessly abuse the latter. 2) An apparent lack of appreciation for the beauty of the natural environment that surrounds them. 3) Preoccupation of the people with macro policies and the lack of attention to micro policies. 4) Widespread individualism among the elite at the expense of community affairs, as represented by the Dakakin (literally little shops) or offices, which pose as centers for research, study, and consulting. 5) A tendency to live in a closed society by making little attempt to learn about other cultures and peoples, even when opportunities offer themselves at no cost.

I can imagine Fouad's disappointment because of the little interest in his expertise shown by Palestinian intellectuals, who failed to invite him even once to lecture on the American political system and society. His shock would have been greater had he made himself available to Israeli institutions, for then he would have had to ration his free lecture time.

While I agree almost fully with Moughrabi's observations, many of which I have experienced personally, I differ a little on some of the explanations. For example, it is not evident that abuse of public space is due to occupation. It predates and goes deeper than the occupation. It is common in Egypt, Syria, and Iran among others, and has been for a long time. Such behavior is similar to what President Sadat called Tassayub, or total abandonment of responsibility. It probably originates in dependence on and hate of government, defective education at home and at school, and the poor example provided by the leaders. Poverty may have something to do with it but not much. The Arabs in

Israel enjoy a much higher standard of living than their compatriots in Palestine, but they behave similarly toward public space as long as they can get away with it.

The phenomenon of Dakakin is in many ways a rational response to a system of doling benefits by donor countries and agencies. The entrepreneurs start up these little shops to take advantage of opportunities since the resources are made available in small amounts and are encumbered with special conditions, rather than in large enough amounts, and with relative freedom to permit public agencies and institutions to take charge. Thus, fragmented aid breeds competition to please, fragmentation of effort, and jealousy among the recipients. Consequently, though the aid may be well intended, its effects are poor institutional development, mediocrity of product, and lack of community spirit and institution building.

An equally distressing but accurate observation is the relatively closed intellectual environment. Professor Moughrabi was not invited to lecture and correct distorted views of the American polity, partly because his potential audiences believed they knew the American system well. They probably felt comfortable with their perceptions, which render them victims and thus deserving aid from the outside. It is also possible that he was ignored because he was an Arab from America, rather than an American from America. A prophet does not have honor in his homeland. This is what the Egyptians call the Khawaga complex (or foreign expert complex). Ironically, Palestinians and Arabs in general are jealous of their own certificates and titles. As Drs. or Professors and engineers, they may think it is beneath them to learn from a lecturer who may or may not agree with their preset views and biases, particularly if that person is another Arab. The closed environment, thus, protects against potentially hazardous dialogues or debates. I might add that I have been back to Israel/Palestine many times in the last thirty years. Faculties of the Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University have never failed to take advantage of my visits to invite me to lecture, but not one of the 8 Palestinian universities made any attempt. I had the same distressing experience during a two-year stint in Egypt. Finally, it is not unlikely that the lack of interest in new knowledge and new approaches is inherent in the educational system which promotes rote learning, conformity, and obedience to or fear of the leader, all of which stifle intellectual freedom, analytical ability, and stimulating curiosity.

One last comment regards the apparent lack of appreciation of the beauty of nature, as observed by Professor Moughrabi. I have a feeling that he was talking about city people who may not have the time or resources to appreciate the countryside: that usually is a luxury. However, the village people, with whom I spend most of my time when visiting, no doubt appreciate what they have in a wholesome way. They appreciate it as a source of living, but also as the comfortable space they live in. They know every rock and every tree, every path and every twist in the road. They could hardly sustain such interest if they did not appreciate the beauty of the environment.

My brief comments are mainly to express my appreciation of Fouad's contribution, and to strongly urge that his article be circulated and read as widely as possible. It may help others to recognize the reality of Palestine and try to substitute it for what might be preconceived and miscounted perceptions.

**THE PEACE PROCESS: THE WAITING GAME  
AND ITS CONSEQUENCES  
June 1997**

For all practical purposes the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians is at a standstill. The pessimists consider it doomed. The optimists go on trusting and waiting. The realists say there is a problem and something ought to be done about it. The problem is that Israel has set a trap and the Palestinians have fallen in it. The result is an indefinite waiting period, which has different effects on each of the two principal parties. While the Palestinians wait, Israel enlarges its segment of the pie by building more settlements, taking hold of more land in Palestine, destroying more homes, and further weakening the Palestinian economy.

The Palestinians are, rightly, upset about expanding settlements in and outside Jerusalem, the small segment of territory handed over to them in the second phase of withdrawal, and the continued attempt by Israel to renegotiate what had been agreed upon in Oslo. The Israelis under Prime Minister Netanyahu have not hidden their intent to renegotiate, although they charge that the Palestinians have failed to reciprocate in the peace process and have failed to live up to their commitment in fighting “terrorism,” charges which are obviously subject to interpretation. The Israeli government’s behavior is not surprising; in fact it would have been surprising if Mr. Netanyahu had behaved differently and more harmoniously with the Palestinians. His government’s behavior is consistent with his ideology, the statements he made before the election, and with the pattern he has demonstrated since taking office. Mr. Netanyahu set the trap by reviving the Har Homa (Jabal Abu Ghneim) settlement building, with full anticipation that the Palestinians will protest in various forms, including violence, which should bring the peace process to a halt. The Palestinians did that and more. Now they insist that the peace process will resume only if the building of the settlement in East Jerusalem is halted. Such a condition is unenforceable given the power difference between the two parties, thus leading to a crippling of the peace process and the indefinite waiting period with its differential effects on the two parties.

The main point here is that the Israelis have the power and they will not give away that power—over land, over people, or over the economy of Palestine unless they have to. And they would not have to unless the benefits of giving up power are larger than holding on to it, or the costs are lower. This is a basic principle, which applies to Israel as to other holders of power. It is therefore for the Palestinians to make it worthwhile for Israel to continue the peace process, either by enlarging the benefits, or by increasing the costs of the impasse. The Palestinians know this principle. The problem they face, however, is of multiple dimensions. On one hand they have limited resources

of their own to force Israel to change its position. Hence they have resorted to other methods, which have not materialized, nor are they likely to materialize positively.

For example, the Palestinians have appealed to Arab power via the Arab League, individual states, and leaders. The Arab leaders have made noise, held meetings, set up committees, and little else. They have done little to use their economic and trade power to force the issue. In fact some Arab leaders have tended to undermine the Palestinian position by insisting that the issue of Jerusalem is only to guarantee access to the holy places to all, which Israel welcomes and possibly is thankful for such statements from Arab leaders.

The Palestinians have appealed and continue to appeal to the United States and specifically to President Clinton, as if history has taught them little. They ought to know that the United States will not force Israel nor put any undue pressure on it to cause a policy change regarding the peace process. The United States expresses disappointment at Israel's settlement policy but uses the veto to protect Israel. In the meantime billions of dollars continue to flow from the US to Israel, specifically to build settlements. Little change can be expected in this relationship in the foreseeable future.

The Palestinians appeal to the European countries, all of which join the chorus of criticizing and sometimes condemning Israel's policy toward the Palestinians. But at the same time these countries continue their trade, economic, and cultural relations with Israel, as if to nullify their own statements and condemnations of Israel's policy.

The Palestinians appeal to the United Nations although they know that the Security Council is helpless in the face of the veto power of the United States, and the General Assembly has no power of enforcement. The moral impact of its resolutions has had little effect on the policies of Israel since 1949. Why do the Palestinians expect it to have any more impact now?

All this leads to the conclusion that depending on the outside has brought the Palestinians little in the past and should not be expected to bring much now or in the future. If the Palestinians want to influence Israel's policy, bring Mr. Netanyahu back to the negotiation table, revive the peace process, and bring about a just and permanent solution proposal, they can depend only on themselves. Here are a few suggestions:

First and foremost, the Palestinians should find a way to resume the negotiations without insisting on suspension of settlement building. Instead they should resume negotiations and continue to protest against the settlement policy. If nothing else, they would shorten the time available to Israel to occupy more land and destroy more homes of Palestinians.

Second, the Palestinians should challenge Mr. Netanyahu to come forward and negotiate a final settlement as he has offered to do. He has suggested that negotiations could be concluded within six months. Why not skip the phases and deal with the final solution, to the benefit of both parties?

Third, the Palestinians should cooperate in strengthening security, as much as possible, both for Israel and for themselves, if only to save Palestinian lives which are lost every time an irrational break of violence takes place.

Fourth, the Palestinians would gain power and influence by concentrating more heavily on strengthening their economy, civil society, and the rule of law. Lots of resources are being dissipated while waiting for a solution, though much can be done in

the meantime, both by the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and by the people themselves.

Fifth, and most important beside self-reliance, it is necessary to reach the Israeli people and challenge them to join forces in the cause of peace. Some attempts in that direction have been underway but only on a very small scale. The Israeli public is tired of war and I believe it is anxious to have peace. Joint efforts by Palestinians and Israelis would no doubt be the most viable way to bring about as fair and just a solution as can be found in these circumstances. By taking the initiative, the Palestinians cannot lose, and they will most probably gain.

## **Problems and Solutions in Palestine July 1997**

It has become almost common behavior to criticize actions and reactions of the PNA and other Palestinian leaders for alleged corruption, waste of resources, absence of democracy, poor organization, and lack of serious efforts to create a civil society, build the economy, and help to create peace. Criticism is also aimed at the “dictatorial” behavior of Yasser Arafat and the arbitrary rulings by his ministers, failure to delegate authority, poor coordination among ministries and departments, and the low level of popular participation in governance. The critics point to apparent misuses of donor funds, a widening gap in the distribution of incomes, and the “terrorist” activities by Palestinians against other Palestinians. It is doubtful that all these charges are justified, but it is equally doubtful that the Palestinian leaders are totally innocent. However, this is not the place for passing judgment. It is more important to find the reasons and solutions to the problems that do exist. The Palestinian leaders must be aware of these charges and must certainly be concerned that they reflect better images than implied by those charges. Some observers blame such behavior on the newness of the “autonomous” community, the persisting burden of occupation, political uncertainty, lack of experience in governing, and poverty. Others, including Palestinian academicians and political leaders, tend to be apologetic and try to explain such behaviors as due primarily to the lack of a constitution and basic laws to guide the authorities and the people. [National Public Radio Interview, May 28, 1997] This latter explanation is the focus of this discussion.

To explain corruption and the absence of civil society as due to the lack of a constitution and basic laws is too simplistic, not convincing, and scientifically indefensible. The lack of a constitution does not automatically mean disorganization or chaos, nor does the absence of basic laws on paper give license for abuse of others, torture, or murder in cold blood in the name of national ideals and objectives. Nor does the lack of basic laws give license to corruption, waste, or indifference toward public interest. Britain has enjoyed centuries of democracy, freedom, and political stability without a constitution. The state of Israel does not have a constitution either, and yet the Israelis behave toward each other and toward outsiders as if they did. While Israel is still building its basic laws, it applies laws enacted by its Parliament (Knesset), laws inherited from the British Mandate Government in Palestine, and laws borrowed from Jordan, and sometimes from the Ottoman Empire that preceded the British in the Arab world. In addition, the Israelis make frequent use of military law as seems expedient. Though abuses are common against Arabs, even such abuses are often brought to a court of law

for adjudication. However, within Israel the behavior of the Israelis toward each other is highly democratic and civil--such behavior is becoming increasingly more common among Israeli Arabs as well. On the other hand, many countries have constitutions and basic laws but they ignore them whenever it seems convenient to do so; this seems to be the pattern in many Asian, African, and Latin American countries; the Middle East certainly is a good example. In that sense the behavior of the Palestinians may be considered normal for a poor, developing, and barely established society, regardless of the existence or absence of a constitution.

Constitutions and laws are usually reflections of the behaviors and expectations of the people guided by them. They are instruments of institutionalizing what is already common and accepted behavior. They also serve to deal with deviant and exceptional situations. The problem in Palestine is that the people and their leaders have had limited experience with democracy, civil society in which popular participation in governance is common, or with dependence on the rule of law they themselves have initiated, debated, and adopted. The Palestinians, like most of the Arab people, still depend on tradition and follow the leader who may be self-appointed or a successor to one who was self-appointed. They display democratic institutions borrowed from the outside or imposed on them, which are disdained and disobeyed, without feelings of guilt or wrongdoing. Such behavior is entrenched in society because of basic defects in the systems of education, which rarely promote democratic and civil society values. On the contrary these systems still pursue rote learning, preach obedience to the leader (including the teacher, the father, the head of the clan or tribe), and pay homage to artificial states established overnight by the authorities in power at the time. The leaders are afraid of delegating authority because they feel insecure in their positions; the subordinates obey for fear of being penalized. In the meantime both groups grab all the benefits they can while they can. The people who suffer the consequences hardly dare to dissent because they are wary of informers in their midst. And in times of crisis the leaders sound the call of nationalism or religious conformity which tend to overshadow the grievances causing the crisis, sustain the status quo, and thus perpetuate behaviors the people may be grieving against.

The adoption of a constitution can hardly be expected to correct these defects, nor can a set of basic laws formulated by legal scholars modify the behavior of the subjects--unless they are enforced by oppression and cruelty, both of which are enemies of civil society, democracy, and respect of the individual. The Palestinian leaders, whether in politics, business, or the academia, are no doubt aware of these conditions and of the processes by which the behavior of the future generations may be influenced. It is therefore incumbent on them to create the educational conditions, formulate the expectations, and provide the model of behavior they wish to institutionalize. And when they have come at least half way to achieving these goals, it will be fruitful to formulate, debate, and adopt a constitution. It is only then that they will be able to live securely in their own community, have respect for others as for themselves, and choose their leaders on the basis of merit, respect, and constitutional guidelines they will have established.

**AT HOME AWAY FROM HOME**  
**August 1997\***

This is the story of a child; some say it was a boy and others say it was a girl, but the fact of the matter is that it happened to both the boy and the girl. They were born at home, away from home, in a Refugee Camp. It was to be home, but only for a while, though no one would say for how long: for a day, a week, or a month, or, as some would dare say: forever.

They were a boy and a girl; now they are a man and a woman, but they still are at home, away from home. Home is just across, beyond a barbed wire, the nozzle of a machinegun, or on the other side of a closed border, and it will be so at least for a while, though no one would say how long a while it will be. The Camp is home for now, for here they have become certified refugees, man and woman, and their own story they will tell:

In the Camp we have lived since we first saw the light. We were greeted by a woman in white; she also was at home away from home. The woman in white had come to do a good deed, to help people like us, who were in need, and so the Camp for her has become a home away from home, but just for a while, by choice; for how long, it was for her to say.

We were born in Camp and so was our livelihood; once we saw the light, a ration card was born too: milk and sugar, medicine and clothing would come our way, for both mother and babe, as long as in the queue we stayed.

Food and sustenance were always there to ensure that we survived, for that is all the others could do for us, at home away from home. From crawl to walk, from baby coo to sensible talk, our skills and abilities have grown; and in search of knowledge off to school we were flown; to a one-room school a few yards away, and a lone teacher who too was a refugee, at home away from home.

At school we learned to read and write, but at home we heard the story of that other home. We became certain that at home we soon shall be, for that is what our elders had told us, and they ought to know. But experience was our greatest teacher: poverty, starvation, detention, jail, and loss of liberty-- these were our daily diet; stateless within states we were, and aliens among citizens, who deigned to be our peers; guests, intruders, just homeless, but never were we free. For we were at home, away from home.

Our parents knew where home was: it was where olive trees and orange groves pleased the eye; where melons and grapes grew large and sweet; where bread was always hot, and mother was always at home, waiting for us to greet. But here in Camp, father

did a little work, then took his time to tell the story of that other home; mother counted the coins to make sure that if poverty should rain it would not pour.

This has been our life as the days have gone by. Neither house nor neighbor has changed, for change would come only when our home will no longer be away from home. The cycle has repeated itself; now we are man and woman fully grown. We have skill and muscle, and lots of time to spare. A small job here and a little work there, another wedding here and a new babe there, but still we are at home away from home.

The houses have grown bigger, a new wall here and another room there, for many more of us have become certified refugees, citizens of the Camp, at home away from home. We have become teachers and nurses, women in white; we have heard the tunes from across the borders and from overseas, from leaders far away and from those next door, urging us to sing the song of return, to a home not away from home.

We believed for we had no choice. But now by choice we make the Camp our home away from home, to make sure the leaders keep their promises and pave the way for us to go home. Belief in the return is a sacred mission, and for us waiting has become a national duty; our patience has been nourished with uttering of patriotism and offerings of sacrifice; yet, little change has come and waiting has become a sore, for all we want is to be at home, not away from home.

And then one night there was a change: The right to return is long overdue! The leaders have little more to say, nor do the sentries who by the closed borders stay. Whether they have guns or only the power of the law, the guardians of liberty and independence have to answer to us, we brothers and sisters, young and old, who have never tasted life at the real home.

We ask for freedom, we face bullets, beatings, bone breaking, and the ugly whip; but none of these could stand in the way of our marching boys and girls, men and women, for all we want is freedom, peace, and a home not away from home.

The song of peace and freedom echoes across the land, under occupation, and in and out of camp, by Arabs and by Jews alike, for both have known the drudgery of life at a home, away from home.

This is our story, we often have told. It is our dream, our hope, and our aspiration that some day we shall be at home not away from home.

\*

Previously printed in November 1989. (Dedicated to the more than 15 million refugees registered in 1988 and to those who have joined them since then.) The numbers now approach 25 million refugees around the world. [update figures on refugees]

**A CENTURY OF ETHNIC NATIONALISM  
ARABS AND JEWS IN PALESTINE  
September 1997**

It has been one hundred years since the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, eighty years since the Balfour Declaration, and 50 years since the United Nation's Partition Plan legitimized the creation of a state of Israel in parts of Palestine. This century of Zionist/Anti-Zionist activities has witnessed sustained and often violent conflict in Palestine, four Arab-Israeli wars, and numerous bursts of terror and encroachment by Arabs and Jews against each other. The dynamic effects of these benchmark events on Arabs and Jews in and outside of Palestine have been tremendous and varied.

There has been a gathering of Jews and a dispersion of Arabs. Jews came from more than fifty countries to settle in what has become Israel and Palestinian Arabs have gone into a Diaspora in an equally large number of countries. The Jews have established a state, sovereign and independent, to which Jews flow from around the world. The Palestinians have been concentrated in occupied parts of Palestine and in neighboring Arab countries. The Israelis enjoy a modern democracy tarnished only by the discriminatory treatment of the Arab minority in Israel. The Palestinians in the occupied territories can only dream of democracy sometime in the future-- when they are sovereign and independent. The Israelis have created and enjoy the fruits of a highly developed, industrialized economy. The Palestinians suffer in a stagnant economy in Palestine, or survive in neighboring underdeveloped Arab economies. Those who are able to enjoy a quality of life typical of developed industrialized economies are a small minority. Israelis have achieved a per capita income, which is about ten times the per capita income of Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Israelis live in modern accommodations, while most Palestinians live in under-supplied refugee camps or in poor urban dwellings. The Israelis have established an identity as citizens of a state and are able to travel, trade, and interact on equal terms with citizens of other countries. The Palestinians still struggle for political identity and are largely at the mercy of other countries for documents that entitle them to travel, trade, or interact internationally. The Israelis have a strong military with highly advanced technology, while the Palestinians depend on weapons that are barely adequate in skirmishes and guerilla fighting. The Israelis enjoy the backing of Jews from around the world, even when world Jews are in disagreement with Israeli policies and actions. The Palestinians, in contrast, can hardly count on

backing from any Arab country except in rhetoric and in small favors that are subject to termination without notice. Even wealthy Arabs outside Palestine can hardly be counted on for economic or financial support for Palestine. The Israelis can count on the support of the United States as a super power and almost as much on support of most other developed and industrialized countries in what they regard as their “struggle for survival.” In contrast, the Palestinians have been victims of the policies of the superpowers and other powerful countries. The Israelis have developed highly sophisticated financial, political, and social institutions, while the Palestinians are still in the early stages of developing basic institutions. As the first century of Zionism has come to an end, the economic, military and political gaps between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine have continued to widen and there are hardly any signs of a reversal.

While the end results of a century of Zionism may be considered an over-achievement of Zionist objectives, peace and security in Israel remain precarious. The “successful” policies and actions of Zionism have brought disasters to the Palestinians who still struggle to achieve their own nationalist objective of having a sovereign independent state in at least a part of Palestine. Even though a peace process is underway, enmity between the two ethnic nationalities has not abated, and the future does not seem promising that an improvement is close at hand.

Many factors have contributed to this state of affairs, some of which were beyond Palestinian control, while others could have been prevented. As relations between Arabs and Jews in Palestine have evolved, the balance of power has tilted progressively in favor of the Jews (later the Israelis). The political, economic, technological, and social-institutional gap between the two peoples has rendered negotiations for a peace agreement out of reach. Ethnic nationalism, greed, and biased foreign intervention have misled each party into becoming more and more confirmed in the justness of its claims for the land of Palestine. However, one factor seems uniquely important and relevant to help explain the past and guide Palestinian policy in the future. This factor is the attitude and behavior of Palestinians in guiding their children and youth in the fight for Palestinian nationalism. That factor will be the focus of the rest of this viewpoint.

The best illustration of how the gap between Palestinians and Israelis has developed may be seen in the different ways Israelis and Palestinians have treated their children in the last few decades, in the context of the conflict. Israelis protect their children and youth and send them to shelters at the earliest sign of danger, up to the time when they are of age for military service. Palestinians, in contrast, expose their children and youth to danger. They allow them and sometimes encourage them to go to the streets to face Israeli soldiers and throw stones at them, even at the risk of being injured or killed in the name of Palestinian Arab nationalism. They praise them for facing danger as “heroes,” “martyrs,” and “children of the stones.” While Israeli children are required to go to school, sometimes under military protection, Palestinian children are often encouraged to go on strike and demonstrate in the streets, often violently, at the expense of their academic and technical education. Israeli children are provided with well-supplied schools, social activities, parks, and sports facilities. Most Palestinian children attend poorly supplied schools, in dilapidated buildings, with poor lighting, no air conditioning, and no parks or playgrounds to train their minds and bodies. All this leads to one disturbing conclusion: Israelis and Palestinians of the next century of Zionism will have wide socioeconomic and technological gaps between them. They will have hate and

enmity ingrained in them, and fear and distrust of each other as much as or more than their forefathers had experienced.

The Israelis can do little about this evolving gap and its impact on the future, except by helping to create peace in place of war, for it is in their interest to protect their children and advance their economy and technology as much as possible. It is for the Palestinians to protect and educate their children and youth and bring them up to a healthy maturity. It is for them to reduce the gap between their children and Israeli children with whom they will have to negotiate the future. It is for the Palestinians to induct their youth into a national mandatory social service in lieu of military service for assimilation and disciplined training. It is for them to bring up a generation of highly trained, well educated people who can face their adversary with sound bodies, knowledge, experience, and analytical ability to settle conflict, develop the economy, and fulfill the national objectives of their people. Of course not all Palestinian children face the horrendous environment described above. Children of political and economic leaders have privileges; they go to private schools, vacation abroad, and are kept away from violent demonstrations and risk in the streets. However, the vast majority of Palestinian children grow up deprived, undereducated, and most probably inadequately prepared to face their adversary on equal terms. Now is the time for the Palestinians to try to close the gap and equalize the capabilities and qualifications of the coming Palestinian generations with those of Israelis. This is the time to equip them educationally, technologically, and socially to be self-confident, secure, and democratic people. This is the time to maximize their readiness to deal with internal and international affairs, and in particular to resolve the conflict with the Israeli people, so that the two peoples can coexist peacefully, with mutual respect for their two ethnic nationalities, in the land they both love.

**PROTEST, VIOLENCE, AND TERROR  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST!  
October 1997**

Opposition to public policy and disagreement between groups are normal in a democratic society, regardless of how one defines democracy. Protest against the adversary may take the form of open disagreement, appeal to a higher or constitutional authority, public demonstration, civil disobedience, or any combination of these. Protest is usually based on the expectation that public pressure would bring about or expedite change of policy or behavior. In the absence of such expectations, protest may take the form of violence as an expression of frustration, impatience, or misjudgment. Violent protest often backfires and generates counter violence, and it may or may not succeed in effecting policy change. Terrorism is an extreme form of violent protest, though usually its immediate targets are not the policy makers but non-combatants, relatively weak and mostly innocent defenseless people. Terrorism is intended to strike fear in society to reduce the people's confidence in the authorities and their ability to maintain law and order or social and political stability.

Recent history of the Middle East illustrates all these forms of protest. It also illustrates the high cost of violent protest. Its cumulative hate effect and animosity between opponents are almost enough to preclude any peaceful settlement of conflict. Yet, even violent and terrorist protests tend to end, as the parties feel exhausted both physically and morally. By then the costs will have mounted and the net potential benefits will have dwindled enough to raise questions regarding the viability of the violent approach in the first place. Violence in this context does not include war between organized armies; wars require a different analysis. The concern here is with civilian activities and movements, both as perpetrators and as victims of violence.

Experiences of violence in the Middle East are numerous and variable. Terrorist protest in Algeria goes far beyond all reasonable measures to influence policy or change the regime. It has expanded from assassination of public officials to murder of members of the media, to massacres of innocent villagers, including women and children. Terrorism in Egypt has targeted ethnic minorities, Christians and their churches, tourists, and intellectual and political leaders. The Algerian and Egyptian governments seem helpless in trying to protect these targeted people, public statements to the contrary notwithstanding. The Syrian city of Hama was destroyed by public "counter terrorism" when its people resorted to violent protest against the government. The story of Lebanon is almost unique: every ethnic chieftain acts as a warlord, takes the law in his own hands,

and moves violently against the others. On the international front, the Lebanese Party of God, Hizbullah, protests against Israeli occupation of South Lebanon and in the process aims its missiles against civilians in northern Israel. As a result Israel uses violent attacks on northern Israel as an excuse to continue its occupation of what it calls a security zone in south Lebanon. The experiences of Iraq and Iran are too well known to need any elaboration; atrocities occur not only against their own minorities but also against members of the majority who dare to speak in protest. Violence in Palestine and Israel represents a complex of moral positions and political and military strategies. It also serves as a mechanism used by public authorities to silence their adversaries. The Israeli people protest against their own government peacefully, but their violent behavior against Arabs borders on terrorism. Extremist armed civilians act as vigilantes in the name of religious and national objectives; they attack individuals, occupy their land, evict them from their homes, and use weapons against unarmed people. The government of Israel interferes only to calm the situation in the short run but does little to prevent such terrorism in the future. On its own part, the government of Israel tries to strike terror among the Arabs in Palestine and in Lebanon in the name of Israeli security. Airplanes, tanks, gunboats, and surface-to-surface missiles are often engaged presumably against guerrillas, though the victims are mostly non-combatant civilians. The Palestinians are not any more innocent. Civilians engage the Israelis in violent encounters, throwing stones, stabbing, and in suicide bomb attacks against civilians. The Palestinian authority tries to control such acts, but it also applies violence and torture against its own people in the name of nationalism and security.

The history of violent and terrorist protest in the Middle East suggests that such protest has rarely helped to achieve the objectives of the protesters. The Algerian and Egyptian governments have failed to control violence, and the violent protesters have failed to gain power and change the respective regimes. South Lebanon is still occupied while shelling of northern Israel is still a menace. The West Bank and Gaza are virtually still subject to Israeli control, which is tightened or relaxed at Israeli will. Israel has won wars with the Arabs but it has not won peace. Security inside Israel is still precarious and Hizbullah still moves freely against Israel. All this suggests that violence and terror have not succeeded in bringing about justice, nor have they been successful in wiping out violence by adversaries. In the meantime the costs of violence mount and the benefits remain imaginary.

The reasons for this seemingly irrational behavior are numerous, but none seems convincing enough to justify violence and terrorism by or against civilians, regardless of differences in political or ethnic ideology. The use of violence seems especially irrational because other more viable and less destructive approaches are available. Peaceful demonstrations and protests are one such alternative. The Gandhi and Martin Luther King movements illustrate the power of peaceful protest. Another approach is protest in the media, nationally and internationally. A third is reaching out for the people on the other side to gain their cooperation and support for what they consider a just cause, and to have them pressure their own government on behalf of that cause. A fourth approach is to persist in negotiating with the adversary with patience, understanding, and good will. A fifth alternative is to request and abide by arbitration. This probably is the most viable and the least costly approach in dealing with national and international conflict. The Arab League can play a major role among the Arab countries and the United Nations can

do the same between Israel and its neighbors. Finally, probably the most important and most effective approach in the long run is to educate the public in the processes of democracy, constitutional government, and the role of institutions in bringing about change in a peaceful way. People of the Middle East may be set in their own ways, but it is never too late to learn from their own experiences and devise peaceful and less costly ways to realize their just and honorable objectives.

## **PROFILE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN PALESTINE, 1996-97<sup>16</sup>**

**November 1997**

This is a comprehensive and important survey (Profile) of development in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG). It is a first, bound to be a precedent for future assessments, and a major achievement in view of the technical and administrative obstacles, lack of reliable data, scarcity of resources, and the rather broad perspective its authors have adopted. The Profile is impressive also in the evident success of the coordinator and editors to synthesize the views of a fairly large number of staff, consultants, advisors, and other commentators, as well as those of various Palestinian ministries. In general the Profile complements UNSCO's ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA periodic reports. This review consists of three parts: "What is Covered," "What is Not Covered," and "General Comments."

**What is Covered:** Modeled broadly on the UNDP's HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT (HDR), the Profile covers most of the topics included in the HDR and goes farther in a number of ways. It makes a political statement against Israeli occupation, the costs of closure, and the difficulties emanating from the restrictions under which Palestinians live. The Profile begins with background information, a conceptual framework, explanation of the methodology and measurements, and the environment in which it was created. Human development is assessed by levels of economic independence, income, employment and unemployment, poverty, education, health, infrastructure, and by overall social conditions. These assessments, in various degrees of rigor, are followed by a discussion of the future, institution building, research and development, and general observations. The last section consists of 20 tables, which summarize all that preceded. Finally, the volume reproduces the results of an opinion survey of human development in Palestine, and ends with a bibliography of the references used as sources.

**What is Not Covered:** Though the Profile is titled Palestinian Human Development, it is limited to the residents of WBG. However, these are less than half of all Palestinian human resources. This omission, though it may be intended and justified by practical considerations, underestimates and distorts the measure of Palestinian resources, the potential for economic and social development, and the problems to be overcome. Palestinian economic and human capital outside Palestine is a rich resource that could and should be considered in exploring the future of Palestine.

---

<sup>16</sup> A Review Essay originally composed in Arabic. Birzeit University, Human Development Project, 1997.

Another gap is reflected in the dearth of information on investment in the economy, both domestic and international, whether by private or public investors. While the rate of saving in the WB is apparently high, little is said about investment, or how the savings are utilized. Similarly, there is no mention of technology transfer and productivity, both of which are directly related to human development. It is true that the Profile is focused on human development; it does cover most strategic economic indicators, which makes the absence of information on investment and productivity especially conspicuous. Still another gap relates to population control. There is extensive coverage of population, health, women, children, and families, but nothing is said about population control programs, regardless of whether such programs exist or not. The high rate of population growth, both natural and encouraged, is a major factor in human development. Therefore, leaving population control out of the evaluation can hardly be justified.

Similarly, there is no attempt to measure or discuss income and wealth distribution. Inequality of income and wealth is definitely a factor in the evaluation of human development and potential. Since poverty is emphasized, why not also the concentration of income and wealth?

Finally, the Profile tends to concentrate on the problems facing human development in Palestine, but it says little about self-help programs or the self-imposed costs of strikes, violent demonstrations, and politicization of education. Though such actions may be rewarding in nationalistic or psychological aspects, they have net negative effects on human development.

**General Observations:** The Profile is largely a study in political economy, with emphasis on the “political” at the expense of the economic and social potentials of the Palestinians in the WBG. In a way this emphasis serves as an excuse for the limited realized economic and human development. Yet there is little evidence that any specific development projects were thwarted by the political conditions. The Profile is revealing in a different way. In spite of the political and military restrictions, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita compares favorably with the GDP per capita in Jordan, Lebanon, and certainly Egypt. Another interesting finding is that the percentage of “poor” in Palestine is not high, compared with the percentage in most other countries, including the rich United States and several European countries--the definition of poverty, of course, varies according to the standard applied by each. In the Profile the poor are those who receive less than \$500 per capita a year. [Poverty in most developing countries is measured by the number of people who live on less than one dollar a day per person.]

The Profile exposes a number of contradictions. While the Palestinian people attach great importance to education, they pay their teachers miserly salaries, supply their schools poorly, and let their universities struggle with barely any facilities. Though the Palestinians brag about their achievements in higher education, most university instruction is in the hands of less than fully qualified people. University libraries are impoverished; in one university the library collection consists of an average of one book per student and the books are largely out of date. The Profile notes that certain ministers had made promises to education but did not come through with their promises. Even so, there are thirty applications pending for the establishment of new universities.

The Profile correctly applies the same criteria to measure human development applied in the United Nations HDR, but comparison with other countries has little meaning, given the abnormal social, political, and economic environment in Palestine. To compare results does little justice to the Palestinian people who certainly face disadvantages in their developmental efforts. On the other hand, the Profile gives more credence to its findings by evaluating development over a period of two or three years, thus allowing internal comparisons and evaluation of change over time.

Finally, the Profile would certainly benefit from more careful editing and deeper focusing on a smaller number of topics than it has covered. Even so, the Profile should be invaluable in guiding human development in Palestine and enhancing efforts to achieve the potential. Hopefully it will be widely accessible and read, especially to and by university students who may find it highly beneficial to prepare their own critical reviews of this important Profile.

## **IRAQ, ITS PEOPLE, AND THE WORLD**

### **December 1997**

The drama of Middle East political and socio-economic successful development or failure is fully reflected in the experiences of Iraq during the last four decades. Iraq's 1958 bloody revolution ousted the monarchy, created a republic, and quickly terminated a series of regimes before Saddam Hussein came to power at the head of a military government. Since then the drama has been overwhelming: a windfall of riches following the oil price revolution, a deadly uninspired eight years of war with Iran, a futile and self-destructive invasion of Kuwait, and an aftermath submission to the dictates of the United Nations Security Council and its most important member, the United States. The Iraqi people have in the meantime evolved from rags to riches to rags again. They have enjoyed periodic episodes of elation because of false victories, but most of the time they have suffered oppression, war destruction, poverty, starvation, malnutrition, and rising rates of infant and child mortality. Iraq's riches of oil reserves, fertile land, abundant water, and valuable human capital have been constrained by actions and reactions of the country's leaders, neighbors, and the outside world, enough to reduce their potential for development. Having been ousted from Kuwait, the Iraqi regime has faced UN sanctions, monitoring, and other measures of humiliation. The economic embargo, especially on oil shipments, has been the most hurtful measure to the economy, which has come to depend heavily on the export of oil and the import of a large number of luxuries and necessities, including food and medicine.

The Iraqi regime blames its suffering on the outside world, especially the United States and Israel. It blames other Arab countries for not backing it blindly, regardless of the folly of its actions. It blames the United Nations for doing the "dirty" work of the United States and Israel. It blames members of the Security Council for voting sanctions and supporting the United States. In fact it blames everybody but itself for its misfortunes. The Iraqi people seem unwilling or unable to put an end to their miserable conditions and gloomy future prospects. How long can this unhealthy environment be tolerated? What can be done about it, and who should do it?

The present situation cannot be tolerated much longer. The future of Iraq and its people is seriously threatened. Malnutrition, infant mortality, poverty, unemployment, lack of medicine, poor educational facilities, and uncertainty of the future are poisonous to the growing generation of Iraqis who will be the leaders of tomorrow. Of course there are privileged people in Iraq who do not suffer these deprivations, but they are a small

minority and will not be able to fill all positions of effective leadership in the future. Furthermore, relations with the outside world have been contracting rapidly to the detriment of the Iraqi economy and society. Yet, these conditions are not immutable. Iraq does not have to suffer humiliation and deprivation, nor does it have to be at the mercy of other countries for survival and development. Iraq and its people have the material and physical resources, as well as the human capital, to overcome most obstacles that stand in the way of economic and social development of the country. They have the capacity to catch up by mobilizing their own resources, restructuring their development and investment programs, and practicing self-reliance as the most effective approach to development and independence. These achievements, however, depend on certain prior steps to be realized.

1. Probably the foremost step is for the Iraqi regime to face its own people and acknowledge its errors in fighting Iran and invading Kuwait. Differences with these countries could and should have been handled through peaceful negotiations, regardless how long it would take. It is most unlikely that the majority of the Iraqi people believe the justness of these wars, especially when the regime surrenders to Iran all the gains it had fought for. Nor would they justify the invasion of Kuwait when their government uses statements or misstatements of United States diplomats as an excuse to invade its neighbor. The regime would most probably regain confidence of the people by acknowledging to them its own misjudgment and consequent actions.

2. The government and people of Iraq should stop blaming the world for their own mistakes or failures. The outside world did not force them to waste billions of dollars of oil revenues on a sterile war with Iran. The outside world did not force them to invade a sovereign neighbor and instigate a counterattack by a consortium of powerful armies, with UN approval, to liberate Kuwait and discipline Iraq for its "misbehavior." The argument that the United Nations has gone too far in applying sanctions and insisting on the "impossible" certainty that all mass destructive weapons and production capabilities of such weapons have been eliminated is not sufficient justification for the rigid and fruitless position the Iraqi regime has adopted. The Iraqi people should face reality and accept responsibility in searching for the sources of their problems.

3. The Iraqi regime should be brave enough to lead its people in trying to reconcile with the other Arab countries and apologize to Kuwait and the Arab League for the invasion of Kuwait as a sovereign member of the Arab League. Iraq's claims on Kuwait might have been dormant and needed to be dealt with, but invasion, war, and aggression cannot be justified or forgotten without apology and respect for security of other nations. By doing so, Iraq would not only pave the way for reconciliation, but it would also force the hand of the United Nations to lift the sanctions and induce Kuwait to forego outstanding debts and claims of compensation for war damages.

4. The Iraqi regime should stop negotiating with the United Nations expecting that the sanctions will be lifted and the embargo ended soon. The US policy is openly antagonistic toward the present regime, Iraq must learn to function within that frame of reference, build its own strength and obviate the significance of the US bias. That may not be easy but it is doable. Furthermore, even if it succeeds in freeing itself from UN sanctions, but that can hardly be a victory or a sufficient force for rehabilitation and development.

5. The Iraqi regime should take full account of its abundant material and human resources and estimate the country's potential to satisfy the need of its people without depending on the outside. The fact that Iraq, since the end of its war with Kuwait, has been able to rebuild bridges, factories, and the army indicates that Iraq is capable of major achievements on the basis of its own resources.

6. Iraq's military adventures have been very costly. The oil revenues of many years have been wasted and major development opportunities have been missed because of these adventures. It is time for Iraq to shift its focus from military buildup to economic and social development. The experiences of the last two decades should be convincing that military ventures are destructive, wasteful, and hopeless.

7. Most of all, the Iraqi regime should recognize the great potentials of its people and help them to rebuild the economy, develop agriculture and assure food security, restore the power of industry, and become as self-reliant as absolutely possible. With their material, human, and technical resources, the Iraqi people have the potential to be net exporters of food, clothing, and petrol-products, including fertilizers, medical, and educational supplies and equipment. They have the potential to utilize their oil resources as energy in industrial and agricultural development, rather than remain dependent on oil exports and revenues as a rentier economy.

With these steps Iraq may regain support of the Arab League and Arab people within and outside the Middle East region. It would also accumulate enough economic and technological power to free itself from dependence on imports of essentials, spare parts, and technical competence. It will also rescue its people from the suffering they have endured too long.

**THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS  
OF A FINAL SOLUTION: Israel and Palestine  
January 1998**

Once again the Palestinians and Israelis are taking opposing positions: the Israeli government wants to proceed immediately to negotiate a final solution while the Palestinian authorities say "NO." Yasser Arafat has, in a lukewarm way, said that he would not object to such negotiations given the right conditions. However, most spokespersons for the PNA have rejected Israel's proposal. Both parties present arguments to justify their positions, though these arguments are not made fully public, nor are they necessarily rational or convincing. There are costs and benefits to expediting the peace process to negotiate a final solution. Weighing these costs and benefits against each other suggests that both parties will realize net benefits. Furthermore, the net benefits of the Palestinians will exceed the net benefits of the Israelis. However, in order for the peace process to be expedited and be successful, certain conditions are necessary: first, both parties will promise to negotiate earnestly and try to present workable solutions. Second, a time limit will be set for a breakthrough in the negotiations and failing such an achievement, both parties will be free to suspend the negotiations and return to their previous positions. Third, both parties will refrain from any unilateral measures that may bias the results during the negotiations, including confiscation of Arab land and building Jewish settlements.

Costs and Benefits to Israel. The history of Israeli occupation suggests that time is on Israel's side. The longer the conflict has lasted, the more land Israel has confiscated and the more settlements it has built, thus establishing obstacles on the ground to withdrawal from Palestinian land. By proceeding to negotiate final solutions Israel will lose that opportunity by having to freeze all prejudicial actions during the negotiations. Another potential cost is a possible flare-up of internal conflict in Israel on account of the terms of a final solution. Such a conflict may cost the government of Bibi Netanyahu its minute majority in the Knesset. Though Netanyahu must have assessed the danger of such a step, he seems to be willing to take that risk. The internal conflict may be compounded by external pressures on the Israeli government to accept a solution that might be less than ideal under other circumstances.

Israel, however, must be contemplating the benefits of immediate negotiations. Probably the most important potential benefit is the achievement of security, which will

prevail once the terms of a final solution have been agreed upon. Savings on defense expenditure in both the short and long run will augment this benefit. Israel also will benefit by setting the stage for more normalization and trade with the Arab countries. The sooner a final solution is agreed upon the sooner will the normalization of relations become feasible and rewarding. Israel has so far tried and failed to promote close relations with any of the other countries in the region, including Jordan, because of the continuing conflict with Palestine. Changing direction and expediting the process of peace making will no doubt influence the pace of normalization and improvement of economic relations with other Middle East countries. Furthermore, by proceeding to a final solution Israel will gain sustained backing by the developed countries, especially the United States, France, and Russia. Finally, Bibi Netanyahu is ambitious and most certainly would like to leave an impact on the history of his country. Achieving a final solution to the conflict with the Palestinians will no doubt make him a legend, side by side with Menachem Begin who signed the peace agreement with Egypt.

The Palestinians have more to gain from expediting the process and concluding a peace agreement. The costs of such a step can easily be exaggerated. It is possible that Netanyahu is using his proposal as a tactic to delay the solution and expand settlements, counting on the Palestinians to say “NO” to his proposal. It is also possible that the government of Israel may rush to build and confiscate land prior to the final solution so as to take advantage of the time available to them. The Palestinians too may find themselves under external pressure to accept less than the ideal solution. The PNA may also face an internal conflict because of opposition of various groups to any compromise or any solution less than the ideal one. Finally, the Palestinians may be afraid that by agreeing to immediate negotiations, they will have abandoned the Oslo Agreement, which entails Israeli withdrawal from certain parts of Palestine. The first two potential costs can be minimized by the assumed terms on which negotiations will be based. Good planning and expert negotiations by the PNA can minimize the other potential cost. For example, the Palestinians may set their own terms to participate in such negotiations, including prior withdrawal of Israeli troops from specified parts of Palestine. Furthermore, they should be able to negotiate on equal terms with the Israelis and stand firm for what they consider an acceptable solution. As to potential internal conflicts, it is up to the Palestinian Authority to formulate a final solution that would gain majority support among the Palestinians, given the circumstances they face.

The Palestinians, however, should benefit greatly from immediate negotiations and achievement of a final solution. Given the assumptions made above, a freeze on land confiscation and settlement building will be an advantage. Another advantage may be withdrawal from more land as the price Israel will have to pay to embark on negotiating a final solution. Another benefit is the international support they will realize by saying “YES,” rather than “NO” as a starter. And once a final solution is in view, the Palestinians will be able to concentrate on the rehabilitation of their economy, build an infrastructure, and set the stage for the establishment of a State of Palestine. Probably the most significant support for the Palestinian position would come from sympathetic Israelis who truly want peace with the Palestinians, and these are a large enough group to make a difference.

The Palestinians have good reasons to be skeptical. Prime Minister Netanyahu’s recent statement that all of the West Bank (and possibly Gaza) are parts of Israel does not

invite confidence in his expressed interest in peace. However, that statement can hardly go beyond rhetoric. Annexing the West Bank and Gaza will entitle the inhabitants to Israeli citizenship and the right to vote and to be elected. With over three million Palestinians, Israel will no longer be a Jewish state. In fact such a solution would be almost a fulfillment of early Palestinian demands for a unified, secular, democratic state, and that is probably the farthest from Netanyahu's intentions.

The Palestinians have an opportunity to gain and sustain international and Israeli support by taking a positive step and saying "YES," by challenging Netanyahu to prove his serious interest in a workable solution, and by coming forward with a reasonable plan for ending the conflict and establishing the peace.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE:  
POTENTIAL AND REALITY  
February 1998**

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) concluded its meetings last December with a big fanfare and a summit by heads of states of a majority of the 55 member countries. The international media took notice. One hundred and forty resolutions were passed and preparations for the next conference were underway. Muslims around the world might feel gratified, proud, and hopeful for the future because of this august gathering of officials "representing" most of the world's Muslims. They probably should be hopeful, but whether they should be gratified and proud will depend on the achievements realized and the impact on their living conditions. An accounting of the results may be hard to conduct, given the time lag between pronouncement and realization. Nevertheless, both Muslims and non-Muslims have the right to ask questions about the value of the Conference, responsibilities of the OIC, and its accomplishments to date. The right to ask questions emanates from the fact that the Conference entails costs in material and human capital, which are in short supply in most of the member countries. Among the objectives of the OIC are: unification of the world of Islam, preservation of Islamic social and economic values, adherence to the United Nations Charter, promotion of cultural, educational, and economic programs in member countries, and providing a forum for leaders of OIC member countries to exchange ideas and discuss and formulate policies beneficial to all.

Any serious evaluation of the results to date (the OIC was formally proclaimed in May 1971) is bound to be negative. Unity among member countries has remained a dream, even in the broad sense of the Arabic term Umma or nation. The member countries have not only failed to remove differences and conflicts between them, but conflict has remained widespread and has penetrated within as well as between countries. Violent conflicts between member countries in the Middle East, in South East Asia, and in Africa are too numerous to name. Conflicts within these countries are even more numerous, between adherents of different schools of Islam as well as between adherents of different interpretations of the same schools. One need only point to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Malaysia, Iraq, Iran, and Algeria to begin to fathom the immensity of the intra-Islamic community conflicts. The costs of these conflicts, especially in human life, have been enormous and still rising.

Cultural, educational, and economic achievements have been quite modest if at all in existence. While some aid for education has been extended from one country to another on a bilateral basis or on behalf of the OIC, the results have been too modest to give much gratification or pride. The levels of education, by whatever measure, remain very low in most member countries, especially in the fields of science and technology, analysis, innovation, and discovery. In fact the level of education in some countries is declining, as in Afghanistan, where women are being excluded from education altogether. Similarly, it is hard to point to major achievements in cultural institutions or to an increase in popular participation in the arts and humanities in many of the member countries. Probably such achievements are more visible in the more secular countries than in the more fundamentalist countries in the observance of Islam. Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, and Tunisia are probably the most visible achievers in art, literature, and the media. Finally, achievements in economics have been equally disappointing as most members of the OIC are still among the poor and little developed countries: Somalia, Sudan, and Afghanistan are enough to illustrate the worst. Though the Gulf countries have made some economic progress, and Indonesia has, until recently, been regarded as fast developing, none of these countries has achieved a level of technology and productivity competitive with the developed countries. They all remain vulnerable and dependent as rentier economies. As to respect of the UN Charter, the record is not encouraging either. Abuses of human rights, restrictions on freedom of the press and the intellectual community, and resorts to violence and oppression for the least possible causes indicate little respect for that Charter.

Of course the failures of OIC member countries to advance economic, social, and cultural development cannot all be blamed on the OIC. But these failures lead one to the question whether the OIC has been beneficial enough to offset costs and justify its existence. In fact one might ask, "Why an OIC in the first place?" To what extent does the OIC represent the people of the countries whose heads of state and foreign ministers attended the conference? And how much do member countries truly have in common to justify formation of the Organization? First, it is evident that the heads of state that attend the meetings represent political institutions and governments and not Islamic institutions, Muslim communities or Muslim people. Among the attendees are secular leaders and non-Muslims, such as those coming from Turkey and Lebanon respectively. Second, most of the expected achievements are responsibilities of political and civic institutions, and have little to do with religious communities or institutions. Third, the fusion between religion and politics has tended to undermine the value of religion by rendering it a tool of politics, in many cases to the detriment of both religion and politics—Algeria and Afghanistan are the best illustrations. Fourth, emphasis on religion as the unifying factor, given the evident internal divisions, has detracted from other and more solidifying factors such as the building of democratic institutions and viable political and economic infrastructures. Fifth, the emphasis on religion has widened the division between communities within countries and has often led to persecution of religious minorities in violation of both Islam and the United Nations Charter. Finally, the emphasis on religion has undermined the basic principle that religion is a relationship between the individual and the deity, without an intermediary, such as government or any other instrument of enforcement.

The OIC is an existing institution and there is no argument here regarding its reality. What is being argued is that since it already exists, regardless of the justifications, the OIC can make a difference by taking a more active role in the affairs of its members. For example, there is nothing in Islam to prohibit the education of women; the OIC can raise its voice to protect women in Afghanistan against imposed ignorance in the name of Islam. There is nothing in Islam to justify the burning of churches or the assassination of Christians, as in Egypt. The OIC can raise its voice against such acts. There is nothing in Islam to justify the killing of innocent people and mutilating them, as in Algeria; the OIC can take steps in that regard and not wait until after the European countries have raised their voices in condemnation of such acts. Finally, there is nothing in Islam to justify war between Shiites and Sunnis; the OIC can take steps to prevent such flare-ups as in Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, and Iraq. There is nothing in Islam to justify persecuting ethnic and racial minorities; the OIC can interfere to prevent such actions as in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Malaysia.

The OIC has a lot of hidden power. First and foremost, it has the moral power on its side when it speaks in the name of the Umma and religion of Islam. It has the power of numbers as representative of over one fifth of the world's population. And it has economic power through the wealth of some of its members. These are formidable powers, which give the OIC sufficient credentials to influence policy and guide the behavior of Muslims within member countries. The OIC can interfere, not as an adversary, but as a pacifier, a peacemaker, a pace setter, a creator of harmony, and a builder of mutual understanding. It can use moral suasion, the teaching of Islam, and power of the purse to see that bloody conflict, ignorance, backwardness, and poverty are eliminated or at least contained. By doing so, the OIC will indeed make a difference and will give meaning to the concept of Umma in Islam.

## **THE ARABS IN ISRAEL: HALF A CENTURY LATER**

### **March 1998**

Israel of 1998 is, in many ways, quite different from that of 1948 but in some ways it is the same. This is especially true with regard to its Arab community. The Arabs of Israel were there when the state was established. They became citizens, but they also became an Arab minority within a Jewish state. Both the majority and the minority have undergone major transformations since then, but the Arabs are still a minority, virtually segregated from, and much less equal than the Jewish majority. This essay focuses on the transformation of the Arab minority and its relations with the state and the Jewish majority.

The Arab community has increased in number and its quality of life has radically changed upward. The decision by these Arabs to stay, even as a minority, has never been regretted. But not all the changes have been positive or desired. Whether or not the net effects have been positive will depend on how the people themselves view their situation.

The Arabs of Israel enjoy relatively high per capita incomes, by comparison with most Arabs in the Middle East region. They enjoy a relatively high level of education, for both males and females. Opportunities for education are accessible all the way up to the university level. Health insurance is virtually universal. Social security benefits are highly acclaimed and fully utilized, including family allowances, old age pensions, and disability benefits. Unemployment benefits are equally appreciated to the extent of being abused. Unemployment insurance, however, is especially important to the Arabs because unemployment rates among them tend to be higher than the national average. These benefits are well recognized and highly appreciated.

In the political sphere there is a lot of complaining by the Arabs. That, however, may be an indication of the benefits of living in a “mostly” democratic society. Barring questions of national security, which are frequently misused by the authorities enough to blemish the quality of democracy, the Arabs enjoy freedoms of expression, religion, and social and cultural mobility, far beyond any degree of freedom enjoyed by any other community in the Middle East, except the Jewish majority in Israel. Israeli Arabs may attack government policy, hold public demonstrations, and criticize, publish against, or sue the authorities without fear of retribution on account of being Arabs. They elect and are elected (though mostly by Arab voters), and they sit in the Knesset (Parliament) and participate in debate, in Hebrew or Arabic, as they please.

In the socio-cultural sphere, The Arabs are mostly on their own; they receive limited cooperation and help from the various ministries, compared with the help the majority receives. They have their own newspapers, language of instruction, cultural activities, and other forms of cultural expression and entertainment. The main conflict they face in this regard is the encounter with the culture of a Western, more technologically advanced, and more powerful Jewish majority. These achievements are real, but they are not free of hardships. The Arabs feel and are treated like a minority-- a fate they share with most ethnic and religious minorities around the world, including those in the most democratic countries. Probably the treatment of the Arab minority in Israel is a little more complicated than the treatment of minorities in other countries because of the sustained conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors, with whom the Arabs of Israel have some affinity.

Probably one of the most serious problems the Arabs of Israel have faced is political, though the effects are usually reflected in economic and social disadvantages. For example, the Arabs are frequently reminded that they are a security risk and are therefore subjected to arbitrary, "discriminatory," and humiliating treatment by the authorities, even though they have never seemed like a threat to the security of the state. They are contained within certain territorial perimeters, traditionally Arab, and do not have opportunities to expand outside these territories. The restrictions are embodied in the land tenure system of Israel, according to which 92 per cent of the land is owned and controlled by the National Land Authority and may not be sold or leased to non-Jews. By contrast, Arab land may be bought or leased by Jews. Being considered a security risk, the Arabs are exempted from the mandatory military service, but as a result they are deprived of benefits accrued by veterans, such as housing, education, and employment priorities and subsidies. Thus as a result of the security risk presupposition and the land tenure system, there is virtual segregation between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority.

The Arabs have made large strides in education, but the quality of their schools is far below that of Jewish schools. Administrators of schools and local authorities complain that they receive less support from the government than do their Jewish counterparts. As a result few Arabs qualify for higher education in engineering and the natural sciences. Hence they concentrate on teacher education, literature, law, and medicine. Advanced technology remains beyond their reach.

While the Arabs enjoy a relatively high standard of living, large percentages live at below the nationally recognized poverty level. This happens to be true even among the Druze community whose members do serve in the army and should qualify for veteran benefits. Unemployment among the Arabs tends to be higher than the national average partly because of their relatively lower level of technical training than that of Jews. The skilled Arabs have been crowded out by Russian immigrants who are highly qualified and who enjoy preference as Jews. The lower-skilled Arabs face stiff competition from and crowding out by commuters from Palestine and Jordan, and from foreign legal and illegal workers. Arab professionals, scientists, and scholars have often found it necessary to emigrate for lack of opportunities in Israel, thus leading to an Israeli Arab brain drain.

Arab agriculture has also undergone major transformation. Mechanization, the use of chemicals, and application of scientific methods have become more the rule than the exception. And yet, the levels of productivity and income on Arab farms are lower

than on Jewish farms. Arab agriculture suffers from a smaller scale, lower subsidies, fewer irrigation facilities, and less well organized marketing compared with Jewish agriculture. All these handicaps are direct results of public policy and land tenure laws. As one Arab farmer put it, "I am ready to compete with any farmer, Arab or Jew, if I had the same opportunities they have especially access to land and water."

Arab achievements in industry, manufacturing, and finance are barely noticeable. There is hardly any heavy industry or large factories, nor are there investment banks and finance corporations owned or managed by Arabs. While opportunities may depend on the market and individual initiative and enterprise, the Arabs in general believe otherwise. They are convinced that they are intentionally excluded from the designated Development Zones, which enjoy government support. Their perception of discrimination against them tends to be sustained by discriminatory public policies, which may account for much of the development lag they suffer.

As a minority the Arabs of Israel have faced a major cultural threat from the predominant culture of the majority, and the consequences are alarming. The assault on the Arabic language has led to deep adulteration of the language. Hebrew words creep in, not only in casual conversation, but also in the media and even in scholarly writing. Apparently the speaker, teacher, or writer often finds it easier to use a Hebrew word or term than to search for the Arabic equivalent. This trend is encouraged by the fact that Arab students are required to learn Hebrew but Jewish students are not required to learn Arabic. The inequality of languages and its negative impact on learning and proficient use of Arabic by the Arabs is not unique to Israel and its Arab minority. It prevails in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and other Arab countries where English or French creeps into Arabic in place of Hebrew. However, in Arab countries, this phenomenon is confined to professionals, writers, and other "intellectuals," probably because of the scientific and technological lag suffered by these countries. In Israel, the impact is reflected in the relatively low quality of the Arabic newspapers and audio-visual news media, and in communications with the authorities. One may write to government offices in Arabic, but the response in such cases may be long in coming; hence to expedite, you write in Hebrew. Whether this state of affairs can be mended is doubtful, given the inevitable inequality of power and technical expertise between the Jewish majority and the Arab minority.

Does this cultural invasion, reflected in the abuse of the Arabic language, mean eventual assimilation of Arabs within the Israeli society? That is most unlikely. Segregation between the two communities is virtually institutionalized in elementary and secondary education, military service, religion, residence, marriage, burial, and ethnic nationalism. The Arabs cannot be Zionists, and the Israeli Jews cannot abandon Zionism.

The Arabs of Israel, though citizens of Israel, do admit to having sympathy with other Palestinians, but they do not choose to fight on their behalf, or emigrate to join them. In fact they have hoped to be a bridge of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, but this has not happened in any effective way. To the Israeli Arabs' distress, the affinity they feel towards other Palestinians has often been used as an excuse to discriminate against them. Thirty years ago I observed that the Israeli Arab minority was searching for identity. The search is still on and is not getting any easier. The conditions the Arab minority faced then have changed in appearance, but not in substance.

Looking at the future, it is evident that the Jewish majority and the Arab minority are stuck with each other within the state of Israel. Therefore, it should be to the advantage of both to accept that fact and try to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of the minority and help it to develop fully, and enjoy all the benefits of Israel's democracy and its highly advanced economy and society. The benefits of such development will accrue to the Arab community, but also to the Jewish majority and to the Israeli society at large.

## **WINNERS AND LOSERS IN THE RECENT GULF CRISIS**

### **April 1998**

Though in the final analysis each country or actor in the drama of the Gulf crisis will have to do its own evaluation as winner or loser, certain effects may seem clearer if observed by an outsider. For example, the United States administration regards itself a winner, but so do President Saddam Hussein and his outspoken ministers, while some political observers consider Russia to be the winner as a returning influence in Middle East affairs. However, if we look at the plusses and minuses of the encounters of the last few months, it seems hard to find a winner, but it is very easy to find losers. I venture to suggest that all the parties, with the exception of the United Nations (UN) and possibly Israel, have been losers. I suggest further that any positive effects realized could have been achieved at less cost and without the risk of armed conflict.

The UN, under the leadership of Kofi Annan, has probably been the star winner in a number of ways. The UN showed that diplomacy still works, even in dealing with Saddam Hussein, especially when diplomacy allows flexibility in addressing issues. For example, by visiting Iraq and by addressing its leaders with respect, as befits a sovereign nation, Secretary General Annan was able to persuade Iraq to do what it had vowed not to do, even under the threat of the American/British armada anchored in the Gulf. The UN was able to restore unity to the Security Council and add rigor to its resolutions. Most important of all, the UN was able to avoid the potential loss of life that would have resulted from the use of force, at least for the time being.

Israel, for all practical purposes, might not have been a party to the conflict, were it not for the 1991 scud missiles attack by Iraq, Richard Butler's unwarranted statements regarding Iraq's capability of hitting Tel Aviv, and Israel's own over-nervousness regarding its legitimacy and security in the Middle East region. But Israel did become a potential party and as a result it gained in at least two ways: the crisis brought some unity within the country, at least as far as Iraq was concerned. Israel also secured renewed commitments by the United States to stand by it almost unconditionally. However, both of these gains can easily be exaggerated since neither benefit was in doubt or in need of reaffirmation. However, as a negative, the Gulf crisis may have helped to refocus on Israel's perpetual failure to comply with UN resolutions, and this could become a serious

challenge especially if the Arab League focuses its efforts to have the UN resolutions enforced.

As to the other parties, all seem to me as losers. Take the United States, and by association Britain. All they have achieved is the resumption of inspection in Iraq. Yet there is no reason to believe that inspection of (MDW) would not have been resumed by deliberating within the halls of the UN, as in fact happened, and without amassing forces in the Gulf. The threat of force might have enhanced diplomacy, but it was neither sufficient nor necessary to achieve the same objectives. On the other hand, the costs to the United States have been high and are still mounting. The United States, to its own shock, has found itself highly isolated with regard to the use of force against Iraq. Except for Britain and Kuwait, there were no supporters. Second, the United States found itself, as a giant military force, brandishing its sword against a crippled “midget” military force. For the United States to build an armada in the Gulf added little honor and displayed little bravery or shrewd diplomacy. Third, the United States has undermined its own status as the superpower by personalizing the conflict, as if it were a fight with Saddam Hussein the person, and not with him as the president of his country. The United States’ underhanded actions to depose Saddam Hussein are not becoming of a superpower or a democracy. Fourth, the United States has incurred large material costs, which may or may not be recovered from the coffers of Kuwait, and these are still mounting. Finally, all public statements to the contrary notwithstanding, the United States has lost some credibility in the Middle East, even among its friends in the region, both by quickly preparing to use military force, and by its evident bias in trying to enforce certain UN resolutions and not others.

The Arab League is the next major loser. Once again the Arab League showed itself to be ineffective in dealing with other international agencies (e.g., the UN) and with its own member countries (Iraq). The Arab League could neither persuade the UN to deal with Iraq more realistically, nor convince Iraq to abide by its agreements with the Security Council before the threat of military action seemed imminent. Other Arab countries and leaders, individually and collectively experienced these same failures. Egypt, the most influential Arab country was not any more successful than the Arab League.

The Gulf countries, with the exception of Kuwait, were generally not in favor of military action, and by expressing their opposition they undermined their relations with the United States and Britain. Yet, their relationship with Iraq has hardly improved in any tangible way as a result. Kuwait, as the exception, has re-exposed itself unnecessarily by supporting military action, and has thus made itself a perpetual target of Iraqi nationalism, regardless of who leads Iraq.

Jordan is another loser. While opposing military action, the government of Jordan found itself in conflict with large groups of Jordanians who demonstrated in support of Iraq. The internal conflict resulted in the loss of life at the hands of the authorities. On one hand the government banned demonstrations; on the other it was not able to avoid casualties. The issue of Iraq was divisive, and it demonstrated the absence of democracy and civility in the governance of the country.

Even bigger losers were the Palestinians. The PNA, which professes democracy, banned even peaceful demonstrations on behalf of Iraq. The public was not ready to listen. Palestinians cheered and danced in support of Iraq and called on Saddam Hussein

to hit Israel if the United States attacks. Once again the Palestinians showed their immature democracy, and their fascination with rhetoric and symbolic, though false victories. They admired Iraq's hollow pronouncements and cheered for its helpless leaders, even though they had little to offer in support, or to gain for themselves. They quickly forgot the suffering brought on them by Iraq's actions in 1991. And at the same time they showed little sensitivity to how their own behavior would reflect on the peace process. Prime Minister Netanyahu was quick to point to Palestinian cheering as another cause of distrust and an indication of non-commitment to peaceful co-existence with Israel.

The biggest loser in the crisis was Iraq. The Iraqi leaders can boast of their false bravery in standing up to the giant United States/Britain threat. They can claim victory by not surrendering to the United States. They can claim victory by having the terms of arms inspection of the presidential palaces modified. But in the final analysis they did surrender, the sanctions are still on, and shortages and suffering are still visited on the Iraqi people. Furthermore, Iraq is still isolated. Even Security Council members who opposed military action have now found themselves in a difficult position: if Iraq violates the agreement reached with Mr. Annan, these countries may find it impossible to oppose the use of force to secure compliance. Iraq may have escaped military assault but it has not resolved the conflict nor precluded such action in the future.

Could the crisis and the threat of military action have been avoided? I think yes, if both the United States and Iraq would have tried harder and showed a little more good will toward a peaceful resolution of the conflict. One major failure of the United States administration has been its lack of understanding of cultural values of Iraq and the Middle East region as a whole, by blindly encouraging individualism by certain members of the inspection teams. Various members of these teams, including the leader, Richard Butler, seemed to have no inkling of the cultural factors that influence policy in Iraq. They failed to act as objective expert-technicians and became voices of propaganda against Saddam Hussein and his ministers. The UN and the United States should have left diplomacy and public statements to the diplomats and UN spokespeople. The United States could have taken more time before threatening the use of force and dispatching war ships and carriers to the Gulf in such haste. Most important, however, the United States could and should have applied personal diplomacy, whether directly or indirectly, to secure compliance, rather than posture as an adversary. Were the conflict truly between Iraq and the UN, as the United States administration claimed, the United States could have played the role of mediator. Finally, the United States could and should have demonstrated more sympathy with the people of Iraq, rather than make them choose between their national leaders and open and probably hopeless rebellion. In fact the United States could have enhanced its position among the people of Iraq by separating economic sanctions from elimination and monitoring of MDW. Not only could the US have persuaded the UN to relax the sanctions, but it could have found ways to flood the Iraqi market with badly needed consumer goods. That might have been, and may still be a far more effective approach than the futile and costly war threats against a country that is starved, too weak to fight, and not adapted enough to democratic means of dealing with a crisis.

Iraq, however, was not any more creative or cooperative in avoiding or seeking a resolution of the crisis. For instance, Iraq could and should have allowed inspection of

suspected MDW sites to continue while bringing its grievances more strongly and rationally to the UN for serious consideration. The Iraqi leaders could and should have known that MDW are going to be impossible to use without bringing self-destruction on themselves. If so, why not open all doors and show that such weapons do not exist and if they exist they may be destroyed. The silly idea that presidential sites may not be inspected could only invite suspicions, especially among adversaries and others who lack an understanding of the symbolism inherent in the culture. On the other hand, Iraq could and should have tried to protect itself against shortages and suffering by means other than complaining and seeking sympathy from the outside. Iraqi engineers should be able to manufacture most spare parts and machinery they need, Iraqi farmers should be able to produce enough food to avert malnutrition and starvation. Self-help is a far more effective protective than spending on arms or crying foul against international agencies. Iraq has the resources and the potential but it needs to muster the will and determination to use these resources effectively.

## **NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE SEARCH FOR A MIDDLE EAST PEACE**

**May 1998**

**Edmond A. Haddad\***

It has been apparent for many years that the United States has failed in its many efforts to mediate a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Part of the reason for this failure is the peculiar nature of American foreign policy as it relates to Arabs and Israelis. To ensure peace the mediating partner must be perceived as an honest broker-- one genuinely interested in the interests of both parties. The United States, virtually alone among nations, almost wholly supports Israel. Most American presidents and the United States Congress have traditionally regarded the Jewish state as America's only strategic and moral friend in the Middle East. Exacerbating the problem is the fact that, as Professor Edward Said put it in a speech last fall at Georgetown University, Arab leadership is extremely weak. The noted Palestinian educator said: "The root of the multi-faceted problems facing the entire Arab world is the lack of democracy in all Arab countries and the rampant corruption, pronounced greed, and lack of integrity among the rulers of the Arab world."

For some 50 years, Arab-American organizations have tried to force major changes in American foreign policy and have largely failed to make a significant difference. They argue that a more "balanced" policy is in the best interests of the United States. Even though Arab-American political and business leaders probably receive more invitations than before to Rose Garden receptions and to the 8th floor dining room at the State Department, they have had virtually no influence on American foreign policy toward ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. Groups such as the Arab American Institute have been effective in encouraging Arab-Americans to seek political office while the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee works diligently to fight the racism and ethnic stereotyping so prevalent in the United States. These groups continually say, "If we could only educate the American people to the truth in the Middle East, they would demand a more balanced policy." An embarrassing but still a fact of life is that most Americans pay scant attention to foreign policy and are little interested in the world beyond our shores. Except, perhaps, for the bizarre machinations of the evangelical Christian Right, and its unquestioning support of Israel, there is precious little interest in or knowledge of the Middle East.

Given this continuing and sorry state of affairs, are there some plausible answers? The Netanyahu government not only continues to repress and depress its Palestinian neighbors but also many Israelis who have and continue to work hard in the cause of peace and human decency. Unless a major power like France or China or even the European Union steps in to support the Palestinians, Lebanese, and Syrians, if only to add a degree of balance to the diplomatic playing field, it seems that Jews and Arabs of goodwill have their work cut out for them. Both of these ethnic groups should take a good hard look at themselves and how they can best contribute to a period of peace and respect for all who live in the lands of the Fertile Crescent.

An initial effort at self-examination would be helpful to both sides. You will never reach extremists on either side so these comments are particularly directed to Arabs and Jews long identified with the peace movement. The degree of racism against Arabs is real and deep. Many Jews active in peace organizations still seem to regard their Arab brethren from a distance. The pathetic response of Peace Now to the Israeli bombing of Qana in Lebanon is but one example. Peace Now looked the other way, it said, because the Israeli elections were nearing and they didn't want to hurt the Peres government any more than it had already been savaged by the killing of so many Lebanese civilians. When Israel does behave like an international outlaw, thoughtful Israelis must now speak out strongly. They simply cannot look away embarrassed and do nothing. Responsible organizations such as Americans for Peace Now and the American Jewish Congress must not be afraid to speak and act. An additional and positive step would be for the former to encourage dialogue with more conservative groups such as the American Jewish Committee. Arab-Americans also have much to do. Instead of complaining about such relatively unimportant issues as who gets a fairer press (both Arabs and Jews complain about news media bias), Arab-Americans simply must move in new directions. A good beginning might come in a national educational effort to reverse the apolitical attitudes and general conservatism of too many Americans of Arab descent. They must learn to participate more fully in the artistic, cultural, and public affairs activities of their communities. When I headed the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, the only time Arab-Americans supported the Council was when we hosted a major Arab speaker. Jewish members, on the other hand, enthusiastically supported Council activities on a regular basis. Large numbers of Arab-Americans hold prestigious positions and are high achievers in a variety of important disciplines throughout the nation. Most do not trumpet their ethnic backgrounds partly out of a genuine fear of discrimination. Another reason has to do with a feeling that ethnic heritage is largely meaningless since where a person was born and what nationality is wholly a matter of chance! Many Arab-Americans, like other ethnic peoples, work tirelessly and without recognition in various humanitarian and human rights efforts throughout the Middle East and here at home. Current Arab-American leadership actually doesn't seem aware of the ethnic strength that actually exists. For example, Ralph Nader arguably is the most well-known and respected national American leader of Arabic (Lebanese) descent. Yet, Nader is rarely, if ever, mentioned in Arabic publications or broadcast media. My guess is that he is perceived as being "liberal" and that is a turn-off to most Arab-American hard-line conservatives. Arab-Americans should be encouraged to reach out to those with similar views. The Jewish publication "Tikkun" is only one example of outstanding and progressive journalism that genuinely believes in a balanced peace in the Middle East.

In sum, I believe that Americans who are also Jewish and Americans of Arabic background must adopt a more hard-line and confrontational approach in the search for peace. Indeed, we should sublimate our historic cultural and religious differences in favor of those areas in which we are more similar. In an angry world of cruise and Tomahawk missiles and now anthrax and the easy willingness to use them, combined with dangerous religious fundamentalism, nationalism is an increasingly dangerous path. Those who genuinely care for an honest and just peace must join together and speak out forcefully against evil on all sides. Such increasingly powerful joint representations of both Arabs and Jews might finally get the attention of Congress and the President with a strong possibility of worthwhile and lasting results. Given today's stalemate, new vision is needed and needed right away.

Edmond E. Haddad is a former President of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, and a retired Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy

## **WILL ISRAEL COME TO TERMS WITH ITS RECENT HISTORY**

### **June 1998**

Ancient Israel had vanished but from the ashes has come fire. The Israel of today is a flame: it warms certain hearts and burns others.

This Israel has evolved from a surge of humanism in search of a national home for a homeless Jewish people. That humanism has sought a secure nest for Jews who had been orphaned and dispersed cruelly around the world. It looked for a refuge for Jews who had been uprooted and prevented from letting their roots penetrate in their locales. It burst out as a force to integrate the Jewish people with nature, the land, and the environment, in peace and tranquility.

The Israel of today has realized most of those dreams. Its leaders may be forgiven if they seem arrogant, boastful, or overly self-assured. But will they be forgiven, or will they forgive themselves for the sins they have committed against others on the way to the realization of their dream? Will they be at peace with their own conscience and moral values, having violated those same values, which carried them to their triumph? Will they look into their turbulent recent past and extend a hand of conciliation toward those they have infringed upon on the way to victory? Only the Israelis can answer these questions, but we can and should do the asking, prod the Israeli conscience, and instigate deep thinking in order to arrive at those answers.

I was there when the Israel of today was founded, when the Jewish residents of Palestine became citizens of an Israeli state. I watched their jubilation, celebration, and boisterous expressions of triumph, relief, and hope. I was there also when Israel expanded its boundaries beyond the internationally legitimate borders. I was there when Israel caused the departure of native residents into a new Diaspora. And I was there when Israel of today seemed to justify its violation and rejection of United Nations resolutions in order to appropriate more of the land and water resources, which belonged to others.

The Israel of today has built a national home, at the expense of others. It has gathered its people from around the globe, and has caused the scattering of others. It has made citizens of its people and refugees and strangers of others. It has brought security to those who were insecure, and has instilled insecurity in others. It has nurtured humaneness among its people, and has violated the human rights of others. The Israel of today has plowed and cultivated the desert, but it also has appropriated the gardens and

livelihood of others. It has globalized its sources of income and wealth as it has fragmented and compressed those of others. It has built homes and settlements for its people over the ruins of homes and villages of others. It has brought freedom to its people but imposed “bondage” on others. It has practiced democracy among its people but violated democracy toward others.

Those others were on the land before the Israel of today came into being, but they have been turned into strangers in their own land. They, like the Jews, are Semites, but for the Israelis they apparently are just others.

The Israel of today is a land of contradictions. Freedoms of expression, religion, mobility, and equality before the law are held supreme, but not for others. The Israel of today has virtually abolished the death penalty but its military forces visit death and destruction on the villages and homes of those others. Opportunities for education, health, and shelter are extended to all, but not as equally or as liberally when the beneficiaries are those others.

The Israel of today has created a national home for its people, but it has turned it into an armed fortress. In place of peace there is conflict, and bullets in place of bread and butter. The Israel of today had aimed at peace and security but instead the other has concentrated on producing and exporting instruments of death, war, destruction, and instability. The Israel of today has sought and received apologies and reparations from those who had harmed its people. Will Israel have the courage to offer apology and compensation for the harm it has inflicted on others?

The builders of Israel are happy to escape being a minority, yet they relish that status for others. They feel deep agony when one of their people is hurt, but they proceed to break bones and inflict pain and confinement on others. They believe in the rule of law, but fail to abide by decisions of their high court when applied to others. Israeli law presumes one to be innocent until proven guilty, but one is considered guilty until proven innocent if that is one of those others. They observe a day of remembrance of the Holocaust, and rightly so, but they fail to remember the tragic effects of their actions on others. As victims they have received sympathy and aid to create a state, but they deny sympathy and obstruct cooperation when it is to create a state by those others. And they have fought and still fight against policies of ethnic and racial discrimination and exclusion, and yet they practice these same policies toward others.

The Israel of today is unique among nations, but will it sustain its positive uniqueness and perpetuate it on pillars of morality, clean conscience, and hope for the future? Will it sustain its uniqueness by recognizing the humanity of those others as of its own? Will it nourish its uniqueness by building bridges where there are cleavages, by creating towers of security, or by reaching out to those others? Will it nurture its young into a life of cooperation and peaceful co-existence with their neighbors--those others? Will it be able to overcome and eliminate the feelings of hate, fear, disdain, and aggression toward those others?

Israel of today has the potential. Its people have the power and the ability to revitalize the values on which they founded the new Israel. The leaders of Israel have a legacy of values, which deserves to be revived, strengthened, and sustained. Will they and their people have the wisdom, the courage, and the will to live by those values, and extend them beyond their borders to those others? Will they come to terms with their

“could be” glorious past and remove the gap they have built between themselves and those others?

### **THE PALESTINIANS: HALF A CENTURY LATER!**

**July 1998**

The Palestinians have been commemorating their tragic defeat, loss of land, and forced dispersion, probably as a reaction to the Israelis' celebration of the creation of their state and achievement of independence half a century ago. The Palestinians have designated that horrid event as The Nakba or catastrophe, which they recall to remind themselves of their suffering at the hands of the Israelis, learn from the experiences of the past, and reestablish their identity and rebuild their society. However, the Palestinians should go beyond, on both sides of 1948, and recall the other Nakbas that have befallen them in order to learn from the total experience of their relationship with Israel and its builders. For example, it was a Nakba when the Ottoman authorities acquiesced and allowed Jewish migration and settlement in Palestine early in the century. It was a major Nakba when the British Government issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and thus made it imminent that Jewish immigrants would flood the land of Palestine and build a Jewish national home there. That, of course, could not have been neutral to the interests of the native people, the Declaration's disclaimer to the contrary notwithstanding. The Palestinians saw the writing on the wall and began their struggle to prevent such an occurrence, but powerful forces were already activated against them.

The next Nakba came in disguise as the White Paper of 1939. The British Government issued the White Paper to end the Palestinian revolt, with a mere promise to regulate Jewish immigration into Palestine. The fact is that the Palestinian struggle was thus crippled and they lost their advantage, while Britain could now direct its attention to the War effort rather than to Palestine or its people. The occurrence of Nakbas assumed new significance with events of WW II. The Holocaust was a major Nakba for the Jews, but it was also a determining one for the Palestinians. The Jews lost millions of people, as well as wealth and property, in addition to the vast dislocation and bereavement of the survivors. But the Holocaust gained sympathy for the Jews and prompted the opening of gates for Jewish immigration and the flow of resources to facilitate Jewish settlement in Palestine. The resulting world order virtually sealed the fate of the Palestinians who saw the signs of disaster but did not know how to avert them. In fact, it was a Nakba for the Palestinians that they did not know much about diplomacy, nor did they comprehend the

meaning and function of compromise in world affairs. Thus, when the United Nations adopted the 1947 Partition Plan, which recognized a two state solution and assured them of national identity, independence, and state sovereignty over a part of Palestine, the Palestinians said “NO.” They still echoed their futile call for a unified, secular, democratic state in Palestine, in which they would form the majority, even though they had little organization, hardly any resources, and no powerful ally to back them up. Consequently, the 1948 Nakba could hardly be avoided, given the preparedness of the opponent and the international support Israel received when its leaders said, “YES” to the Partition Plan.

Unfortunately for the Palestinians, their potential saviors, the Arab countries, individually and in combination, were little prepared to fight a war and win it on behalf of Palestine. Furthermore, the Arab countries, knowingly or unknowingly, rendered their armed invasion of Palestine (Israel) ultimately ineffective when they left the leadership of the invading armies to King Abdullah of Jordan, who apparently had an understanding with the Israelis and the British, at the expense of the Palestinians. But the chain of Nabs was still growing. The next Nakba came in 1956 when Israel, in collaboration with Britain and France, ran over the Sinai all the way to the Suez Canal, thus demonstrating its ability to defeat the Egyptian army, which was the main hope of the Palestinians for a recovery of their lost land. And as if that were not enough, Arab rhetoric and empty threats led to the six day war, defeat of the Arab armies by Israel, and occupation of the rest of Palestine, as well as parts of Jordan, Egypt, and Syria. Even then, the Palestinians and other Arabs would not recognize reality, accept defeat graciously, and try to salvage what they could through mutual recognition with Israel and a compromise solution. But the Nakbas of Palestine were not all suffered at the hands of the British or the Israelis. The massacre of Black September of 1970 was inflicted on them by the Jordanian military and their own actions. Twelve years later, the Nakba befell them in Lebanon, evidently in response to Palestinian interference in the internal affairs and their attempt to establish a “state within a state” in Lebanon, the host country. Israel took advantage of that intra-Arab conflict, and in the name of security routed the Palestinian forces out of Lebanon, forcing them to leave behind their arms, equipment, infrastructure, and the field of action against the enemy. But the most serious and persistent Nakba suffered by the Palestinians was the one they brought on themselves by selling land to the Jews to be used for new settlements. The peasants did not sell land; it was big landowners, sometimes absentee landowners, who often played the role of leaders while selling land for Jewish settlement. Furthermore, the Palestinians, in most cases, provided the labor force that built the settlements, farms, and industries that sustained the Jewish movement for the establishment of a national home and eventually a Jewish state in Palestine. In retrospect, even the Antiradar, or uprising, in the West Bank and Gaza, though often hailed as a triumph, was in fact a Nakba. The Palestinians may have drawn attention to their desperate situation by throwing stones at the Israelis, but the price was too high and avoidable. The cost was in the loss of life, property, income, and the sacrifice of cohorts of children and youth who were maimed, crippled, or left with little education or training to face life and the future effectively.

The Palestinians are wise to look at the past, recall the Nakbas, and learn from them. But it is even more important to recall and celebrate the achievements they realized, regardless how little they may be. The last half-century has witnessed several

positive events and happenings that deserve to be recognized and commemorated. Four such achievements, since 1948, are bound to make a difference in the life of the Palestinians: a new form of leadership, the beginning of self-reliance, some understanding of the meaning of negotiation and compromise, and attempts to apply rationality and planning in decision making. The Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestine National Authority represent major departures from the former tribal outdated form of leadership. The new leadership has the promise of being more understanding of modern diplomacy, and more capable of representing, rather than controlling the constituents.

The new leaders have recognized, together with the Palestinian people, that they can depend only on themselves in facing national and international problems. And while practicing a degree of self-reliance, they have done so without alienating potential allies and supporters in the region and outside it. They also have managed to work with national and international agencies, which have not always been sympathetic to the cause of Palestine. To be able to do, the new leaders have finally understood that minimizing the loss is as important as maximizing the benefit. The Palestinian leaders have learned to compromise, see the cup as half full, rather than always as half empty, and thus have managed to make a breakthrough in dealing with Israel. The road is still bumpy and long, but there is no turning back to the pre-Oslo situation. Finally, the new leadership has made a start on the road of rational analysis and planning, whether in politics, economics, or social relations. While it may be difficult to abandon rhetoric, traditional ways of governing, and the outdated confessional and clannish (tribal) influences, the new leaders have made a major headway in that direction. Their newfound rationality should prove invaluable especially if they are to take advantage of the new technologies of communications, production, and the global market in building the Palestinian state and society.

## **THE SEARCH FOR AMERICAN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST<sup>17</sup>**

**August 1998**

**M. E. Morris\***

The Middle East peace process has fallen on exceedingly hard times. The Oslo Accords of 1993, which gave it a new life, despite severe misgivings and serious shortcomings, hijacked the peace process, which began in Madrid in 1991. Oslo, in turn, was hijacked by the Clinton Administration and turned into a photo op on the South Lawn of the White House.

In the five years since the famous handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Astir Arafat, it has become increasingly--and distressingly--apparent that a photo op may be the extent of America's contribution to the beleaguered peace process. In the absence of a cohesive American Middle East policy--or, indeed, of any coherent strategic framework for the region--the US has retreated from its role as honest broker in the Herculean task of converting blood enemies into neighbors, if not allies. Just as in the bad old days, marginal groups on both sides dominate the news and direct the agenda. Inflammatory rhetoric from both camps incites some, titillates others, and offends almost everyone.

Despite oft-reiterated US statements regarding its interest in, concern about, and commitment to peace in the Middle East, the US government--more accurately the Clinton Administration--has been shamefully remiss. The United States has consistently supported actions that contradict its own principles, not to mention in opposition to the Oslo and Hebron Accords. This failure of will on the part of the United States has already proven detrimental to US interests. Examples include refusal to cooperate with US offensive maneuvers against Saddam Hussein in February 1998 was a major clue, as was the virtual boycott of the Doha economic summit.

This is not to gloss over the remarkably detrimental actions of Israelis and Palestinians, specifically the ideological government of Mr. Netanyahu and the venal and corrupt disorganization of Mr. Arafat. There was really no question (assurance? editor) that Mr. Netanyahu would pursue real peace with Palestinians--his personal history, his ideology, and most of all his political maneuverings were all tip-offs. Netanyahu has made it clear in word and deed that he perceives the relationship between Israelis and Arabs to be one of perpetual conflict. Coexistence and mutual respect are not in Mr. Netanyahu's political lexicon. Nor does he perceive a negotiated settlement with

---

<sup>17</sup>

Palestinians to be a strategic or tactical necessity. According to polling data, a majority of Israelis continue to support the search for peace. Netanyahu's ability to manipulate the political process through playing of small parties against each other, however, has severely divided this group and blunted its impact.

Yitzhak Rabin's vision of Israel's future was that of a regional leader among nations. By reaching an equitable accord with other Middle Eastern states and becoming a real part of the Middle East, Israel could yet realize the original Zionist dream of becoming a "light unto the world." Netanyahu, however, apparently prefers to recreate Israel in the image of East European shtetls, perennially surrounded and persecuted by enemies.

On the Palestinian side, clearly, it is not easy to change from being guerrillas/freedom fighters (depending on one's perspective) to being statesmen overnight, and Mr. Arafat is living proof of this. But the fact remains that the overwhelming odds--today at least--favor Israel. From that dominant position, Netanyahu has demanded that Arafat exert political and military influence that he does not have over West Bank areas he does not control--thanks to previous Israeli "redeployments" that have given Palestinians only limited civil control over non-contiguous population centers.

In the meantime the United States shuttles messages back and forth via the hapless Mr. Ross and the blustering Ms. Albright, who has now given Israel several ineffective ultimata. Netanyahu's behavior has not been a surprise; he has been quite straightforward about his disdain for the Oslo process, after all and it is fairly obvious that he will make a deal only when he has no other choice. Yet the Clinton Administration seems to be constantly amazed at Netanyahu's delaying tactics, his emotional blackmail, and outright rudeness. The only remaining superpower has become almost totally paralyzed in dealing effectively with Israeli actions that are frequently in violation of the Oslo Accords and contradict the spirit of cooperation [and hope] in which those Accords were conceived.

It is only through a deliberate concentration on a shared vision of peace, an acknowledgment of each other's existence as a nationality, and a focused effort on both sides to respect each other can Oslo work. Oslo was not a blueprint for action--it was not meant to be. It was simply--and profoundly--a Declaration of Principles. It now appears, however, that both sides did not agree on those principles, but that, instead, it was an agreement made by Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat, and not by the Israelis and the Palestinians, as the world believed. It is ironic that, after so many Israeli statements about the instability and unreliability of Arab governments in negotiating agreements, it is an Israeli government that does not abide by the promises of a previous administration.

Nonetheless, the most distressing aspect of the deterioration of the peace process to this American writer--who has no ethnic or religious connections to either of the principal parties--is not the behavior of either Israelis or Palestinians but rather the behavior of the United States. The failure of the US to sustain the Middle East peace process goes to the heart of current American foreign policy difficulties. The spectacle of Mr. Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, conducting a partisan foreign policy attack from Israel on the Clinton Administration in May of this year was striking, first, in that it occurred, but also in that the President of the United States let him get away with it. Mr. Gingrich's outrageous behavior clearly demonstrated

that the Administration has abdicated its leadership of foreign policy. The basic problem is that there is no real FOREIGN policy nor is there a long-term strategic vision, supported by short-to mid-term tactical objectives. There is no carefully thought-out picture of a future that would best serve US foreign policy goals in the Middle East or elsewhere.

Perhaps the complexities of global interdependence have confounded attempts to construct a comprehensive strategy. Perhaps, as a recent Rockefeller Brothers' Foundation report surmises, today's policy makers are less concerned--and less informed--about policy issues than at any time in the last twenty years. Perhaps the domestic political costs of developing a cohesive foreign policy may conflict with strong internal interest groups that may play a role in the next elections. Whatever the reason, the United States has, in the years since the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the easily demonized (and easily-recognized) "evil empire," steadily retreated from the foreign policy arena and from a commitment to social and political stewardship across the globe for millions who suffer from oppression, injustice, and gross violations of human rights. The continuing failure to define a strategic role that both recognizes America's vital interests and uses the enormous influence of the United States to further the bedrock values inherent in a democracy indicates a system gone awry. While the derailing of the Middle East peace process is one of the most obvious examples, others, unfortunately, abound, from Bosnia to Rwanda to India/Pakistan to Kosovo. None of these cases demanded a solution from the United States; all of them demanded American leadership.

Abba Bean, former Foreign Minister of Israel, has said that the failure of the current Israeli-Palestinian peace process would lead to an inferno of explosive antagonisms and volcanic hatreds that generations would have to pass before anyone would attempt such a process again. It is imperative to arrest this explosion, to wrest back control of the process from radicals, to adhere to the principles of cooperation, equity, and belief in a common future that provided the framework for the work that was barely begun when Rabin was assassinated. Neither Israel nor the United States should allow the terrorists' agenda to prevail. For Israel it is time to bend; for the United States, it is time to develop a backbone. As Richard Holbrook, the new US Ambassador to the United Nations, stated in his recent book, *To End A War*, "the world's richest nation, one that presumes to great moral authority, cannot simply make worthy appeals to conscience and call on others to carry the burden." In the long run, a commitment to human rights and to justice for all people will only reinforce US strategic interests and provide a much needed direction and depth to US foreign policy. At the present time, what passes for policy looks far more like crisis management than strategic thinking.

As this article is written, there are indications that the United States is beginning to lose patience with the ongoing impasse, and may be willing to pressure both sides to make the necessary moves to return the process to a rational, rather than an emotional, basis. American pressure to negotiate an equitable settlement between Palestinians and Israelis could take several forms, such as linking US aid to Israel to explicit strictures on expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories and tampering with the current boundaries of Jerusalem--both of which actions are in blatant contravention of the Oslo Accords. Another significant action the United States could take would be to acknowledge and publicize the multiple human rights abuses suffered by the Palestinian

people: from the demolition of housing to the refusal to grant permits and licenses, from the utterly inadequate state of infrastructure (such as roads and sewer systems) in West Bank areas under Israeli control since 1967.

The United States has the moral authority to demand that Palestinians be treated with respect, that agreements made by both sides are carried out conscientiously, and that when agreements are abrogated the responsible party is held to account by the international community. Additionally, Washington should focus on the urgent need to stop the complete disintegration of the peace process by concentrating high level diplomatic and political resources on resuming meaningful negotiations and enforcing agreements.

The one element in the Palestinian-Israeli relationship that has not changed since 1991--that was true long before that, as a matter of fact--is that the only rational course of action for the principal parties is to pursue peace. Israel is too strong militarily and the Palestinians too strong demographically for either side to win anything but a Pyrrhic victory against each other. It is a war that, ultimately, cannot be decisively won, politically, economically, or morally, without devastating costs to both sides. This was what Yitzhak Rabin and Astir Arafat understood on that September day in 1993, what many Americans understand as well, but what Mr. Netanyahu has chosen, so far, to ignore--unfortunately, with the complicity of the Clinton Administration.

The continuation of this conflict into another generation will be a great tragedy, and a useless one as well. It is within the power of those of us who are involved with the Middle East--through blood ties, political alliances, economic connections, or simple affection--to demand that our leaders work towards an end to the machinations and maneuvers that prevent progress and deny a viable future to the people of two nations, who have been too long divided by bitterness, intransigence, and ideological imperatives.

Mary E. Morris is a Partner in Morris and Morris, Middle East Consultants, Vice President, Programs, for the Los Angeles World Affairs Council. She is also an instructor in conflict resolution in the California State University System. Previously, she was Associate Director of the Greater Middle East Studies Center at RAND in Santa Monica, California. Mary may be contacted at: E-Mail: [Mary@morrisx2.com](mailto:Mary@morrisx2.com); her web site is: <http://www.morrisx2.com>

**SUDAN: WHEREFROM AND WHERE TO?  
THE ARAB COUNTRIES MIGHT ASK  
September 1998**

Sudan has land, water, and people, all in relative abundance. With good management, these factors of production would be major development resources. Yet, the country is still underdeveloped. Its economy is in shambles; its society is torn apart by a seemingly unending civil war; and its polity casts doubt on Sudan as a sovereign united country. A large segment of the population faces starvation and death. If not in war, people die of malnutrition and lack of food. Many have depleted energy so that when food is made available they do not have the strength to eat it. The leaders of Sudan are responsible for that state of affairs. Those in the North (the Government in power) speak of democracy, but only as they define it. They pay lip service to the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and thus help to perpetuate the North-South conflict. The leaders of the minorities in the South seek protection of their rights, but in the process they resort to force and also help to perpetuate the conflict. They pay the price in the form of starvation and genocide of their people. The stalemate continues: the Arab League watches, but apparently it considers the conflict internal and thus seems indifferent, even though the League can mediate and facilitate peacemaking without interfering in internal affairs. The rest of the world watches and expresses sympathy, sometimes by donating food and medicine to sustain life and reduce the suffering, but hardly does much else to ease the conflict, with the exception of Kenya. The United Nation watches, but presumably like the Arab League, considers the conflict internal, even though innocent people suffer in large numbers in the meantime.

How did Sudan reach that apparently hopeless situation? Explanations range from traditional values, tribal social structures, ethnic and religious divisions, economic and social underdevelopment, and the legacy of imperialism. While these factors may have some influence, they do not suffice individually or in combination to convincingly explain Sudan's predicament. Though all these factors have prevailed since independence, Sudan has experienced a few bright and hopeful moments, with promises of peace, tranquility, and development. The first few years of Numeiry's presidency were one example. Another was the time of Al Sadiq al Mahdi. The problem, therefore, must reside in additional factors. A major factor is the struggle for power along lines that are

inherently divisive and antagonistic. The leaders fight on confessional or doctrinal grounds they deem not subject to negotiation. Those who have the power insist on imposing their doctrinal beliefs (Islamic Law--the Shari'a) on the minorities whose beliefs are different (Christianity, Animism, or other) from their own. The ideological or doctrinal conflict is fueled by the readily available supply of arms, and by the evident indifference of the outside world. One other factor has contributed heavily to perpetuation of the conflict, namely the relatively low level, traditional, non-secular education, which has prevailed for decades. This form of education has served to justify and perpetuate the conflict by breeding conformity and follow-the-leader mentality. Sudan as a nation and the people, individually and collectively, pay the price, while the leaders reap the benefits while they last. Elected governments have lasted less than one decade in total. Military coups and popular uprisings have been a constant alternative. The military government of Numeiry, 1972-1985, initiated a peace accord with the South, but the accord did not survive as Numeiry drifted toward Islamic rule. His attempt to grant regional autonomy was halfhearted and therefore did not survive. The elected government of Al Sadiq al-Mahdi, 1986-1989, did not have a long enough life to solidify power and enforce its plan to suspend Islamic law pending a Constitutional Conference that would deal with conflict. The current government of Omar Hasan Al-Bashir has aborted all attempts to restore secularism, and has gone all the way in imposing the Shari'a on the non-Muslim minorities. The Leaders of the South, in response, have risen up in arms against the government and have extended their domination over most of the South. But they have not been able to topple the government and create a unified secular state, nor have they been able to attain a viable autonomy, or convince the government to meet them halfway to reach an accord [This year, 2011 Southern Sudan will be the newest nation in the UN].

Even so, while suffering continues and attempts to reach a solution seem hopeless, a solution is still possible. Both the North and the South know that a country divided cannot create a viable national entity or a viable economy and society. Both the North and the South declare their commitment to national unity, which is a positive sign. And both, under auspices of Kenya, have agreed to a truce to let food deliveries reach the suffering areas. Both also have agreed to meet and "negotiate." Still another positive sign comes from the government's theologian and most powerful member of government, Dr. Hasan Turabi, who professes that Islam allows autonomy to minorities. According to Turabi, "the South will be offered maximum decentralization;" family law will be a part of religion for each community; civil law is universal and contractual, while criminal law could be "regionalized." If implemented, this equation would be a major step toward peaceful reunification of Sudan and reconstruction of its economy and society.

While the demands of the opposition and the prerequisites for a viable economy and society in the age of globalism go beyond the provisions of the Turabi formula, implementation of the formula will at least open the door for serious negotiations. The demands of the South for power and resource sharing are legitimate subjects for discussion. Efficient allocation and use of the resources benefit the country as a whole and not the South alone. Economic and legal experts should be able to formulate ways to share power and resources to the benefit of the country at large. The main problem is to get the leaders to commit themselves to a genuine search for a peaceful and permanent

solution. While various approaches may be available, one such approach is the following:

1. The leaders of the North and the South would make a major contribution by extending the truce indefinitely to allow food deliveries and facilitate socio-economic activities.

2. The government of Al-Bashir would greatly facilitate negotiations by implementing the Turabi formula, pending a permanent resolution of the conflict.

3. Leaders of the North and the South would show their commitment to peace by initiating marathon negotiations, with Kenya and the Arab League playing the role of hosts, and of facilitators if requested. These negotiations would consider all relevant issues, beginning with the practical and less complicated to permit quick results and help to build confidence between the parties.

4. The Arab League would help the peace process in Sudan by promoting a program to bring resources from individual Arab countries to help Sudan reconstruct its economy, with special attention to food production and distribution.

5. The Leaders of the North and the South would jointly create a national committee to plan a strategic program of rehabilitation and development of the economy, even as the negotiations are underway. Such a program would no doubt gain support from the United Nations, FAO, and various developed countries, all of which should be encouraged to help as much as they can.

6. Finally, since Islam is supposed to allow freedom of thought and expression, it would be a healthy step to initiate, under the auspices of a national task force, a forum to discuss the basic ideas and principles that hold a country together, such as secularism vs. confessional systems of government, and their relevance to freedom, development, stability, education, and social progress. The forum would be educational rather than policy making; it would also serve to defuse conflict by promoting knowledge, understanding, and rational decision-making.

These steps are non-partisan. Hopefully Kenya and the Arab League would accept the proposed roles, while Sudan, both North and South, declare a commitment to negotiate indefinitely until a resolution is realized.

**The Israelis Do Not Execute Palestinians.  
The Palestinians Execute Their Own!  
October 1998**

Two Palestinian families, the Abu Sultan and the Abu Khalidi, had a feud. The Abu Sultans killed two members of the Abu Khalidi family. The next day two Abu Sultans were sentenced to death by a Palestine National Authority (PNA) military court (presumably the PNA has no military!). Ten hooded policemen publicly executed two Abu Sultans (brothers) the next day. Several ministers and lawmakers witnessed the spectacle. Yasser Arafat who, until then, had ordered that death sentences be commuted to life imprisonment, approved the execution. It is ironic that all four dead people were policeman. It is even more odd and almost unbelievable that the Abu Sultan family would publicly request and praise Arafat's approval of the execution of their sons. Reports of the case say nothing about due process, appeals, mitigating circumstances, considerations of clemency, or how this murder case differs from other murder cases, except that all the dead were policemen.

Though the details of the feud and following circumstances are not fully known to me, the known facts suggest many unanswered questions:

1. Why do the Palestinian people, who have been and are being battered from all directions, apply such a cruel punishment to their own, even when the Israelis, presumably their worst enemy, would not apply it to them?

2. How is it that the PNA which considers itself democratic and secular and which depends largely on British law would apply the death penalty, and in such a sundry way, when Britain itself has abolished it?

3. What makes Yasser Arafat think that this cruel punishment would put an end to abuse of authority by the forty thousand members of the police force, when the death penalty has failed to prevent crime anywhere else in the world? The argument that such punishment would "strengthen the state and increase its control over the people" has little scientific or rational foundation; it only creates fear and lack of trust in the authorities.

4. How is it that abuse of authority by two lowly policemen is dealt with so severely, while reported corruption and abuse of authority by high ranking officials goes unpunished and unnoticed?

5. The most serious question, however, is why did Yasser Arafat ignore both the secular and rational laws of the modern world, and the age old Arab custom of dealing with feuds. The modern secular rational laws of the developed world allow for due process, right of appeal, and consideration of mitigating circumstances, all of which would require more than three days to explore and contemplate action. Furthermore, with the exception of the United States, which is backward in this regard, all developed countries have abolished the death penalty.

Arab customs, in contrast, call for immediate intervention by a third party, to prevent more bloodshed, and then proceed to negotiate peace making and an end to the feud by peaceful means. The PNA and Yasser Arafat seem to have ignored both approaches for no obvious or convincing reason. In the meantime, instead of two, four are dead. Instead of one bereaved family, there are two. And in addition to killing by two emotionally aroused and irrational individuals, there is an orchestrated killing in cold blood by the PNA, as if Palestinian blood has little value.

I grew up in a Palestinian village and I remember family feuds that ended in someone killing another from a different family, town, or village. The first step taken, as I remember, was for the village elders to try to physically separate the feuding parties to prevent arbitrary emotional killing by the victim party. However, immediately a known neutral committee or delegation would initiate negotiations for a Sulha, or peace making ceremony. Depending on the circumstances, the negotiations may include a ransom, a prison term, or exile of the person or persons charged or connected with the offense. Such exile would be to separate the antagonists, protect the innocent, and reduce the chances of provoking anew the victim's family.

The Sulha almost always prevented further killing at least for years to come and was usually approved by the law courts. It compensated the victim's family materially, if only partially, for their losses. It saved life. It also reflected and reinforced human (Arab) capacity for forgiveness, humaneness, and compassion, especially in crimes of passion and honor in which people often behaved almost insanely, as the facts of the above case indicate.

The PNA is a budding national authority. It is still in the process of establishing the philosophy and institutions of governance. Therefore, it has the opportunity and the privilege to learn from its own and experiences of others. It also has the opportunity to learn from the history of the death penalty, which offers little to recommend it. And most of all, the PNA has the opportunity and privilege to set the example by exploring and implementing ways that help to save life and rehabilitate the Palestinian family and society. It also has the opportunity to create unity in place of separatism, and compassion in place of hostility and harshness, which most Palestinians have suffered for decades. It is a pity that the PNA paid little attention to these considerations. It is also a pity that Yasser Arafat broke his own rule and allowed implementation of the death penalty. He thus has set a precedent for little more than rhetorical justice and a pretentious attack on corruption and abuse of authority. Even so, it is never too late and the PNA and Yasser Arafat may find a valuable lesson in their own uninspired experience.

**THE ARAB LEAGUE CAN DO A LOT MORE**  
**November 1998**

The Arab League has been in existence since 1945 and its membership has expanded to include Somalia, Mauritania, and Djibouti. Its longevity and expanding membership should attest to its permanence and usefulness. The League has been functional in promoting a certain degree of economic and financial cooperation among its members. It has also extended its domain by establishing offices in twenty non-Arab countries, as well as at the major international organizations. However, these formalistic achievements tell little about the League's effectiveness in carrying out its mission on behalf of its members. Indeed one may have to look very hard to be able to observe a measure of success by the Arab League in promoting unity, stability, harmony, or development in the Arab world. Yet, the need for the League's services is greater today than ever before, both within and outside the Arab world and the Middle East region. The League's services are especially needed in intra- and inter-Arab affairs, as well as in the international arena.

The Arab League might consider it risky and unwarranted to interfere in the internal affairs of its members, such as in the conflicts in Algeria, Morocco, or Sudan. Yet, people in these countries have been suffering severely in human and material losses because of internal political, ethnic, religious, and social biases and divisions. The League might be correct not to interfere, but good will offices to solve problems are not forms of interference. The League should be in a good position to mediate, coordinate, and promote communications and understanding between the conflicting parties. The League is by all standards better qualified than any outsider to mediate and help the conflicting parties see the way to peaceful coexistence within their unified countries. If the League has been active in helping to resolve these conflicts, it is little known to the Arab and international public.

Inter-Arab affairs are another area in which the League has much to offer. Probably the most complex situations are those relating to Iraq and Libya, and to economic and social cooperation and development. Inter-Arab relations on the state level are in a sad enough condition to cause Mu'ammarr Kadhafi to give up hope on Arab unity and seek instead membership in an African unity organization. Relations between Iraq and the Gulf countries are still sour enough for a few of those countries to have supported the threat of arms against Iraq by the United States. Syria is unhappy with other Arab countries because of their peace agreements with Israel. Foreign ministers of member countries meet but little happens. Mini summits by Arab leaders end up with hardly anything of substance. Economic cooperation and an Arab market have been aimed at since establishment of the League, but hardly any observable achievements exist, even though the need for them is great in this age of globalization and regional bloc formation. Furthermore, most Arab countries suffer from underdevelopment, both economically and socially. The levels of technology, productivity, education, mobility, and living standards are depressed. Economic cooperation is indispensable both for Arab unity and good business. Inter-Arab investment can be a major vehicle of development as well as a good business opportunity for the investor.

The Arab League cannot be blamed for these limited results, but the League can be more helpful. In fact the League should be capable of promoting more economic cooperation than has been the case. The League can play the role of mediator, facilitator, educator, and reminder of the benefits of cooperation and the costs of separatism and non-cooperation. The fact that these ideals and objectives are in the League's Charter or in the minutes of summit meetings is not adequate. There is a great need for a constant reminder, promoter, and facilitator, and the League is the only Arab organization capable of playing that role. Whether it has the resources to do so is problematic, but securing those resources is part of its functions, and that is where shrewd leadership proves itself.

On the international level, Iraq needs help in at least three ways: to be convinced to comply with the demands of the international community to the extent possible as a sovereign state; to persuade the international community to modify its demands to render them fair and feasible to comply with; and to recover from the economic and social ruin it has suffered in the two wars, with Iran and with Kuwait and their aftermath. The Arab League can do far more in all three situations than has been apparent from available information. The Arab League can be especially helpful in dealing with the international community, first as a representative of a fairly large bloc of countries and people, and as being immune to economic and political sanctions to which relatively weak states are vulnerable. President Saddam Hussein may be too arrogant and misguided to ask for help, but the League should be willing to take the initiative just the same.

Libya, in contrast, has apparently received help from the Arab League, which seems to have mediated between Libya and the United States and Britain. However, the League's help could be more effective by pressuring the international community to remove the sanctions against it, and end the relative isolation of Libya, now that an agreement is close at hand with regard to the trial of those accused in the Flight Pan Am 103 disaster. In fact the League can assume responsibility on behalf of Libya to make sure that fairness and justice are rendered. Here too, the international community, the US and Britain in particular, would hardly behave toward the League in the same shabby and disdainful way they have behaved toward Libya.

The League can be helpful to its members in international affairs in several other situations. For instance, it can help clear the name of Syria, which has been accused of aiding terrorism without a single case against it being substantiated. The League can also take a more active part in smoothing relations between Syria and Turkey, which have reached a threatening degree of verbal antagonism.

The Arab League may be performing in most of these areas at various degrees of success, but little of such performance is known on the international level. Whether it is in the New York Times, the International Herald Tribune, or on the US National Public Radio, one hardly hears of the Arab League or its accomplishments. Even the area specific focused papers, such as the Los Angeles-based Beirut Times, rarely publish information about the League. The only exception is when the League issues statements in reaction to a crisis between an Arab country and an outsider. By then, however, such statements come too late and when the world is too involved with the prevalent crisis to care. For example, the League calls for uniform enforcement of all United Nations resolutions only when such enforcement is called for with regard to a specific resolution against an Arab country. Why does not the League sustain its efforts for the enforcement of all resolutions before a crisis occurs, and long after the specific crisis is resolved, in order to assure fair treatment of its members? The Arab League would benefit much by becoming more visible on the international scene. Its international visibility would enhance its various roles and make it more effective in helping its members, and in fulfilling the ideals it has been entrusted with to realize.

**PALESTINE AND ISRAEL: THE PERMANENT SOLUTION--AT LAST**  
**December 1998**

From Oslo I to Oslo II, from the Cairo Accords to the Wye Plantation Agreement, with Washington acting as the center of power and guidance, the Palestinians and Israelis have finally approached the most critical phase of their diplomatic and political encounters. Both are tired of war and are in search of peace--a permanent and stable peace. The fact that they have made it so far is itself an indication of their realism, recognition of the inevitable, and of good will. The critical negotiations for a final solution have begun, with two shrewd, seasoned, doctrinaire, but also realist leaders, Mahmoud Abbas and Ariel Sharon, at the helms of their respective teams. The issues they must resolve include the boundaries between Israel and Palestine, the political status of the emerging Palestine, the fate of the Palestinian refugees and of the Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories, the sharing of Jerusalem, the disputed natural resources such as water and minerals, and the trade relations between them and with other Arab countries. Each of these issues is capable of delaying a final agreement, but not if the two parties want peace, and it appears they do. Even so, the obstacles they face are formidable and demanding, as follows:

On the Israeli side, a major obstacle is how to reconcile power with compromise. Israel, as the vastly stronger of the two parties, may find it difficult to surrender the rest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) as per Resolutions 242 and 338, and abandon the concept of the Greater Israel. It will take a lot of effort and skill to convince themselves that a compromise assures the most realizable and viable solution.

Another obstacle facing Israel is to overcome the obsession with security and the self-created belief that a Palestinian State would be such a threat that they cannot coexist with it. The ability to view the Palestinian people as good neighbors, regardless of the political status of their homeland, will be a great and indispensable achievement.

Whether the Palestinians live in a state or under autonomy, or in a confederation, it is they as people who will decide whether to be peaceful and good neighbors or not. However, being in a state of their own, as per UN Resolution 181, may be sufficient incentive for them to avoid conflict and live in peace next to their mighty neighbor Israel.

A third obstacle to overcome by Israel is the potential loss of material gain by losing grants and subsidies to settlers, commuters, and entrepreneurs, who see in the WBGS a treasure mine, whether in housing, cost of living, cheap labor, or an assured market. These gains to individuals and groups are often masked by religious, political, or ideological justifications to hold on to the occupied land. A government's intent on peace can overcome that obstacle simply by removing all subsidies and privileges connected with occupation.

Finally, a big obstacle, facing both people, will be how to remove the negative impact of time. The conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine has lasted over one hundred years, and between Israelis and Palestinians for half a century. Misinformation, biases, stereotypes, and suffering by both people have created distrust, animosity, and fear of each other. These negative forces will take time to obliterate and replace with positive attitudes and expectations. Patience, gradual reeducation, and good examples set by the leaders will go a long way to achieve such values and promote a just and lasting peace between the two people.

The obstacles facing the Palestinians are probably more knotty and formidable. The Palestinians have to come to terms not only with Israel but also with themselves, with their leadership, and with the novelty of being an independent people. In facing Israel, the Palestinians must accept the fact that they are, militarily and economically, the weaker party, that political justice is relative, and that international vested interests may not be in their favor. Therefore, the Palestinians will have to work hard to free themselves of the conviction that they are the victim, the exploited, the mistreated, and the underdog. Accepting reality and even a painful compromise may be the most assured way to a permanent and viable peace.

Another obstacle the Palestinians will have to overcome is the fact that any territory and resources not recovered from Israeli occupation in a permanent peace settlement will no longer be theirs in theory or practice. Whether they will recover all of the WBGS or most of it, they will have to be convinced that the settlement they reach is in their best interest. The same applies to any agreement on Jerusalem and on natural resources.

Still another obstacle facing the Palestinians is the deep fear and distrust of Israel, the Jews, and the various allies they have abroad, regardless of the government in office. The behavior of Israeli governments and the blind support Israel commands from the great and superpowers, and from world Jewry, have generated and perpetuated among the Palestinians negative feelings, biases, and stereotypes against Israel, the Jews, and their supporters. To replace these with more positive and harmonious feelings will take time, self re-education, and cooperation from the other side.

However, the most formidable obstacle the Palestinians will have to overcome is internal. As in Israel, there are Palestinian factions who oppose compromise solutions with Israel. Israel is in a more favorable position, in this regard, because of its democratic government and institutions which make it possible to settle disagreements by democratic means. The Palestinians have not had the time or the institutions to create such a system.

Therefore, they have to be creative in dealing with opponents of peace without alienating them. It may be possible to deal with factions such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad by co-optation on one hand, and control of violence on the other. It is more difficult, however, to deal with critics who attack the PNA for its compromises in seeking peace with Israel, while hiding behind concepts of democracy, human rights, clean government, and loyalty to the Palestinian homeland. These critics charge the PNA with dictatorship, corruption, repression, betrayal of Palestinian goals and objectives, and a sell-out to Israel and the United States. Unfortunately these critics are outspoken in voicing their criticisms, but they are barren on constructive suggestions on how to deal with Israel, how to achieve peace, and how to rehabilitate the Palestinian society. They offer no viable alternatives to avoid more losses of land to Jewish settlers, more losses of life and material, and more suffering and alienation by the Palestinian refugees. Even so, the PNA may be able to overcome this obstacle by inviting creative alternatives, co-opting as many of the critics as possible, improving on its own behavior with regard to corruption and civil rights, and, most of all, by achieving the best feasible and permanent settlement with Israel.

In the final analysis, the Palestinians and Israelis have the responsibility to promote mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation between them as a cornerstone for a successful and lasting peace. First, both should attempt to cut the political rhetoric and offensive statements they make against each other. Second, both should search for and publicize any positive features they observe in each other. The media should play a major role in this undertaking. Third, and most important, both should review the curricula of their schools and educational institutions and remove all disinformation, misinformation, and biased and stereotype characterizations of each other in order to allow new generations to grow up free of fear, animosity, and distrust of each other. By doing so, both parties will help to allow peace between themselves to evolve as a natural phenomenon, in addition to being a political and legal contract.

## **The Drama and Tragedy of US Politics January 1999**

Two tragic situations unfold in United States politics at the same time: the Republican Party vs. President Clinton, and President Clinton vs. Saddam Hussein. The former, in each case, is a committed antagonist of the latter, almost to the extent of being personal enemies. In each case the antagonist has recruited an agent who takes the job to destroy the target as a mission, Kenneth Starr for the Republicans and Richard Butler for President Clinton. These agents are appointed according to legal procedures, given unlimited powers and, evidently, unlimited budgets. Both mobilize unlimited numbers of “experts” who would do what they are asked to do, apparently without question.

Kenneth Starr goes after the “truth” in uncanny ways: tapes witnesses secretly, bribes others by offering immunity, leaks information, writes his report and dresses it selectively, and charges the President and “indicts” him, thus acting as judge and jury prior to reporting to Congress.

Richard Butler, with his horde of inspectors, goes to Iraq on behalf of the Security Council but apparently acts at the pleasure of President Clinton. He inspects suspicious and non-suspicious locations, makes unreasonable demands on the Iraqi authorities, as if to force them to deny his requests, and then reports non-compliance. In the last stance, this last November, he and 200 inspectors made surprise visits to party offices and evidently benign places to “discover and to test” Iraq’s readiness to comply. Then he reports in vague terms that there was no compliance. Furthermore, he delivers his report to the White House two days before it reaches the Security Council, thus giving President Clinton an advance notice and the justification he needs to bomb Iraq.

Both Kenneth Starr and Richard Butler were armed with vague instructions and unlimited powers, which they used to investigate, evaluate, and conclude that their subjects are in violation. The tragic side of these dynamics is that there are no winners but many losers.

The Republican majority in Congress catches Clinton, through his own actions and the fanatic dedication of Kenneth Starr, and proceeds to impeach him in the name of the Constitution. However, the Republicans act virtually on partisan grounds, as do the Democrats, without regard to circumstances, including the facts that the country is in “combat” with Iraq, and the potential damage to the economy and the country. They do so without popular support, still in the name of democracy and the Constitution. Thus they risk chaos, weaken the President at a time when he is involved in foreign conflict, and cause a waste of resources in the process. In the meantime they gain little, other than to satisfy their negative personal feelings toward Bill Clinton.

President Clinton feels that he is being treated unfairly by the Republican majority and Kenneth Starr. Yet he does not hesitate to personalize the conflict with Saddam Hussein and to take advantage of the fanatic services of Richard Butler to deal as “unfairly” with Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi people. He showers Iraq with bombs and missiles, destroys infrastructures, causes loss of life of innocent Iraqis, all presumably to uphold resolutions of the Security Council. But what does he gain? He destroys much of Iraq's military capability, satisfies his personal feelings toward Saddam Hussein, and hopes to detract from his own impeachment. However, most probably Saddam Hussein will survive; UNSCOM will meet its end, the dignity of the Security Council will be undermined, given that two permanent members were opposed to the use of force and the third member (France) expressed a benign attitude. The US and Britain are a minority of the Security Council and yet President Clinton claims to be acting on behalf of the Council. In the process President Clinton inflicts heavy losses on the US economy. Furthermore, contrary to President Clinton's claims, all Arab countries are opposed to the use of force against Iraq, hardly any country, besides Britain, has come out openly in support of military action.

Both the Republican majority and President Clinton claim that they had no alternatives but to do what they did, given the Constitution of the United States and the Security Council resolutions. Neither antagonist is telling the truth. Both invoke documents that are subject to interpretation, and both have experts to re-interpret the relevant articles of both documents to support their claims. The Republican majority has the power to censure, rebuke, condemn, and even forgive the President, given that his actions were neither treasonable nor threatening to the security and stability of the country. Similarly, President Clinton could have gone back to the Security Council before sending an armada against feeble Iraq. He could have requested a more careful reading of Butler's report, and he could have explored other means of pressuring Iraq, including tightening the sanctions, building the formation of an international coalition, and taking more time before attacking Iraq and inflicting death on innocent Iraqis. He could also have allowed the removal of economic sanctions while maintaining the monitoring of arms buildup. That both the Republican majority and President Clinton have failed to seek genuine alternatives to their actions can only bring harm to their own causes and to the targets of their vindictive actions. Even so, those alternatives still exist and remedial action is still possible.

**TO DECLARE OR NOT TO DECLARE A PALESTINIAN STATE,  
UNILATERALLY?  
February 1999**

Yasser Arafat has expressed a determination to declare a state of Palestine on May 4, 1999, even if no final agreement with Israel has been reached. Bibi Netanyahu has threatened to annex the still occupied areas of the WB in response. The United States and Egypt have been pressuring Arafat to avoid such provocation. Recent polls indicate that a majority of Palestinians support Arafat's position. Yet, logic and rationality, pragmatism and practicality, as well as protocol and diplomacy would argue against such unilateral action by Arafat and the PNA. Furthermore, a simple application of cost/benefit analysis would argue against such a declaration.

The Palestinians have survived for centuries without a state of their own. Now there is hope, with fairly wide international support, that some form of Palestinian statehood will become a reality. But the time is not ripe for that, not only because a unilateral declaration may be costly, but also because the prerequisite conditions do not exist: the infrastructure is limited; the basic institutions are underdeveloped; instability of no-war-no-peace still prevails; and the apparent international support for statehood has yet to be explicit, precise, official, and tangible. Without these prerequisites, a declaration of statehood will be little more than that: a declaration, and empty rhetoric.

The timing for the declaration of statehood is significant. The people need to be prepared, with full knowledge of their rights and obligations, toward each other, toward their government, and toward the international community. The state should have enough resources to back its declaration, to act like a state, and to behave like an independent sovereign entity. Among such responsibilities is the commitment to abide by international agreements. A unilateral declaration of statehood at this time would be a violation of the Oslo and the Wye agreements. The Oslo agreement established May 1999 as a target date to reach a final peace agreement with Israel, but it did not stipulate

that the final agreement would result in statehood, though it did not exclude such a possibility. The fact that Israel may be obstructing the peace process and delaying the consummation of a final agreement, does not justify unilateral action by the PNA. Furthermore, declaring a state at this time can only detract from the more urgent actions needed to rehabilitate the Palestinian society, build the infrastructure, develop the economy, and establish a fair degree of economic independence.

On the diplomatic side, a unilateral premature declaration of statehood by the PNA might backfire and lead other nations to the belief that the PNA is not ready for statehood. Such a declaration might create problems for the United Nations, which constitutes the single most important power to legitimize statehood. Therefore, unless supported by the United Nations, a unilaterally declared state would remain outside the international family of nations and would be deprived of the diplomatic advantages of membership in the United Nations.

A unilateral declaration of statehood is bound to create problems and entail costs to the Palestinian society that will far outweigh any potential benefits. It is true that a declaration of statehood would generate psychological and moral satisfaction among the Palestinians. It could bolster the status of Yasser Arafat and anoint him as a “hero” and a “great leader” among his people. It could even gain support of a dozen or more nations, which in most cases would have little to offer beyond verbal and rhetorical backing.

By contrast, the costs are bound to be tangible, large, and highly destructive. For instance, the Israeli government, regardless of the party in power, may proceed to exercise its threat and annex large areas of the WB, or at least postpone for a long time any intended deployment of Israeli troops from the territories. That, of course, could lead to renewed and sustained violence and loss of life and material. Even if Israel does not annex land, it could re-impose restrictions and create economic obstacles, close the borders, and reduce commuter work in Israel, and thus choke the Palestinian economy for







long periods, as it has done in the past. And, most important of all, Israel could suspend all peace negotiations indefinitely and then render the little hope of an ultimate peace agreement little more than a dream. Finally, a unilateral declaration on the eve of the Israeli election may be the greatest gift the PNA could give to Bibi Netanyahu--it may ensure his reelection.

Looking beyond Israel, a unilateral declaration, in violation of the Oslo and Wye agreements, might radically reduce financial and diplomatic aid for the PNA from other countries. Certainly the United States and the European Union may react negatively, and so would the United Nations, all of which have been instrumental in promoting peace negotiations. By the same token, the World Bank may alter its policy and suspend aid, especially if the United States sets an example. Any such reaction by Israel or the international community would render the declaration a form of self-destruction, rather than a boon for the suffering Palestinian society. Israel's cooperation is the single most important and indispensable resource the PNA needs in its struggle for economic and political independence. Yasser Arafat can wait; the Palestinians can wait; a bilateral solution is bound to come. In the meantime, the Palestinians would enhance their claim to statehood by acting to ensure that the prerequisites for sovereignty and independence are fully in place.

## **EARNINGS INEQUALITY AND POVERTY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **March 1999**

Inequality and poverty are social ills that prevail abundantly in the Middle East, but few people talk about them as major policy concerns. The year 1998 may have been a watershed in starting a discussion of these topics, first in conference in Cairo, Egypt in March, and then in Byblos in Lebanon in November. This commentary focuses on the Byblos conference, held at the Lebanese American University (LAU). About thirty experts presented papers and nearly half of them came from Europe and the United States. This was a cozy conference, one session at a time, in the same room, with board and room provided by the hosts, thus allowing the participants to interact throughout the three day duration of the meetings. The papers dealt with issues of definition, measurement, empirical findings, explanation, and recommendations. In large part the papers were empirical, and put little emphasis on theory or modeling. However, a few field studies generated new and highly valuable information. Though the Arab countries were a major focus of the conference, few contributors came from those countries and few sources of information originated there either.<sup>18</sup> For obvious political reasons, Israel was neither represented nor studied, although the participants did not hesitate in noting relevant conditions in Israel. Overall, there seemed to be a consensus on certain points: earnings inequality prevails and is increasing in virtually all countries of the Middle East, and so are unemployment and poverty. The magnitude of these social ills varies from country to country, though the lack of adequate data prevents rigorous measurement or comparison; the size of the poor, according to the relevant definition in each country, has not been decreasing as a percentage of the total population; the poor are mostly unskilled,

---

<sup>18</sup> The most relevant references on inequality and poverty in the Middle East are: Amin, Galal. *THE MODERNIZATION OF POVERTY. A Study of the Political Economy of Growth in nine Arab Countries, 1945-1970*; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974 El-Ghonemy, Riad. *AFFLUENCE AND POVERTY IN THE MIDDLE EAST*, London and New York: routledge, 1998, Tuma, E. H. *THE PERSISTENCE OF ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION. A Comparative Study*, Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1995

rural, female, and children; and the symptoms of poverty are mostly deprivation of basic needs, especially education.

Offered explanations of unemployment and poverty varied, although certain factors seemed to recur in most of the papers. Among these were: underdevelopment, low levels of technology, and low labor productivity; insufficient saving, investment, and capital accumulation; privatization and globalism, which seem to benefit the rich and punish the poor and unskilled; poor government policies that fail to generate employment and development; and lack of accountability and corruption, which aggravate the problems and distort policy. The solutions suggested, as expected, would deal with these failures and help to generate employment and income, though how to do so was not clear. While these features of the conference were to be expected, there were other unique characteristics that deserve special attention.

1. Given the novelty of its theme, the Byblos conference may be considered a benchmark in dealing with poverty and inequality in the Middle East. It is interesting to note that LAU has established a center for the study of equality for women.

2. In spite of its prominence in the theme of the conference, inequality received little emphasis or discussion in the meetings, compared with the emphasis on poverty and unemployment. That should not be surprising, given the lack of evident interest in the Middle East to cure, analyze, or study income and wealth inequality. In fact, the socio-political and economic systems in the region, as well as the traditions, cultures, and institutions of the Middle East tend to tolerate inequality as normal, and even promote it by reinforcing the prevalent patterns of income and wealth distribution.

3. Two presentations were, from my standpoint, of particular significance. The first concentrated on conditions in Cyprus where unemployment, poverty, and inequality are far less severe than in the Middle East region. The explanation offered was that Cyprus enjoys a highly efficient and corruption-free bureaucracy, a high degree of accountability, and a high level of education, all of which were thought to be lacking in the Arab countries, Iran, and Turkey. The other presentation focused on Lebanon, and was based on an empirical study of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. The study indicated large variations in the distribution patterns around the country, with differences between urban and rural, north and south, and between Beirut and the rest of the country. The study suggested major changes in the tax system in order to alleviate poverty and reduce inequality, with suggestions of specific marginal rates of taxation.

The session on Lebanon had another fascinating feature: two members of parliament attended as panel discussants. They made brief comments as a starter and then invited questions. They were bombarded with very pointed questions, harsh comments, and inquisitive arguments regarding their own contributions to alleviate the problems menacing the Lebanese economy and society. These members of parliament faced even more severe criticism than would be considered normal in United States politics. Yet, both were extremely civil, candid, patient, and willing to discuss. They pointed out the limitations they work under, and sometimes admitted their own weaknesses and failures. To me, their give-and-take with the audience was as open, free, and democratic as can be expected in any system of government. Regardless of whether that was typical of Lebanon or not, the debate experience was an occasion LAU and the Lebanese polity can be proud of. One can only hope that the LAU conference will be

followed by other conferences in the region, and that inequality and poverty will be the focus of study and analysis, especially by native scholars and policy makers.

### **DOES JORDAN NEED A KING? April 1999**

The passing away of King Hussein of Jordan has evoked various reactions around the world. Heads of state rushed to pay their respect, the media had a heyday in eulogizing the departing king, and journalists and political scientists were generous in commenting on the king's achievements and the vacuum he leaves behind. They also expressed doubts regarding the ability of the new King Abdullah to fill that vacuum. However, a few commentators went the other way and asked whether King Hussein really did achieve much for Jordan, other than what he achieved for himself, his family, and his friends. The major question, which has not been raised, is whether Jordan does need a King! The answer might be not only provocative, but also embarrassing, for various reasons. Jordan does not have a long enough history of a monarchy to claim a tradition that is worth preserving. More than half of the population are of Palestinian origin and have no tradition of a monarchy and would rather do without one. Jordan cannot afford a constitutional monarchy in the tradition of Britain, which is too costly and archaic. Furthermore, Jordan cannot afford an absolute monarchy either, as King Hussein's was, if it aims to achieve economic development and political democracy.

People of all walks of life have been uttering wondrous, inquisitive, sometimes wise, and often irrelevant judgments on changes of the power structure in Jordan. Will political stability be maintained? Will conflict within the Hashemite dynasty be forthcoming and dangerous? Will the new King be as friendly to Israel as were his father and his namesake grandfather, and will he be able to deal with the social and political ills of the country better than both his predecessor kings did? In particular, will democracy have a chance and will the economy develop under the new king any more or faster than it has in the last half century? Awareness of these questions is bound to lead to more questions, many of which have no ready answers.

King Hussein's Jordan seemed like a medieval feudal estate in which lord of the manor was the absolute authority, the single most privileged beneficiary, and the most generous and most stingy, all at once, as he dealt with his subjects. Many became

wealthy in Hussein's Jordan, but the majority of the people remained poor. Many thought they had power, but only as long as they stayed subservient and obedient. Many thought they had freedom as in a democracy, but only as these values were interpreted by the King. Prime ministers were replaced as easily as shuffling a deck of cards. The parliament was dissolved with a stroke of the King's pen. Journalists were jailed and their media closed down at the whim of the monarch.

King Abdullah the first set the stage for his grandson, the late King Hussein, by playing into the hands of the British, as Hussein did into the hands of the Americans. Both also cooperated with Israel and accommodated the Palestinians for a price. Abdullah the First accommodated the Palestinians in return for the West Bank. King Hussein also accommodated the Palestinian for the same price. He gave them citizenship and treated them like his "other" children, but he did not hesitate to gun them down in the 1970 Black September.

King Hussein ruled Jordan with an iron hand, the iron being designed and manufactured by his patron states, the UK, the US, and Israel, all in the name of political stability, safety of Middle East oil, and the security of Israel. The King was shrewd, able to maintain his power and authority while several Arab monarchies were being eliminated. And yet, the people of Jordan have remained poor, deprived of individual freedom, and excluded from governance of the country.

King Hussein summarily deposed his brother, the would-be King Hassan and appointed his son in his place, but the people of Jordan had little to say about the change. Apparently the US was the major consultant in the process. King Hussein reconstituted the line of succession and thus the source of power, authority, and absolute rule over the people without any pretense of consideration of their wishes and expectations. And so has the new King Abdullah who appointed one of his younger brothers as crown prince, and his wife as Queen, with no evident consultation with the people, or assessment of popular sentiment. (Rumor has it that Prince Hassan was more an Arab nationalist than King Hussein was, and had less sympathy towards Israel and the PNA than did the King; this reminds me of the rumors that followed the exile of Hussein's father King Talal to Turkey on the pretense that he was mentally unstable; the rumors then were that he disagreed with the policies that had been dictated and followed by his father, King Abdullah, towards Britain and Israel and therefore he had to go).

Monarchies still exist in developed and democratic countries, but in all of them the monarch plays a symbolic role only, leaving power and authority to reside in the people who elect the government and hold it accountable, as in Britain and Scandinavia. Countries with absolute monarchies have remained economically underdeveloped and poor, as in Jordan and Morocco. Even the Gulf countries have remained underdeveloped; their wealth has resulted from natural endowments and the know-how and investments of the developed countries, rather than from the efforts and achievements of their own people. It is obvious that absolute monarchies are incompatible with democracy and are apparently an obstacle in the way of economic development.

Jordan is now at a cross-roads: to promote political democracy, develop the economy, reduce unemployment, poverty, and economic dependence on foreign aid for "survival," or continue the pattern of economic and political dependence, as has been the case since its independence. The options are limited: 1. Jordan can persist in the same pattern, though it can hardly be considered viable, given the worldwide tendency toward

economic and political globalization, and the sentiment toward democracy and participatory governance. 2. Jordan can explore abolishing the monarchy and establishing a presidential/parliamentary system, which allows the people to choose their government and hold it accountable for its actions. This option is most unlikely at the present time if it is to be implemented by peaceful means. 3. Jordan can, even though it is costly, opt for a truly constitutional monarchy in which the monarch plays a symbolic, honorary role, while power, responsibility, and accountability reside in the people.

It is easy for an outsider to recommend one approach or the other, but only the people of Jordan can decide the road they should follow. Let us hope that King Abdullah and the people of Jordan find the right path and realize economic and political freedom, both of which are cherished objectives around the world.

### **“ISRAELI” ARABS OR “ARABS” IN ISRAEL! May 1999**

When I first came to the United States 44 years ago, it seemed strange to Americans to hear me say that I was an Israeli Arab. Being an Israeli meant a Jew. But once they found out that there were Arabs in Israel, the immediate question was how were the Arabs in Israel treated. The State of Israel was still very young, poor, insecure, and overly protective against Arabs within and outside its boundaries. Therefore, equality for all citizens seemed hardly expected, and apologists for the unexpected were many. Military rule was in force and Arabs faced various obstacles and deprivations: restrictions on movement, limited choice of employment, and few opportunities in business, and humiliation every step of the way, all in the name of security. Since then Israel has grown to be economically prosperous, militarily powerful, and presumably quite secure. Yet, the question is still being asked: how are the Arabs in Israel treated! Apparently equality for all citizens is still in doubt. That the Arabs in Israel are citizens, presumably equally protected by law, cannot obscure the tendency among public and private Jewish groups to treat Arabs as less equal than other citizens. It is, therefore, questionable whether the term “Israeli Arabs” accurately describes the social, political, or economic status of the Arabs in the country. It might be more accurate to describe them as “Arabs in Israel,” and their status vis-à-vis Jews as separate and less equal.

In 1776 Benjamin Franklin was asked, “Don't you like to be called ‘British?’ His answer was that he would be delighted to be called British if he had all the rights and privileges of the British. The Arabs in Israel would be delighted to be called Israelis if they had all the rights and privileges of the Israeli citizenship. Arabs and Jews are almost totally segregated, not by choice. Planned settlement of Jews by the authorities is such that the two communities are segregated and unequal. Jewish settlements are provided with complete infrastructures, while Arab communities are not. Access to land by Arabs is totally restricted while Jews have easy access at subsidized prices. Educational facilities in Jewish institutions are far superior to those in Arab institutions--schools

through secondary education are segregated. Training in science in Arab institutions is virtually impossible because of the lack of facilities. Arabs must learn Hebrew but Jews do not have to learn Arabic. Major business and official documents are available only in Hebrew, and correspondence with the authorities in Arabic would entail delays and negligence to the extent that Arabs feel forced to communicate in Hebrew to get attention. The Israeli Information Service summarizes Hebrew newspaper editorials for the Internet, but not any Arabic newspapers, even though this has been suggested to them. Occupational structures also differ immensely between the two communities, with Arabs doing more menial and less professional and technical work than do Jews. Arab workers are less secure in their jobs and always feel threatened that a Jew will take their job away from them--Russian immigration has been an economic nightmare for them. Apparently inequality has become so institutionalized that Arabs take for granted that they are treated less equally than other citizens, thus making the term "Israeli" of dual meaning, one for Arabs and one for Jews. The feeling of being discriminated against is augmented by the evident distrust revealed by the authorities at the highest levels toward them. The Arabs in Israel have been described as a "potential strategic threat" to the state, and some Jewish leaders have suggested autonomy for the Arabs, which would be no more than a license to treat them differently and less equally.

Observers often note the progress the Arabs in Israel have made, but these observers rarely notice how much Arabs still lag behind Jews in their socio-economic and political rights and privileges. Israeli (Jewish) apologists argue that Arabs do not serve in the military and therefore do not bear their responsibility as citizens, but their exclusion from the service is dictated by the authorities who distrust them. Observers point with admiration to Arab representation in the Knesset, Parliament, but the Arabs are numerically underrepresented, are never appointed to important and policy making committees, and are not represented at the cabinet level, even though they comprise 20% of the population. Some commentators suggest that Israel has become a de facto binational state, but that is contrary to the fact. The Arabs have not been integrated fully as citizens. They are treated as a less than equal minority. All one has to do is to observe how Arabs are treated at the borders by the authorities when leaving or entering the country: they are delayed, searched, interrogated, and humiliated for no evident reason other than being Arabs. Unfortunately, the effects of discrimination have been harmful to the Arab community, and undermining to the ideals of democracy and equality in the state of Israel, and yet these conditions are fully avoidable. The Jews have experienced less-than-equal citizenship in various parts of the world and certainly they did not like it!

Israel today is strong, wealthy, and secure. It has no rational reason to preclude Arab citizens from any of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship. Israel can remove all the barriers to full and equal citizenship. Only then will it be accurate to describe the Arab minority as "Israeli Arabs" rather than "Arabs in Israel."

## **NATO, Yugoslavia, and Conflict Resolution**

### **June 1999**

The conflict between Serbia and its province, Kosovo, has turned into a human tragedy, far beyond the expectations of any of the actors in this on-going drama. The people of Kosovo, led by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), have been seeking independence. Serbia, under Yugoslavia's President Slobodan Milosevic, has opposed that move to maintain unity of the State of Serbia, and because the KLA has been considered a rebel army and a terrorist group against the state. The fact that most people in Kosovo are Muslims and the majority of Serbs are Christians has complicated the issues even farther. Ethnic conflict in the Balkans is not new. Multiple ethnic groups, as in most of Asia and Africa, have coexisted mostly on the basis of tolerance rather than of acceptance of equality. Conflicts have erupted in various places, usually in periods of economic distress, overcrowding, and poverty, at which time the limits of tolerance become too narrow and leaders of the different ethnic groups take advantage of those situations to reaffirm their "unique" status and vested interests. In doing so, some of these leaders go too far and apply harsh measures, abuse human rights, and try to impose their own terms on others, as has been the case in the Serbia-Kosovo conflict. By taking up arms to achieve independence, the KLA gave excuse to the Milosevic regime and Serbia's leaders to send the army in its pursuit, and to embark on ethnic cleansing by making it impossible for Albanian Muslim Kosovars to stay in their homes. While neither the KLA nor the Milosevic regime would admit to their extreme behaviors against each other, outside observers have been convinced that abuses of human rights had gone too far, especially against the people of Kosovo. That is where NATO enters the picture.

NATO gave warnings and set terms for Serbia to avoid outside intervention. The most important terms were to stop ethnic cleansing, stop abusing the rights of Kosovars, withdraw Serb troops from Kosovo, and let foreign military units into Kosovo to supervise compliance. The plan also proposed a form of Autonomy for Kosovo for a period of three years, after which a final solution would be attempted. It seemed obvious right at the start that no self-respecting government would agree to the withdrawal of all

its troops from a part of its own country, or allow foreign military units to replace its own and tread on its sovereignty. Both the Milosevic regime and the KLA rejected the plan. It is clear by now that both NATO and the Milosevic regime have badly miscalculated the effects and implications of their positions. By setting unacceptable terms, NATO has put itself in a trap and has made it mandatory to resort to force against Serbia and the “demonized” Milosevic. In his turn, Milosevic has miscalculated by thinking NATO would not send an armada of bombers day after day and night after night to force him to accept those terms, and he knew that ground troops were not in the plan. As a result, most of Kosovo's population has been dislocated and turned into homeless refugees within and outside Kosovo, the KLA has been contained, and ethnic cleansing has been virtually complete. At the same time the rain of missiles and bombs over Serbia has been causing severe losses of infrastructure, utilities, and human life. Hospitals, busloads of civilians, prisons, foreign embassies, power grids, and other non-military targets have been hit, while the civilian Serbs have been terrorized by NATO's air campaign. Shortages of food, water, power, and other basic amenities of life in Serbia have also been mounting. NATO blames Milosevic who in turn blames NATO for the exodus and suffering of hundreds of thousands of Kosovars. Neither party can avoid responsibility for what has happened and continues to happen. The fact that Milosevic has caused havoc in Kosovo does not justify NATO's campaign of terror and destruction to the Serb civilian society. Now that Mr. Milosevic and his collaborators have been indicted for war crimes, how long will it be before similar charges are filed against NATO leaders, especially against Tom Blair and Bill Clinton?

It is clear that the conflict required outside intervention, but not by whom, in what form, and to what objective. NATO has made it its mission to intervene. It has also decided the form and objectives of the intervention. By doing so, NATO has made the above horrible results predictable. First, NATO, being a defense organization, not a peace-making organization, has usurped the role of the UN and thus has made it difficult for Milosevic to compromise through negotiation with the UN. Second, as a military alliance, NATO was bound to resort to force, rather than look for other alternatives to avoid the human tragedy that has resulted. Third, NATO, and in this case mainly the United States and Britain, to avoid human casualties among their own personnel, have resorted to air attacks from very high altitudes, with consequences that have been most unfortunate, such as missing targets, hitting wrong ones, and still failing to subdue Milosevic and his regime. The fact that US and British air attacks have failed in Iraq, and that Israeli planes have failed in Southern Lebanon, do not seem to make a difference in NATO's decision making. Finally, while the exodus has been underway, the terms for resolution of the conflict have been expanded to include the return of the Kosovar refugees to their homes as a precondition. Yet, historically, repatriation of political refugees has rarely occurred and most refugees have had to settle outside the country they had left behind. In a sense, NATO has achieved ethnic cleansing for Mr. Milosevic, who could not have done a more thorough or less costly job of evicting Albanians from Kosovo than has been the case, thanks to NATO's actions.

Even so, the end is not yet in view, while peaceful alternatives to the sustained massive destruction and dislocation of people do still exist. First and foremost, NATO must concede to the Security Council of the United Nations the primary role of dealing with the Serb government in Belgrade. At the same time, NATO must stop its air attacks

promptly to allow the UN to negotiate with Belgrade. Second, the Security Council should establish terms that are acceptable to a member sovereign nation, while safeguarding the human rights of the people involved in the conflict. Third, the Security Council should exert utmost diplomatic pressure on all parties to the conflict to come to terms in a peaceful way. Fourth, the Security Council, with full cooperation of NATO, should put together a “stick and carrot” package that both the Serbs and the Kosovars would find difficult to refuse. Such a package would include possible boycotts, trade embargoes, as well as massive aid to develop the economy and rehabilitate the community. The US has allocated \$15b for the military and other activities in Kosovo. Other members of NATO have no doubt allocated a few more billions. Had half of these allocations been devoted to economic and social aid to Serbia (including Kosovo), the tragedy might have been avoided. However, this option should still be available. Vanquishing the Belgrade regime should not be an objective, nor should foreign occupation of Kosovo or Serbia be an alternative, for both actions would be bad precedents of how the powerful would treat the less powerful. Finally, should all these alternatives be unsuccessful, the Security Council would still have the option to authorize force to end the conflict and restore stability. If this were to happen, it would be necessary to include military units from outside NATO, in order to reflect the will of the United Nations as the legitimate international arbiter and peace-making organization. Furthermore, a strong contingent of ground troops would be indispensable to do the job swiftly, with the least unavoidable losses to all parties concerned. While it is impossible to undo what has been done, reorientation of policy and action by learning from experience may restore peace and tranquility to Yugoslavia, and legitimacy and dignity to the United Nations.

### **Ehud Barak and the Palestinians July 1999**

Israel will soon have a new government, headed by Ehud Barak, with Labor as the only major party in the coalition. The change of government and redistribution of power reflect Israeli attitudes toward Bibi Netanyahu, the internal conflicts within the Likud party, the economic problems facing the country, and possibly their interest in expediting the peace process. Being anxious to bring the peace process to its logical conclusion, the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, have demonstrated a certain degree of euphoria and great expectations of the incoming prime minister and his still unformed government. Editorials in Arabic papers and government statements in various Middle East countries have offered warm congratulations to Mr. Barak, but they also have betrayed their unspoken expectations that he would be a fair and instant peace maker. Given their bitter experiences with Mr. Netanyahu, one can hardly blame them for expressing such optimism and hope for the future. However, are such expectations warranted by past Labor policies, Ehud Barak's statements or previous behavior, or by any confidential pre-election agreements, or are they simply expressions of wishful thinking and imaginary expectations? While it is too early to judge, there are reasons why the Palestinians and other Arabs should tread very carefully in dealing with Mr. Barak and his pending government.

The major outstanding issues include the boundaries between Israel and its neighbors, the sharing of Palestine's territory by Israel and the Palestinians, the place of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian refugees, sharing of water resources, security, and final status of the Palestinian entity. These issues are in many ways intertwined and failure to agree on any one of them could mean failure of the peace process. Therefore, it may be wise to look into Barak's and Labor's backgrounds before building false and unwarranted hopes on him and his government. Ehud Barak is a soldier and therefore security must be high on his list of priorities in dealing with Israel's neighbors. He leads a party, which has only a plurality and therefore has less than a free hand in resolving the conflict. Barak is a member of the military and political

establishment, which has guided Israeli policy toward the Palestinians for a long time. None of these features suggests that Barak would alter the direction of past Labor governments toward the peace process with the Palestinians. On the other hand, Barak has had invaluable experiences through his association with Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres who concluded the agreement on principles with the Palestinians, but whether he agrees with their approach to peace is still unclear.

Regarding the boundaries, it may be expected that Barak would reach an agreement with Syria and Lebanon, cede back the Golan Heights and the security zone in South Lebanon in return for demilitarization of a belt along the boundaries with both countries, as had been expected of the Rabin/Peres governments. Both Israel and its adversaries on the northern borders know that that is the only logical solution to the conflict between them. United States aid and pressure will enhance the chances of realizing such an agreement.

Security on the borders with the Palestinian entity is a minor issue since the Palestinians can hardly constitute a threat to the security of Israel. However, the more serious matter is how to share the territory and the water resources, and what to do with the Jewish settlements and the Palestinian refugees. The Palestinians would no doubt request a return to the pre-June 1967 boundaries, with minor adjustments. Ehud Barak would most probably try to hold on to as much of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as possible, including East Jerusalem. After all, that was the policy of Labor in the past. Labor governments were also the initiators of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in violation of international law regarding occupied territories. Whether Barak would be willing or able to remove the settlements is doubtful at this time and any such expectation would be false and unwarranted.

The fate of the Palestinian refugees has in fact been neutralized as far as the peace process is concerned. The PNA has virtually agreed that only a small percentage of refugees would be repatriated to Palestine and many fewer to Israel; all others will have to be resettled elsewhere. Accordingly, negotiations regarding the destination of refugees and compensation for lost property may be carried out separately from the Peace Process. To expect Barak to be benevolent and forthcoming with more favorable solutions would be unwarranted, given that the PNA has virtually set the limits on repatriation, its size, rate, and destination, limits, which could hardly be more favorable to Israel.

The scarcity of water has been described as impregnated with war potential in the region. So far Israel and the Palestinians have shared the water resources, though inequitably. While the issue of rights to water resources is important, once a political agreement has been reached, the solution becomes a technical one, mainly on how to increase available water resources. In the meantime it would be foolish to expect Ehud Barak to surrender Israel's hold on the water resources. Labor governments were the first usurpers of these resources at the expense of the Palestinians and Jordanians. Barak, however, may make a major contribution by enhancing technical cooperation between Israel and its neighbors to increase water resources and thus increase the size of the pie to be shared. In the meantime there are enough water resources to accommodate Israelis and Palestinians for years to come, reports to the contrary notwithstanding--most such reports are based on false assumptions and are used as scare tactics for political reasons.

The immediate and possibly most pressing issue is the ultimate status of the Palestinian entity. As far as I can ascertain, only Shimon Peres among Labor leaders has

publicly endorsed the idea of Palestinian statehood. Whether Rabin had agreed to the idea and whether Barak will follow suit is not evident. Eventually statehood will be established--when the conditions are ripe for it. The Palestinians have recently indicated their intention to resurrect General Assembly Resolution 181, which recommended partition of Palestine between two states, an Arab and a Jewish State, in 1947. If the Palestinians imply return to the boundaries proposed by the Partition Plan, they may be set up for a big surprise, for neither Israel nor any major influential country would support such a request. Resolutions 242 and 338 have become the basis of negotiations for a peace settlement and these relate only to the pre-1967 war boundaries. If, on the other hand, they only want to use Resolution 181 as a basis for the establishment of statehood, they would find many supporters. But if the focus is on the concept of statehood, the Palestinians would do better to concentrate on retrieving territory from occupation, securing a larger share of water resources, and ending occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip altogether. Statehood and sovereignty can hardly be created by the stroke of a pen or by empty rhetoric and loud declarations. They must evolve together with a viable economy, a civil society, and an efficient public administration. Once these features are in place, statehood and sovereignty will become a *fait accompli*. Israel and the world will then rush to recognize the new state. Ehud Barak may or may not be in favor of a Palestinian state, but once the Palestinians had demonstrated their institutional and behavioral readiness for statehood, he would hardly be able to oppose it. The international community will also be on the Palestinian side.

What should the Palestinians expect from Barak and his new government? So far Barak has made only general statements that indicate a commitment to the peace process, while still negotiating with Likud for a coalition, even though their attitude toward peace has been quite negative. Now it seems that he has a pending coalition with a large majority without Likud and that should give him a mandate to bring about peace. At the same time he has deliberately excluded Arab parties in Israel from his potential coalition government, though he welcomes their support in the Knesset (Parliament), just as all previous governments had done, regardless of the party in power. The Arabs, especially the Palestinians, must, therefore, have clear and feasible objectives, expect little to come automatically from Ehud Barak, and be prepared to negotiate skillfully and hard for every right or concession they hope to realize.

## **A SYRIAN-ISRAELI PEACE AND THE PALESTINIANS**

### **August 1999**

Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak has visited Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine. How timely it would be if he were to visit Syria and Lebanon as well, or if President Hafez al-Assad of Syria would visit Israel--an invitation has apparently been extended to President al Assad to address the Knesset (Parliament) of Israel. The relations between Israel and its neighbors to the North and North East are not as yet favorable enough for such visiting. A breakthrough in the "war-like" relations between them would be a major step toward peace. The challenge for the leaders of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria is to face the inevitable and pave the way to peace and diplomatic normalcy between their countries. These leaders have made "guarded" declarations that they want peace with each other, albeit on their own individual terms. The first step may be difficult, but it is not impossible: Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat did it; Yitzhak Rabin (and Shimon Peres) and Yasser Arafat did it; and Hafez al-Assad and Ehud Barak can do it. Egypt and Jordan already have peaceful relations with Israel and they can help to break the deadlock by making that first step possible. There are indications that both countries are already playing that role. It would be equally logical and probably more enticing if the Palestinians were to do the same and welcome any improvement in the relations between Israel and Syria and Lebanon. Some observers suggest that an intensive engagement in peace negotiations with Syria might hinder or slow down Israel's negotiations with the Palestinians, but such apprehensions are groundless. Improvements in relations between Israel and Lebanon and Syria should be advantageous to the Palestinians and to the peace process between them and Israel.

The Palestinians may have cause to be concerned. Peace with Syria may seem of more immediate significance to Israel than a completed peace with the Palestinians. Or it may have more international resonance than an agreement with the Palestinians, and it may have more security value as well. If so, peace with Syria should have more urgency and a higher priority than completing negotiations with the Palestinians. However, these observations emanate from assumptions that are largely speculative, such as: Hafez al-

Assad would like to leave behind a legacy of peace and security; that he is relatively old aged and in poor health and therefore time is of the essence; that Hafez al-Assad can deliver on any signed agreement while a successor may not be able to do so; and that peace with Syria would automatically translate into peace with Lebanon. Therefore, the argument goes, Israel may become too obsessed with negotiations with Syria to pay enough attention to negotiations with the Palestinians. However, both the assumptions and the conclusions are questionable.

Israel's conflict with the Palestinians is the source of conflict with Syria and Lebanon, and solving the former would leave little reason to sustain the latter. Israel knows and is probably committed to the idea that peace with Syria is attainable, with security guarantees, upon withdrawal from the Golan Heights and South Lebanon, but that will not resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. Therefore, to rush to resolve the conflict with Syria at the expense of the Palestinians would seem most unlikely.

While peace with Syria may offer formal security on the northern and northeastern borders, the security problem with Syria has virtually been resolved by the apparent "no-war" agreement between the two countries. Therefore, a formal security agreement may be of little added value to real security. By contrast, the conflict with the Palestinians may not cause a threat to the state of Israel, but it has the potential to create insecurity for the Israelis as individuals and as groups. Therefore, it would be to Israel's disadvantage to neglect the Palestinians in order to make peace with Syria.

In any case, there are good reasons to believe that Israel can undertake negotiations with more than one party at a time, and there are no known procedural or logical reasons why negotiations with Syria and Palestine should not proceed simultaneously.

On the other hand, progress toward peace with Syria should enhance the peace process on the Israeli-Palestinian front. One great benefit of an Israeli-Syrian agreement is that Israel would be secure enough to make concessions in negotiating with the Palestinians, if only to promote good will and better relations with Syria. An agreement with Syria would also allow President al-Assad to influence the terms of the final Israeli-Palestinian agreement in favor of the Palestinians. Furthermore, an agreement with Syria would no doubt touch on the issue of the Palestinian refugees and that may initiate the process to deal with the refugee question seriously by all parties concerned. Peace with Syria would also have an impact on water availability in the region and is most likely to be beneficial to the Palestinians. Finally, an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement should have highly positive effects on the economies of the respective countries, including the Palestinian economy, whether in the form of trade, tourism, investment, or general economic cooperation.

While these arguments may dispel some of the Palestinian apprehensions, the Palestinians may enhance their potential benefits by publicly endorsing and encouraging any steps to advance peace between Syria and Lebanon and Israel. The Palestinians, however, will need to take steps of their own to realize the benefits, such as making clear what their "realistic and feasible" objectives are regarding the various issues pending in their relations with Israel. They should communicate with the Syrians and come to an understanding with them regarding those objectives so as to achieve at least a pseudo-unified front in negotiating with Israel. In the final analysis, peace between Israel and Palestine can be complete, secure, and permanent only if peace with Syria and Lebanon

becomes a reality. The sooner such peace is achieved, the sooner will the Palestinians realize their objectives.

### **THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES: TIME TO MOVE ON? September 1999**

The issue of the Palestinian refugees is in resurgence, in the news, in newspaper columns, and probably on the minds of policy makers. The theme is a renewed call for implementation, or at least formal recognition of the refugees' right to return to their home country, and for compensation. However, the refugees face a dilemma: on one hand they are encouraged to stay in camps and hold on to the refugee status until their right of return is realized. On the other, even after half a century of waiting, the prospects of returning to their homes are not brighter than ever before. Why then should they stay in camps and remain dependent as refugees? Evidently there are other reasons beside craving for justice or human and political rights, as recognized by the international community.

They remain in camps because their freedom of movement and resettlement has been restricted, not only by Israel which would not allow them to return to their homes, but also by their host Arab countries. They are denied the option of permanent residence and citizenship in those countries, on the pretext that the Arab League has resolved against resettlement. They are kept in camps as a system of control, even as they enjoy limited autonomy within the camps. They are kept in camps as refugees to avoid disturbing the demographic *status quo* within the respective host countries. Or they are in camps, according to some observers, because the quality of life in the camps is better than in the villages whose residents are not refugees. And they remain in camps probably because they believe that the PNA will welcome them to reside within its territory, once a peace agreement has been reached, even though the PNA has yet to make such a declaration. Israel, in the meantime, insists that the refugee future is an Arab problem and any responsibility it has should be determined in negotiations of the final settlement of the conflict.

Some observers suggest that the Palestinian refugees have been neglected for so long because they are isolated, dispersed, and disunited. Now, however, they will be united by the installation of Internet communications in the camps and establishment of a

memory museum to remind them of their common tragic situation. Once they are united, policy makers will pay attention. Is this myth or reality?

A sad part of this human drama is that there is a lot of myth and little of reality surrounding the fate of the refugees and camp dwellers. For instance, it is a myth to tie the continued existence in camps to the implementation or recognition by Israel of their right of return. In reality, there is little reason for the refugees to remain in camps in order to fight for that right. They can fight for that right regardless where they reside and what political status they have. Those who have resettled and improved their socio-economic and political status are in a better position to fight for the recognition of their right of return than those who have remained in camps or refugees dependent on or as wards of the United Nations. It is a myth that the Arab countries will not resettle the Palestinians within their own territories because of the ban on resettlement by the Arab League. Jordan has permitted, and for a certain time period encouraged, Palestinians to acquire Jordanian citizenship without running into conflict with the Arab League. It is also a myth to suggest that integration of the Palestinian refugees within the host countries would be an economic and social burden on those countries. The Palestinians are a valuable stock of human capital, which, if unleashed, would be a major investment in the host countries, as evidenced by their great contribution to the economies of the Gulf region. It is still another myth to suggest that the Palestinian refugees are kept in camps for their own protection and welfare. The fact is that the governing regimes in most Arab countries are fearful that injecting the Palestinian element into their political system might be destabilizing and threatening to their own existence.

While there are few gainers from keeping the Palestinians in camps and as refugees, the Palestinians themselves are big losers. Those who are most outspoken in tying the fate of the Palestinian refugees to the right of return do not live in camps, nor are they classified as refugees, dependent on United Nations help. They live in comfort, if not in wealth; they travel freely; and they enjoy privileged opportunities for themselves and their children, while the camp dwellers and UN “coupon” dependents dwell in misery and discomfort. The refugees lose because they are unable to apply their own capabilities in education, technology, and the economy.

Probably their most serious deprivation is that the refugees receive little encouragement, guidance, or facilitation for changing the *status quo*. They are in fact discouraged from distinguishing the myth from the reality and exploring the wide horizons that may be open to them outside the camps. For example, the reality of their political situation suggests that few of them will be able to return to their original homes in Israel, even if their right of return is formally recognized by Israel. Palestinian leaders have admitted that much, but they would not communicate their position to the refugees. Another reality the refugees should recognize is that staying in camps and as refugees has done little to improve their prospects for the future. In contrast, many of those who have left or avoided camp life and the refugee formal status have prospered and have acquired extraordinary social, economic, and political power. These people have already discovered that they would be welcome in a state of Palestine, compared with the dim prospects of returning awaiting the camp dwellers and coupon refugees. Still another reality is the growing gap between the haves and have-nots among the Palestinians, and this gap is greatest between the camp dwellers and coupon refugees and those who have enjoyed freedom from these dependencies. This gap is most evident in the quality of life,

freedom of mobility, and opportunities for children and future generations by the two groups.

It is now high time for the refugees to recognize that their right of return would be as sacred whether they live in camps or not. They should recognize that they could fight harder for that right when they have freedom of mobility, better education, and more comfortable economic circumstances than they have experienced in camps and as refugees. They should also recognize that it is their own responsibility to look after themselves and to instruct their leaders regarding the future, rather than be misguided by myths created for the benefit of others at their own expense. The leaders and the regimes they have depended on cannot deliver on the right of return, even if they wanted to, or on any collective resettlement in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is high time for the refugees to seek other opportunities on their own, give up the refugee status, and say good-bye to camp life. Only then would they be able to build a better life, as independent, self-supporting, fulfilled human beings.

## **HUMAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES**

### **October 1999**

Human development and economic development are interdependent; each is necessary but neither is sufficient for success of the other. In general terms economic development and higher per capita income provide physical capital for human development and human development provides human capital for economic development and production. However, both are necessary for the overall development of society. The Arab countries have been more interested in economic development (or modernization) than in human development and therefore have allocated less resources and energies to human development than warranted or feasible. Even so, there has been a significant advance in human development, as measured by the core Human Development Index (HDI) used by the United Nations, which combines the rates of adult literacy, life expectancy, and infant mortality. However, there are other important indicators of human development, which have hardly improved in the Arab countries. These include the status of the individual in society, the basic freedoms of thought, inquiry, and expression, freedom of worship, participation in governance, and freedom of the press. I suggest that much more could have been done to improve these indicators. I suggest also that economic development will continue to be fatally hampered until human development in its wider perspective receives adequate attention and resources to make it viable and self-sustaining.

All the Arab countries have made advances in human development in the last quarter century. Adult literacy has risen substantially, though illiteracy was still over 20% in 1995, except in Lebanon where it was down to 8%. In contrast, it was 56% in Morocco and 49% in Egypt. The illiteracy rates would be much higher among women. Life expectancy has also increased but it still lags behind life expectancy in the developed countries. Life expectancy, however, varies by country, ranging from 74 years in the United Arab Emirates down to about 50 years in the non-oil exporting rich countries. The decline in infant mortality has been equally dramatic, except in Iraq, which is experiencing a reversal of the improvements achieved before the war with Kuwait and its

allies. Some countries, nevertheless, still suffer from high infant mortality. For example, in 1995 the rates were 63 per thousand in Egypt, 56 per thousand in Morocco, and double that in Djibouti. The saddest case is Iraq in which infant mortality in 1994 reached 146 per thousand.

These improvements in HDI should be applauded and the Arab countries should be encouraged to continue this trend up to their potential. But these achievements are mainly quantitative and shed little information on the quality of the individual or the society thus produced. For example, there has been little change (development) in the quality of education, the status of the individual, or the basic freedoms people crave for. Probably the most serious hindrance in education is the curtailment of the freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression, which renders education a process of rote learning rather than an intellectual and growth experience. Teachers are constrained in what and how they teach, leading students into conformity, acquiescence, and blind obedience to authority. One teacher was put in jail because he included a question on corruption in his test paper. The same limitation applies to the media. Journalists are jailed and newspapers are closed down at the whim of the ruler. In addition, education is hampered by tradition and religious doctrine. Rational analysis and critical thinking are rarely promoted or encouraged, even at the university level, although these thought processes should be imbedded in children in the earliest years of education. Consequently, the “educated” are often poorly qualified to guide economic and technical development, or to educate others for maturity, independence, and creative thinking and performance. This may explain why the Arab countries remain dependent on foreign expertise for most fields of endeavor. This is true in oil exploration, modernization of agriculture, and industrial development and production. Even the “educated” Palestinians who brag about their level of education seem unqualified to manage their budding economy and society. The authorities compound these deficiencies by allocating little if any resources to research and development in their own countries; some make major contributions to research and development in the already developed countries. Arab intellectuals, at least in part because of these limitations, tend to be scared to raise their voice, except in criticism of and complaints against outsiders.

The limitations on quality education and the basic freedoms are closely associated with the place of the individual in society. Though all Arab countries speak of some form of democracy and representation, the individual hardly participates in governance, except probably in Lebanon, even then only to a limited extent. Whether born to royalty, or whether they take over by force, the rulers stay on for life, often under pretense of winning a “fictitious” election. Elections in the Arab countries are only symbolic and the voters rarely have a choice or feel secure enough to vote their conscience. The individual is scared because he/she is trained to fear, not respect authority, and because there is no due process or civil protection in maintaining law and order. The elected bodies quickly turn into rubber stamp endorsers of the ruler's decrees or pronouncements. These restrictions tend to debilitate creative thinking, innovation, and private initiative and enterprise. It is ironic that Arab émigrés tend to be quite creative once outside their home-country environment. Abuse of the individual in the Arab countries is perpetrated by governments, factions, clans, families, and by rebellious groups and by individuals.

The effects have been detrimental. First, these restrictions have been wasteful of energy and potential--many creative capabilities have remained dormant because they

have not been allowed to blossom! Second, the restrictions have tended to be self-sustaining, and thus their negative effects have been compounded. Third, restrictions on human development have put breaks on economic development by limiting the skills and creative abilities necessary for development. All these effects have resulted into a lower quality of life for the individual and a relatively less dynamic and advanced society than the Arab countries are capable of and desirous of achieving. If so, why do these inhibitions persist? Probably one reason is the lack of adequate resources since most Arab countries are relatively poor. Quality liberal education, which promotes analytical powers and individual freedom and independence, requires more resources than do traditional rote learning and conformist education. Another reason is the claim that these freedoms and systems of education are based on foreign (western) ideas and values and the Arab countries do not need to imitate western colonial values. Those who make such claims fail to offer viable alternatives. They reject those values on subjective emotional grounds, regardless of the negative consequences. Yet, they do not hesitate to utilize these Western ideas and values to their own personal advantage. Still another explanation is that tradition and religion dictate existing values and offer human rights to the individual and need not be changed. However, tradition and religious teachings are subject to interpretation in order to cope with the dynamics of society at large. Values that were fit for the past do not necessarily fit the present or the future and therefore should be reassessed by the people themselves. It is also possible that human development commands low priority among policy makers, compared with the more auspicious fields of defense and business and therefore has received less attention than it deserves. Even so, if there is a will, there is a way. If the leaders and policy makers want to promote human development in its wider perspective, they would find a way. Most probably they would rather not find a way because they have vested interests in the debilitating sociopolitical environment in their respective countries. Their vested interests preclude rational, analytical, uninhibited education with guarantees of civil rights, freedoms of thought, inquiry, and expression. Whatever the reasons, the Arab countries have continued to suffer the consequences. But it is never too late to change direction. The rulers and policy makers have the option to initiate the necessary institutional changes to provide this and future generations with a healthy educational and intellectual environment that would allow them to develop their own capacities up to their potential. And if they fail to do so, most probably the people will, sooner or later, wake up and demand the change. In the meantime the individual, the community, and the Arab society at large continue to suffer.

**WHO IS A PALESTINIAN AND WHO WANTS TO KNOW!**  
**November 1999**

The above questions have come to the fore because of a controversy between two professors, Justus Weiner, an American Israeli, and Edward Said, a Palestinian American. Professor Weiner, with no hint of doubt about his own mixed (?) identity, raises questions about Professor Said's identity as a Palestinian, his right to speak on behalf of the Palestinians, and his honesty in telling the story of his relations with Palestine. Professor Weiner's charges would have been quickly forgotten had Professor Said not chosen to take the bait, fall in a trap, and end up wasting much of his valuable time on questions that have little significance to the Arab Israeli peace process or to the future of either Israel or Palestine. The controversy, however, almost by default, raises general questions that, once raised, demand attention and clarification. Professor Weiner is certainly free to write what he wants as long as he is held accountable for the accuracy, relevance, and literary quality of his writing. He is also free to make his own interpretations at his own risk. Professor Said, on the other hand, has the option of engaging in what he considers a web of falsehoods, personal attacks on his character, and a conspiracy of Zionist elements against him. However, by doing so he is bound to waste energy, get distracted from the real issues he espouses, and gain nothing in return. By taking on the challenge, Edward Said will not convert "Zionists" and "conspirators" by his own rhetoric and counter attacks. How much more effective he would be, were he to ride above those trivial attacks, and concentrate on the humanistic and justice issues he has tried to promote. But having opted to "defend" his status (as if it needs defending), Professor Said would do well to look at his own approach to the Arab (Palestinian)-Jewish (Israeli) conflict, the relevance of his occasional proposals for a solution, and his stand toward the peace process and the Palestinian leaders responsible for it.

Professor Said has certainly been outspoken regarding the conflict, in lectures, newspaper columns, journal articles, books, and interviews. He has carried a major one-person campaign against the injustices inflicted on the Palestinians by Israel, Zionism, imperialism, and the West. His approach, as I see it, has changed little over time: always highly rhetorical, long-winded, and on the attack. Rather than reaching out for

reconciliation and harmony, he has done all he could to antagonize and little to win friends or re-educate his adversaries. In that sense, Professor Said has been his own worst enemy and much less effective in promoting the Palestinian cause and the cause of peace than he could have been. However, since Professor Said admits to his capability of changing, there is still hope.

Now to the substantive issues raised in the Weiner-Said controversy: is Professor Said, and many others like him, a Palestinian? From the standpoint of nationality (citizenship), he is an American of Palestinian origin. The Palestinians are those who still hold Palestinian identity cards as a record of nationality and have not acquired a citizenship of another country. Those who have acquired citizenship are nationals of the adopted country but of a Palestinian origin. An exception is when dual citizenship is legally valid in the countries concerned. The Palestinians who have acquired citizenship elsewhere did so by choice and therefore are technically nationals of their new country. That, however, does not prevent them from thinking of themselves as Palestinians or of helping to promote the cause of Palestine. By the same token, Professor Said has every right to consider himself a Palestinian and to fight for the Palestinian cause, justice, and a humanistic approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Whether Professor Said does or may speak on behalf of the Palestinians is up to the Palestinians to decide and no outsider can do anything about it. Whether Professor Said was personally dislocated by the conflict is immaterial. It is a fact that he and his family have lost property in Palestine because of the occupation. And all those who have lost property, whether citizens or not, are entitled to retrieve the property or receive compensation for it. However, owning property and leaving it behind does not establish citizenship--in fact much of the property bought by the Jews prior to 1947 had been owned by absentee owners, many of whom were not Palestinians. But one may ask whether Professor Said, unlike refugees and dislocated Palestinians, could have gone back to his previous home country. Most probably he could have, had he wanted to.

Professor Said is critical of the Oslo Agreement as restoring too little too late to the Palestinian people. He blames Yasser Arafat and his aides for being poor negotiators, not being educated enough to speak English, or comprehend legal government concepts, and not having maps or personal knowledge of the Palestinian territories they were negotiating for. But these are the people who have led the struggle, taken the risk, and kept the issues of Palestine alive. They are the people who have tried to salvage what remains of Palestine before it is completely absorbed by Jewish settlement. They are the people who have made a difference. Furthermore, they and their experts are the people who can assess what is feasible and what is not in the negotiations. To criticize is easy, especially from the safe havens of Paris, New York, or San Francisco, but it is more difficult and more relevant to offer alternative solutions that are viable, timely, and acceptable to the conflicting parties. Professor Said has been prolific on criticism but rather stingy on viable alternatives. His recent proposal of a binational one-state solution is vague, impractical, and irrelevant at this time. The "unified, secular, democratic" one-state solution is about three quarters of a century old. It was not viable then and it is not viable now. [His reference to Judah Magnes and Martin Buber as in favor of a binational state is rhetorical. Both had great influence and yet they did not have one single Arab professor appointed to the Hebrew University. Nor is it evident that they wanted a one-state solution, since binational could mean federal or confederal as well.] At present

neither the Israeli Jews nor the Palestinian Arabs would want it and give up their claim to ethno-national sovereignty. Two independent, sovereign, multiethnic states, side by side, would be the most likely viable solution. Once they are in place, the two states can determine the degree and form of closeness and cooperation they wish to promote between them.

Finally, Professor Said is justified in criticizing the inefficiencies and evident corruption of the PNA for the purpose of removing those defects. However, although, according to him, he knows “the politics of the PLO better than anyone, certainly in this [USA] country,” for some reason he has had little success in influencing the PLO or helping them to reduce inefficiencies, remove corruption, or find better solutions than those they have adopted. It is ironic that he bombards Yasser Arafat and his regime with criticism for their authoritarian approach, yet he did not object to being “appointed” by them to the Palestine National Council in which he served for years. It is good to remember that democracy does not grow instantly out of wishful thinking or the stroke of a pen. People have to learn how to practice, cherish, and protect democracy. The Palestinian people, like people in all the Arab countries, have yet to learn to do so.

The PNA and the PLO still face an uphill struggle in negotiating peace with Israel, in rehabilitating the Palestinian society, and in building a viable economy. They need and can use all the help that may be available. We all would render a great service by looking at the current situation with more realism, more positive thinking, and better understanding of the dilemmas facing the Palestinian people and their leaders, and the limited alternative approaches open to them.

**TO SEPARATE OR NOT TO SEPARATE FROM ISRAEL?**  
**December 1999**

It would be rhetorical to ask why the Palestinians, who expect to have their own sovereign state, should want to separate from Israel. But to learn that they object to separation falls in the realm of unthinkable. The logic and structure of a sovereign state dictates separation from other sovereign states. Cooperation, in whatever form, with other states would evolve, by mutual agreement with the respective states. Therefore, it is surprising that Palestinian officials and others have been critical of the idea of separation floated by Israeli officials. Of course, there are costs and benefits to any disruption of a relationship that has existed for over three decades between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. However, the benefits to the Palestinians should by far exceed the costs. By contrast, the costs to Israel may exceed the benefits. Why then should Israel want separation and would the Palestinians object to it?

The Israelis may have at least four reasons to formally separate from the Palestinians. First, separation might enhance security and lower the costs of securing the borders. Second, the Israelis may want to pre-empt the obvious by choosing separation as a preliminary step toward recognition of a Palestinian state. Third, they may wish to free themselves of any responsibility for the welfare of the Palestinians, as inherent in the dynamics of occupation and the resulting dependence of the occupied on the occupier. Finally, Israel may prefer to build relationships with Palestine by agreement rather than by imposition. The costs to Israel, excluding those of transition, would include losing any economic and trade advantages the Israelis have because of their dominance. The Israelis usually deny any such advantages on the assumption that the weaker economy is the beneficiary of trade with a stronger economy in an “ideal” free trade market. And yet, Ehud Barak wants separation, especially in economic terms. Is it possible that the Israeli administration has floated the idea of separation in order to provoke Arab objections, which tend to be highly predictable, and thus maintain Palestinian dependence as a favor to them? Ehud Barak, however, has qualified his proposal as “separation but not detachment.”

The Palestinians should have compelling reasons to separate from Israel, legally, politically, and economically. They want a sovereign state of their own. An independent state is expected to have its own borders, institutions, government, and economy. It is expected to shoulder responsibilities for the safety and welfare of its citizens. And it is expected to have its own process of making decisions. And yet Palestinian officials have objected to the idea of separation, why? One reason may be distrust of the intentions of the Israelis and fear that by separation, the Israelis would simply choke the Palestinian economy and society. Given the weakness of the Palestinian economy and its as-yet undeveloped institutions, it is understandable that the Palestinians would be apprehensive.

Furthermore, given the structural and behavioral dependence of the Palestinian economy on Israel, it may be scary to be separated and left alone to carry responsibilities for which the Palestinian administration is not yet ready. For example, Israel is the most important trade partner, though not by choice, a significant employer of Palestinian labor, and an important source of technology and know-how. It is like a young adult wanting to be independent but still afraid of leaving home to face the world, although Israel has never given the Palestinians the feeling of security as if they were at home. However, such fears should generate caution regarding the pace and terms of separation, rather than objection to the principle of separation. The Palestinians would have to negotiate those terms.

Another reason for apprehension is the fear that separation could prejudice the terms of the final peace agreement, such as the size of the recovered territory, the borders, economic relations, and the rights to natural resources. But whether separation comes now or later, these issues have to be negotiated; objections to separation will not resolve them in favor of the Palestinians. The hasty objection to separation is reminiscent of the common trend of always saying “No” at first, only to come back later and negotiate for less than might have been feasible to start with.

The Palestinians would do well to consider the benefits of separation rather than dwell on the “imaginary” costs. Separation with independence means realization of the long-standing objective of having a Palestinian state. Here resides a major psychological achievement, which the Palestinians have been waiting for.

Independence brings challenges of self-reliance; it ends the need to find a scapegoat for problems in the Palestinian economy and society.

The Palestinians will now be in charge of their territory, able to block Jewish settlement, and free to conclude economic and trade agreements with other parties as they see fit. They would be free to secure and plan capital investment and choose trade partners according to their own national interests. And they will be able to negotiate economic, trade, and cultural relations with Israel, rather than take what Israel deems fit to offer. They would be able to protect the rights of Palestinian workers in Israel, safeguard the welfare of farmers who export to Israel, and provide facilities for business people dealing with Israel. Separation and independence with a negotiated agreement will end the punitive, arbitrary closures, which have inflicted great harm on the Palestinian economy. The Palestinians will also be in a position to determine without undue pressure the form of relationship they would have with Israel and other neighbors, such as bilateral agreements, customs unions, free trade zones, confederation, or even federation. Finally, separation will end what the Palestinians consider economic

exploitation, political and personal humiliation, and inhibition of development and growth by Israel. The Palestinians have craved for these opportunities; they can hardly afford to reject them now. Therefore, they would be wise to welcome the idea of separation, negotiate the pace and terms of separation, and embark on building the independent and self-reliant state they deserve. And if the Palestinians do not have a contingency plan to deal with separation, it is high time for them to have one.

### **RELIGION, POLITICS, AND PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND** **January 2000**

I have often been amazed since coming to the United States, forty five years ago, to hear that Arabs and Jews, Muslims and Christians, and other minorities had lived happily together in the Middle East until Zionism and Israel came about. To me that seemed to be an exaggeration of an imaginary harmony between these communities, almost bordering on falsehood. If anything, there was a semblance of tolerance, with various degrees of separation between the communities, and much lip service to unity, but only in the absence of a crisis. I recall how little crises between Muslims and Christians in my village and the surrounding areas often flared up into major feuds. I also recall the virtually total separation between Arabs and Jews in all matters social, cultural, and political. I remember how Muslim boys in my village made fun of my father's attire as a priest. I also remember, sadly, how the treatment I felt I received from my teacher of Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), as the son of a priest, was a major factor in my dropping out of high school altogether. In commenting on these experiences, my father used to recite in Arabic from Abul'alla' alMa'rri (?): "In Latakia there is an uproar between Ahmad and Christ, the one ringing a bell, and the other broadcasting from a minaret, each proclaiming the truth of his doctrine; how I wish I knew the truth."

My recollections of childhood have been aroused by the recent conflicts in Nazareth between Muslims and Christians, and in Jerusalem between Arabs and Jews, all in the name of religion. In this essay I shall focus on the events in Nazareth and their immediate and future implications.

The conflict between Muslims and Christians in Nazareth became apparent about two years ago. The Christians were planning to enlarge the plaza by the Church of Annunciation to accommodate the expected flood of tourists in honor of the millennium. The Muslims also wanted to build a mosque to honor a Muslim sage, Sheikh Shehab-addin and laid claim to a part of the land area designated for the plaza. The contested

area is public land, administered by the municipality. Last Spring at Easter time the conflict erupted into violence and several Christians were injured. Eventually Israeli authorities interfered; they mediated, twisted arms, and concocted a solution, which allowed both Muslims and Christians to realize some of their objectives. However, according to received reports, neither community was satisfied – which often is the price of compromise.

Much of the rejections came from outside Nazareth and outside Israel. The Latin (Roman Catholic) patriarch in Jerusalem led the protest and ordered all churches closed for two days. The Vatican criticized Israel for allowing building of the mosque, thus creating the bases for conflict. The Mufti (religious leader) of Egypt is rumored to have issued a fatwa, (religious judgment) against building the mosque in the disputed location. Yasser Arafat got into the act, taking sides with the Christians, and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia offered to finance the building of the mosque if its location were removed away from the Church. Abul'alla's verse is fitting once again. It appears that the passage of time, modernization, relative increase in literacy, and expansion of communication have done little to create harmony, prevent conflict, or promote rationalism in decision making in the Middle East region. The only relatively rational party in the conflict, to their credit, have been the people of Nazareth who managed to avoid violence in the recent flare up, accept mediation, and resist interference by the outside. The corner stone of the mosque has been laid in the meantime, but construction has been postponed until after the rush of tourism has subsided. Whether the conflict has actually been resolved remains to be seen.

Looking deeper into the Muslim-Christian encounter, three standpoints seem relevant: religious, political, and rational. From a truly religious standpoint, the conflict should not have arisen. Christianity calls for neighborliness, love, cooperation, and sharing, even with one's enemies. Furthermore, Christianity teaches, "Those who are not against us are with us." Islam is not against Christianity and from a truly Muslim standpoint, the conflict should not have arisen either. Islam respects and protects Christians as "People of the Book" who worship the same God as they do. Evidently those who instigated the conflict were using religion for their own purposes.

The problem should not have arisen either if seen from an Arab political standpoint. The Arabs are a minority in Israel, and the Christians are a minority within a minority, and both Muslims and Christians complain for being treated unequally by Israeli authorities. They know that equality and absence of discrimination can be achieved only by self-improvement, political awareness, and unity in fighting discrimination. Therefore, by allowing the conflict to arise and simmer for a long time, the Arabs in Nazareth and in Israel at large have weakened their political position, reduced their already shaky unity, and poisoned the atmosphere for themselves and their younger generation. Furthermore, outside interference, which was wholly rhetorical, could only cause more divisiveness between the Muslim and Christian communities, weaken their unity, and reduce their effectiveness in combating discrimination and inequality.

The conflict would most probably have been less serious and less destructive had the Christian and Muslim Arabs adopted a rational standpoint toward the conflict. For example, how relevant is the size of the plaza around the Church of the Annunciation to

the practice of worship? And how relevant are the size of the mosque and height of minaret to Muslim worship or for honoring Sheikh Shehab-addin?

Even if we assume that these features of the plaza and the mosque were relevant to worship, what is a better way to resolve the conflict than by mediation, compromise, and neighborly understanding and sharing? Mediation and compromise are the least costly approaches and the most promising that accommodation and tranquility will prevail in the long run. The people of Nazareth were apparently willing to accept the mediated resolution, were it not for outside instigation. Even so, the people of Nazareth, to their credit, have managed to avoid violence and irrational behavior in the recent flare up. How much more successful they would have been in containing the conflict and minimizing its damage had the outsiders remained outside, and had the insiders told them more forcefully and explicitly to do so!

Finally, it is uncertain that the conflict has been resolved or what will happen when construction of the mosque is resumed. A prominent feature of Arab society is its high capacity to hold grudges and remember feuds, and low capacity for forgiveness and reconciliation. Arabs, in fact, tend to let animosities simmer and grow deeper into dangerous hatreds, unless these animosities are resolved immediately in a ceremonial *Sulha* (peacemaking ceremony), witnessed by third parties. Even then there is the danger of sowing feelings of hatred in the minds and hearts of the children. There is the danger of giving fanatics of all sides opportunities to re-inflame emotions and create new conflicts. And there is the danger of allowing political opportunists to take advantage of little crises and revive conflict and divisiveness for their own. Let us hope that the people of Nazareth and other Christian and Muslim communities will continue to act rationally, accept compromise and accommodation of each other as their best strategy, and make sure that outsiders stay out of their affairs. I am again reminded of my early experiences in this (United States) country. I came from an Arab, Greek Catholic, Israeli family, on a scholarship to a Baptist University, where I studied philosophy with a Jewish professor. Harmony by mutual respect and accommodation has been a lesson worth learning.

**THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE UNITED STATES:  
A WEB OF CONTRADICTIONS  
February 2000**

In a little noticed announcement (Dec. 10' 99), Albania abolished the death penalty (DP). At about the same time the United Kingdom abolished it formally, though no one had been executed in the UK since 1968. The European countries have all abolished that penalty and made it a condition for any country wanting to join the European Union to be rid of the DP. The United States, in contrast, is reviving the DP, and many leaders in or running for office try to emphasize their commitment to maintain and implement it expeditiously. The irony in all this is that Albania is a Muslim country and Islam condones the DP. And yet, that former communist, traditional, little developed country has found it judicious to abolish it. It is true that Albania's incentive was to qualify for joining the European Union and, therefore, the Albanian Constitutional Court made it legitimate to take such action. Israel is another country whose theocratic orientation, Judaic Law, permits the DP as a punishment. Yet, since its founding in 1948 Israel has not applied the DP except in one exceptional case against the Nazi Eichman, and it took a special act of parliament (Knesset) to apply it. Israel has not applied the DP even against "terrorists" caught red-handed in criminal acts.

Thirty-eight of the fifty United States of America now apply the DP. Over 500 people have been executed since its resumption in 1977. Ninety eight were executed in 1999. Attempts are being made now to expedite the execution of those on death row. Even individuals who had committed crimes before reaching adulthood are made subject to execution. All this is happening in this "Christian" country, which prides itself on being a champion of human rights. Christianity calls for forgiveness and reintegration of the deviant into society. George W. Bush, the governor of Texas and Front Runner for the Republican nomination for president, regards Jesus as his "idol" philosopher. Al

Gore, the Democratic Front Runner, is a reborn Christian. Yet both are little disturbed by the contradictions between their faith and their willingness to allow the execution of individuals in the name of the law, the state, or so-called justice. Governor Gray Davis of California is a Catholic. He knows that the Council of Catholic Bishops in the United States is opposed to the DP, as is the Pope. Yet, Governor Davis has approved its implementation. It is also ironic that the DP is not mandatory in the United States and the judges and chief executives have the power to avoid it.

Confusion surrounding the DP, however, goes beyond its contradictions with Christianity and its basic teachings. There are questions regarding its rationale, functions, costs, procedures, and fairness. These questions should generate reasonable doubt as to the wisdom of applying the DP or keeping it on the law books. Reaching back into the Old Testament teaching of an eye for an eye, proponents of the DP consider it a just punishment, a deterrent to others, or a service to society and the victims of the crime committed by the condemned. However, justice is not absolute. It is a value conceptualized and adopted by people for their own purposes, and what is just in one place may not be just in another. Even in the United States, various states judge and punish similar crimes in different ways, including not applying the DP. Charges against the unfair and discriminatory features of the DP have been common and yet its implementation is being sustained and expedited.

The supposition that the DP may function as a deterrent is not credible. Many social science studies show that the DP does not deter individuals from committing crimes punishable by death. Saudi Arabia, with less than seven percent of the population of the United States, executes as many in one year as all the United States do. Yet crime in Saudi Arabia does not seem to be on the decline. China executes “criminals” swiftly and probably in abundance, and yet the crimes punishable by death have not been receding.

It is not evident either that the execution of criminals is the most satisfying punishment from the standpoint of the victim's survivors. In the United States the survivors usually have no say in what the punishment should be, or whether the condemned should be spared execution. Survivors of victims in Saudi Arabia have the option of sparing the life of the condemned and some choose to do so as an act of mercy, or in return for monetary compensation. Thus, the DP can hardly serve a constructive function for society or the victim's survivors. If anything, the DP leaves behind bitterness, animosity, and feelings of helplessness among families of both the victim and the condemned. Furthermore, implementation of the DP misleads the young by telling them that killing in the name of the state is acceptable and that human life is expendable, contrary to the declarations of those who preach the philosophy of pro-life, basic human rights, and fairness and equality before the law.

Another consideration is the cost of application of the DP, from litigation through execution. The costs of each case in the United States run into millions of dollars. How much more economical it would be to put the condemned to work for life, both to pay for upkeep and to compensate the victim's survivors and the state. This approach has not been tried in the United States, as far as I can tell, and it may be high time to consider a life sentence with productive labor as a constructive alternative to the DP.

The process of execution is also abhorrent enough to be a good reason not to apply it. Various forms are permissible in the United States, depending on the state

implementing it. The most common are the electric chair and injection with deadly chemicals. Questions of humaneness, absence of cruelty, and minimization of suffering have been factors in choosing between one method of execution or another. But they all end in taking the life of a frightened, immobilized, helpless human being, in cold blood. Apparently all those arguments for choosing the less painful, swifter execution are ways to ease the conscience of the lawmakers and executioners, rather than to help the individual losing his/her life.

Cases punishable by death in the United States are automatically appealed to higher courts and could reach the Supreme Court. Even so, it is known that innocent people have been convicted and executed. Their innocence may not be discovered until after they are executed. And yet, we continue to apply the DP, and some leaders want to shorten the period of appeals, and thus increase the risk of erring in applying the DP and implementing it. 5,709 people have been sentenced to death since 1977, but of these 2,137 people have been removed from death row because their sentence or conviction has been overturned. Is this ratio not high enough to make us shudder at the thought of possibly executing an innocent person in the name of “justice?”

The United States fights for human rights, dignity of the individual, fairness, justice, and against cruelty throughout the world. The DP violates all these values. A condemned criminal loses legal rights, but no one can take away his/her human rights. How can the United States preach these values to the world when they are violated here at home? The United States can lead best by setting an example by abolishing the DP, thus respecting the human rights of its people, and removing the contradictions between its proclaimed values and the laws governing its actions.

**TO BREAK THE IMPASSE IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS: REALISM,  
CREATIVE REASONING, AND GUTS  
March 2000**

Probably the most important question each of the seekers of peace in the Middle East should ask themselves is: Why should our opponents do what we want them to do to advance the peace process? Also, they may ask: What do we get by quickly saying “NO” to the proposals of our counterparts in the negotiations? The answers to these questions should identify the costs and benefits of the position taken in human or material capital, rather than in rhetorical triumphs and empty self-gratification. Were the leaders of Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria to reflect deeply on these questions, they might find the road to peace much smoother than they paint it to be, at least in public. And they would do that best by imagining themselves in the place of their opponent, if only briefly, and think of what they would do differently. While this hypothetical position may not lead to reliable answers, it should at least allow one to appreciate what the other party might or might not do and design policy accordingly to gain cooperation from that party. The major players in the Arab Israeli conflict are no doubt aware of these ideas, but it is doubtful that any of them takes time to reflect on them and try to reach out to their counterpart as a way of promoting peace with them. Traditional diplomacy and thirst for self-gratification still guide policy, in favor of apathetic, scared, or duped constituents. Let us start with the Palestinians.

The Palestinians want Israel to end occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip, recognize their right to self-determination, and acknowledge the Palestinian refugees' right of return, as a matter of justice and as a condition for peace. While these demands may be legitimate, are they realistic enough to be fulfilled immediately? The Palestinians should remember that Israel is not hurting because of the occupation. Palestinian self-determination may seem threatening to Israel, and return of the refugees may be even

more so. Therefore, Israel could hardly be expected to rush to fulfill these demands simply to satisfy their “weak” counterpart, and the Palestinians oblige by giving Israel excuses not to do so. For example, the Palestinians have rejected the territories Israel has offered to withdraw from because they were not consulted in mapping out that area, and because they prefer areas more densely populated. In reaction, Israel has delayed withdrawal indefinitely and the negotiations have been stunted. Had the Palestinians thought a little more deeply, they might have decided differently. Since they expect all or most of the occupied territories to be recovered before a final peace agreement is concluded, why not take what is offered and continue to ask for the rest? Similarly, the Palestinians threaten that failure to realize progress toward peace might instigate violence, and thus they provoke Israeli reactions, which delay progress even longer. They also know that violence has been costly to themselves, and useless in trying to achieve their objectives. Finally, the Palestinians should know by now that the Arab countries will help them only in talk, and the United States is chronically biased and committed in favor of Israel. While the Palestinians have little left to offer the Israelis to induce progress toward an acceptable peace agreement, they can express willingness to cooperate and they can practice diplomacy without starting by saying “NO” or surrendering any of their legitimate demands.

This does not mean that the Israelis are doing more thinking and self-reflection regarding their relations with the Palestinians. Why, for instance, would the Palestinians give up their claims to any part of the occupied territories, which are theirs historically and according to United Nations resolutions? What do the Israelis gain by failing to consult the Palestinians before mapping the areas to be returned to them? Of course, Israel may be applying a delaying tactic to wear out their opponent and build more settlements in the meantime. However, by doing so, their security remains threatened, the negotiations are suspended or slowed down, and the cherished idea of peace remains just an idea.

The Syrian-Israeli relations are equally replete with illustrations of lack of realism and creative thinking. For example, Israel might ask itself: why would Syria agree to any peace formula that would not guarantee Israeli withdrawal from the whole Golan Heights occupied in 1967? If Israel can retain territorial war gains, why would Syria not wait until it can recover the whole territory, if not by peace then by war? Syria may be hurting because of the occupation, but the effects have in the meantime been internalized enough not to generate much pressure on Syria to reach an agreement at any cost. Furthermore, why would Israel stipulate “normalization” as a condition for peace when governments can only formalize peace, while the people have to do the normalization, if they choose to? The Israelis may have their own claims from Syria, but a little thinking would suggest that Israel can declare its readiness to withdraw from the whole occupied territories conditional upon reaching an agreement on those claims. If only the Israelis would try to imagine themselves in Syria’s position, they would recognize how much more they can achieve by applying a little more realism to their relations with that country.

On the other hand, Syria is not much more realistic than Israel in the peace negotiations. While Syria should be entitled to recover the whole of its occupied territory, why should Israel commit itself to total withdrawal before it knows what it will get in return, if only in general terms? Israel is in full control of the Golan Heights, its

borders with Syria are peaceful, and the Israeli people are not suffering because of the “dormant state of war” with Syria. Furthermore, Syria's policy of unrealism has deprived that country of the benefits of peace for over two decades. Syria could have recovered the Golan Heights when Egypt recovered Sinai on similar terms. Even now, a conditional declaration by Israel to fully withdraw from the Golan Heights, and an equally conditional declaration by Syria to cooperate with Israel regarding the outstanding issues between them would go a long way toward smoothing the road toward peace. The rhetorical arguments against such realism are simply rhetoric and do not bring any observable benefits to either side.

The position of Lebanon is the most peculiar and the saddest of all in the Arab-Israeli turmoil. Lebanon cannot fight, but it receives the blows. It cannot occupy or defend and ends up occupied. It cannot even control its own factions and warlords, and yet it pays the price for their actions. The government of Lebanon seems helpless and the innocent majority of the Lebanese people suffer the consequences. Israeli, Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese authorities share the responsibility. All of them display lack of sensitivity to the suffering of the Lebanese people, ignore their own responsibility, and continue to put the blame on others. For instance, Israel might ask itself: why would the Lebanese end their resistance to occupation before the occupation is ended? And if, as Israel believes, Syria and Iran control Hizbullah and the resistance, why not face Syria and Iran, directly, rather than hit innocent people in Lebanon? If Israel wants only to protect Israeli citizens on the borders with Lebanon, why not withdraw from Lebanon, fortify its borders, and remove the excuse for the “resistance?”

Of course, Lebanon is not helping. Lebanese authorities have done little, assuming they are able to, to control Hizbullah. Nor have they declared the resistance to occupation a national policy, rather than tolerate it as an uncontrollable factional destabilizing force? The Lebanese authorities may take the brave step of telling Israel, “Withdraw and we will control the borders on our side.” They may take the equally brave step of telling Syria and Iran to end their interference in Lebanon's internal affairs. The Lebanese authorities may even call on the Arab League and the United Nations to come to their aid and help to end the occupation of and violence on Lebanese territory. Syria came into Lebanon at the behest of the Arab League and Syria can be invited to leave by the Arab League.

All in all, there is a glaring poverty of reason, realism, and courage among the Israeli and Arab leaders who claim to be seeking peace with each other. Unfortunately, these leaders have the apparent support, voluntary or otherwise, of their constituents who pay the price with human and material losses. Pierre Mendes-France ended French occupation in Indo China abruptly. Charles de Gaulle did the same in Algeria. Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat ended the Israeli occupation of Sinai. With some guts, Ehud Barak may make history by ending Israeli occupation of Arab land and making peace in the region a reality. Otherwise it may be time for the people on both sides of the conflict to claim their right to peace and security, and tell their leaders to put an end to misleading rhetoric, face reality, and come to terms with each other in the most direct and honest way possible.

**"GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE FINAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN  
ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS"<sup>19</sup>  
A COMMENT  
April 2000**

To formulate and adopt general principles for the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is a big challenge and could be a major contribution toward conflict resolution. The viability of such principles will depend on whether they apply to the process, the terms, or the aftermath of the resolution. It also depends on where those principles originate, whether they have been tested, and the degree to which they may be generalized to other international peace agreements. A presumably viable set of principles should lead to an ideal agreement and that is what a Joint Working Group (JWG) under the auspices of the Weatherhead Center for International Relations at Harvard has tried to produce. The members of the JWG are Jewish and Arab experts who have devoted years to the study and analysis of the Arab Israeli conflict. Their set of proposed principles for an Israeli-Palestinian agreement would provide for “responsiveness to the needs and sense of justice of both parties,” “conduciveness to a relationship based on trust and equality,” “comprehensiveness,” “finality balanced by gradualism and flexibility,” “security agreements,” “economic well-being,” and “national rights and self-determination for both peoples.” Each of these principles is accompanied by some details of what is expected. As a first response it would be hard to disagree with these principles or with the resulting agreement, assuming such an agreement was achievable. Unfortunately these principles appear to be operational only because they are existentialist and are based on oversimplification. On one hand, they contain certain inherent contradictions. On the other, their point of departure is quite recent so that the early history of the conflict and its consequences are largely ignored. For example, under principle seven, both parties would have the right of self-determination and sovereignty. Yet in the same principle the authors stipulate a two-state solution. According to

---

<sup>19</sup>

principle three, the peace agreement “should be accompanied by agreements with Arab states relevant” to the agreement, and it “should strive to be part of an overall agreement with the Arab states.” But what if one or another of those states does not agree? Will the peace agreement disintegrate? Would not such a condition give any relevant Arab state a veto power over the agreement? And would it not give each of the two parties an excuse to delay an agreement until they have a special advantage simply by setting conditions not acceptable to an Arab state? According to the first principle, the agreement should be “anchored in UN resolutions 242 and 338 and other relevant UN resolutions as agreed upon by the parties.” However, this means that either party can reject any of the other resolutions and thus reduce the impact of the peace agreement severely, to its own advantage or to the disadvantage of the other party.

There is, however, another, more important shortcoming with these principles. The parties to the conflict are supposed to consent to solutions based on justice and fairness, but there are no guidelines to what is just and fair. Given the differential distribution of power between the two parties, it is unlikely that they will agree on what is just and fair. The weaker party may have to acquiesce in order to salvage what can be salvaged. That, however, would result in less than the ideal peace agreement envisaged by the JWG. A more serious problem with these principles is that they are not basic or general enough to be called general principles or to guide negotiators toward the ideal peace agreement. For the principles to be general, they ought to apply to different conflicts and situations and not be specific to one situation only. Furthermore, they should be regarded as general and applicable to other parties, who are not directly related to the specific conflict. Probably the two most general and basic such principles (which are not included) are: first, all territorial war gains must be returnable. Second, all UN resolutions related to the given conflict must be respected and complied with.

If territorial war gains are not returnable, war will continue to be an option for recovering lost territory, regardless of the passage of time. That means the peace agreement will not be stable. It may be impossible to return certain war-acquired territories for a variety of reasons. In that case the winning party must surrender an equivalent area in exchange. To suggest some other form of compensation for lost territory would be a license for the more powerful party to acquire territory at the expense of the weaker party, and that leads to instability. The general principles of the JWG stipulate that the peace agreement should be anchored in UN resolutions 242 and 338. That may be appropriate from a pragmatic standpoint, but not from a general principles standpoint. The ideal agreement should be based on all the UN resolutions. Whether the parties to the agreement choose to comply or not is up to them, but the general principles stand as the torch that lights the way toward a stable international peaceful community. For example, Resolution 181 called for the partition of Palestine and the creation of two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Palestinians rejected that resolution and that was wrong from the general principle standpoint. Israel acquired more land than the UN allocated for a Jewish state, and that was wrong from a general principles standpoint. Resolution 194 called for putting Jerusalem under effective UN control and that has not been respected or complied with by Israel, Jordan, or the Palestinians. Ironically, by complying with that resolution, Jerusalem would remain united and both the Israelis and the Palestinians would have Jerusalem as their capital. That same resolution also gave the Palestinian refugees the option of returning to their homes or compensation; this

option has so far been ignored, but the principle stands. Resolution 465 calls for respect for and compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding treatment of occupied territories and the people living on it. It calls on the occupiers to treat the people according to international standards, and to refrain from changing “the physical character, demographic composition, [and] institutional structure” of occupied territories; this resolution was violated by Jordan before 1967 and has been violated by Israel since 1948. Finally, resolution 681 again calls for respect of the Geneva Convention, especially with regard to deportation of natives of the occupied territories by the occupiers, which also has been ignored.

The JWG has tried to create a framework for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, which is admirable. But that framework must not be at the expense of the concept of general principles. Compromise falls in the domain of negotiators. The JWG members are acting as philosophers, theoreticians, and creators of general principles that would stand on their own merit, regardless of whether certain parties agree with them or not. For this reason, it behooves the JWG not only to remove the contradictions and statements which tend to dilute the generality of the principles, but also to acclaim and adopt the two additional suggested principles: that all territorial war gains are returnable, and all UN resolutions should be respected and complied with. For only then will the principles be general enough and capable of leading to the ideal peace agreement the JWG has tried to promote.

PICAR Working Paper, September 1998. Members of the JWG are: Joseph Alpher, Gabriel Ben-Dor, Ibrahim Dakkak, Slomo Gazit, Yossi Katz, Ghassan Khatib, Moshe Ma'oz, Karma Nabulsi, Shimon Shamir, and Khalil Shikaki

**UNITED STATES POLICIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
TIME FOR REDIRECTION  
May 2000**

The protests against the WTO, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), first in Seattle and then in Washington, are signals that these institutions need to revise their policies if they are to help developing countries in general, and the suffering segments of the populations of these countries in particular. At the same time, these protests are aimed largely at the US policies toward the developing countries, considering that the US is the driving force behind the policies of those institutions. If so, then US policies ought to be revised as well, even before those institutions can revise their policies. This certainly is true of the policies of the US and these international institutions in the Middle East. Therefore, my focus will be on US policies and the need for their revision to make them viable and consistent with the US proclaimed objectives toward the region.

The US policies may seem successful from the standpoint of their makers, and probably from the standpoint of certain governments in the Middle East, but they are considered failures by a majority of the M.E. people. They have failed to promote economic development and may have inhibited it. They have failed to reduce inequality and may have increased it. They have failed to bring about peace and justice to the region. And they have failed to promote democracy, individual freedom, and human rights. All these are presumed objectives of US policies toward the people in the Middle East. It is true that none of these objectives may be achieved without the active participation of the governments and people of the M.E., but the influence of the US could be a major instigator of change toward those goals. Unfortunately the US has not exercised its influence as expected.

The US has succeeded in bringing certain American values and products to the people of the M.E., at least to those who can afford them. McDonald's, Pepsi Cola, and Hollywood are probably the best illustrations. American-made arms are also in great demand and the US government is usually anxious to sell and therefore willing to extend aid and loans to facilitate arms deals. But none of these forms of interaction with the M.E. are conducive to economic development and growth. They promote consumerism and in some ways inhibit development by limiting saving and investment. That, however, is not the fault of the US. The US may be at fault mainly by failing to tie its economic aid to viable developmental projects, which may increase output and raise productivity. On one hand, US aid to the M.E. countries has been too little to make a difference, except aid to Egypt and Israel, which is politically motivated. Even aid to Egypt, when measured relative to Egypt's population and needs, seems too small to advance development substantially. On the other hand, US economic aid, and loans from the World Bank and the IMF, have been made conditional upon instituting structural economic reform, promoting free trade, and creating a free domestic market to conform to the demands of the global economy. Though these conditions may seem reasonable as seen by the US and the international institutions, and may be defensible by economic theory, they are neither reasonable nor defensible given the low level of economic and technological development in the M.E, outside Israel, and the relatively primitive market institutions in those countries. The Arab countries and Iran are too underdeveloped in technology and economic and trade institutions to be able to jump into the global market by a stroke of the pen. Nor is the domestic market developed enough to function as the heart of a market economy. The flow of information is limited because of both poverty and illiteracy, and the buyers and sellers are still under the spell of tradition and social and cultural values, which interfere with rational economic behavior, assumed by the proponents of structural reform and globalize. To illustrate, much of the business transactions in the M.E. is carried out in cash, literally in dollar, pound, or dinar notes, sometimes involving hundreds of thousands of dollars worth, without a written contract, and with little consideration for the costs of idle money held in the form of cash. Therefore, US pressures to institute structural reform and jump into the global economy may have sustained and enhanced economic duality in all countries of the region, except Israel. Thus, in each one of these countries there is a small sector that functions as part of the global economy, usually in partnership with international corporations, and a vast sector that functions as it did decades ago. The result has been sustained underdevelopment, low productivity, low incomes, and widespread poverty. Once again, the US cannot be held responsible for the failures of the M.E. regimes, except that the US has done little to change conditions and help to promote economic development, improve the market, or increase efficiency.

US policy makers pay lip service to the idea of economic development and entrust the task of promoting development to the World Bank and IMF. However, those institutions tend to impose, not promote, their policies in the region. They apply the same formula to all situations and rarely do they conduct depth studies of the development needs and possibilities of the individual countries. The World Bank and IMF professional staff in the M.E. region often act as undisputed experts who hold the power of the purse, and pay little attention to the ideas of their local counterparts or local policy makers, and they often do so in a rude manner. I have personally observed such behavior in the field

and made my protests known on the spot. It is not surprising, therefore, that neither structural reform nor economic developments have materialized out of their efforts.

US policies in the M.E. have also been less successful than they could be in promoting democracy and human rights. While US officials and law makers never cease to preach and even threaten on behalf of democracy and human rights in China, Vietnam, and Cuba, they hardly ever raise a voice on behalf of democracy and human rights in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Morocco, Jordan, Egypt, and Israel. Though most countries in the M.E. have some form of election and representation, the results and the procedures have little in common with democracy, individual rights, or popular participation in governance. When only one candidate is nominated (or none as in the Gulf countries), and that candidate receives 99% or more of the votes, the US policy makers must wonder, but they say little and do nothing. It seems that oil, the big market for US products, especially arms, and the “false friendship” with Arab countries created to advance peace with Israel, render the US willing to overlook such abuses of democracy and individual freedom.

The failure of the US policies has been even worse in defending and promoting human rights in the region. Arbitrary detention, sundry conviction and punishment, torture and cruelty, and exclusion and suppression of women are rampant in most countries of the M.E. Even local authorities have come to acknowledge such a state of affairs. King Mohammed of Morocco has instituted a system of compensation for those jailed arbitrarily during his father's rule. Probably the most horrible illustration of cruelty and abuse of human rights come from Saudi Arabia. As reported by the Associated Press, nine young men have been charged with transvestite behavior. Five of them have been sentenced to six years in prison and 2,600 lashes, to be applied in 50 sessions, 15 days apart, 52 lashes each session. The other four have been sentenced to 5 years in prison and 2,400 lashes, 48 lashes each time, 15 days apart, in 50 sessions. It seems that these nine people will be kept alive for two years just to apply lashes to their bodies. If this is not cruelty, what is? While the US authorities overlook abuses of human rights in Saudi Arabia, they condemn Saddam Hussein (justifiably) for abusing the human rights of his people. Unfortunately, the US compounds its inconsistency by committing its own abuses of the rights of innocent Iraqi people, especially the children, by sustaining the sanctions against Iraq, even though these sanctions have had little effect on Saddam Hussein and his regime.

The people of the M.E. are aware of the abuses practiced in their own countries, but most are too scared to raise their voices in protest. The US can do a lot to influence conditions in the region and make it easier for the people to exercise their political and human rights. First and foremost, the US must try to have more contact with the people, and not only with the ruling regimes. The US policy makers and representatives in the M.E. should pay more attention to what those people have to say and how to go about improving economic and political conditions. Second, the US can influence the World Bank and the IMF to make them more flexible and more receptive to local ideas and suggestions. Third, the US must take a stand against abuses of democracy and human rights and not compromise principles for the sake of oil and the sale of arms. The US can set an example by removing the sanctions against Iraq and limiting UN action to control of mass destructive weapons only so that the Iraqi people can rehabilitate themselves as human beings. Finally, the US can influence economic behavior in the M.E. by lending

adequate funds but only for viable development projects that would bring those countries closer to the competitive standards demanded by the global economy. While only the people of the M.E. can realize these objectives, the US can do much to help them make the transition, and by doing so transform its own policies from failures to measurable successful endeavors.

**UNITED STATES POLICIES IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT:  
Biased, Predictable, Effective, and Indispensable  
June 2000**

There are two common attitudes toward the United States (US) in the Arab Middle East: on one hand there is a general admiration and almost affection for the American people; on the other there is an equally strong criticism of US policies relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Arabs, especially Palestinians, blame the US for their misfortunes and for the victorious and secure penetration of Israel in Palestine. They also blame the US for the inability of the United Nations to implement its relevant resolutions in the Middle East region. The Arabs have a point: US policies have been demonstrably biased, consistently so to be predictable, and effective in strengthening Israel and weakening the Arabs. But upon reflection the Arabs may also find that US policies have been indispensable to their own advantage, for without them their losses might have been larger and their gains less realizable than they have been in the struggle against Israel. In fact, all the achievements of the Palestinians might have been out of reach without US influence and active participation.

While the assessment of policy as biased is a subjective judgment, there are sufficient experiences that illustrate the bias, at least as perceived by Arabs. The Israelis and Jews in general would most likely consider US policies as fair, justifiable, and expected from a friend and an ally, given their “predicament” in the Arab Middle East. Americans, especially policy makers, democrat or republican, see their policies as motivated by their dedication to peace and the secure sovereignty of all states in the region. By default, the Palestinians are thus excluded from the protection of US policies because they do not have a recognized sovereign state, in contrast to Israel, Jordan, Kuwait or Egypt. Nevertheless, these rationalizations of US policy do little to alter the

facts or perceptions that US policy has consistently favored Israel at the expense of the Arabs. To illustrate, once the state of Israel was established and the UN Partition Plan rejected by the Arabs, US policy turned against the concept of an independent state for the Palestinians, as had been approved by the Partition Plan. Up to now US policy makers have yet to publicly endorse the concept of a sovereign Palestinian state. American material and moral support for Israel have been disproportionately large and disproportionately small to all the Arabs combined, compared with Israel. Military aid to Israel has always been forthcoming, including most advanced weapons, aircraft, anti-missile instruments, as well as intelligence, radar, surveillance, and communication systems, enough to guarantee Israel's military "superiority" over all its Arab neighbors. The US has also made a habit of casting a veto in the Security Council so that Israel could take for granted that the Security Council would not be able to force it to comply with any resolutions it did not like. Israelis use massive violence against Arabs, including civilians, but their actions are regarded as defensive measures, while Arabs using violence to liberate their land are regarded as terrorists. Even when the US plays the role of mediator and peace maker, it tailors its policies to promote Israeli objectives, such as incremental peace making, which gives Israel time to create new facts on the ground, build more settlements, and deplete the resources of the Palestinians to make them increasingly more dependent on aid for survival. Henry Kissinger went farther by promising Israel that the US would not endorse any policy affecting Israel without prior consultation with and approval by the latter. Strangely enough this promise has been integrated as a standard US policy, not to try to force the hand of Israel in any negotiations relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The policies outlined above have been followed by all US administrations from Truman to Clinton. President Nixon, who might have deviated from that policy, made Henry Kissinger his secretary of state and thus helped to reinforce those policies rather than deviate from or modify them.

Arabs often wonder why the US takes sides against them in favor of Israel, causing them harm and suffering. While explanations abound, no convincing rationale has been found. For example, US policies may be influenced by some dormant feelings of guilt for failure to prevent the Holocaust. Or Americans may feel a certain affinity with Judaism as a foundation for what is called the Judeo-Christian ethics, which presumably guide behavior in the US. Another possible explanation is that Americans have a certain empathy with Israel as an "underdog" in a sea of Arabs in the Middle East. Some tend to explain the bias as a function of the strong Israeli/Jewish lobby in the US and the virtual absence of an Arab/Palestinian lobby or even an adequate objective source of information regarding the Palestinians and their lost homeland. Finally, Israel may have an advantage because it shares with the US values of democracy and individual freedom, especially for Jews, and a melting pot for people from every corner of the world. Israel in fact may be seen as a miniature clone of the US. The creation of Israel may also represent a replay of the drama of building the American republic. Whites came to America from the outside, decimated the Indians and took the land, used Blacks as cheap or free labor, and segregated both Indians and the Blacks from their own physical and social living standards. Similarly, Israelis came from the outside, bought a small percentage of the land they occupy, then started to evict and displace Arabs and take over their land and property to make room for Jewish immigrants. They also have utilized cheap Arab labor and virtually built a wall between them and the native Arabs,

thus perpetuating two separate communities and two unequal standards of living. Furthermore, the creation of Israel is often seen, not only as a replay of the American experience, but also as an act of heroism, creativity, self reliance, dedication, and sacrifice, all of which are values highly revered in the US. The Americans may in fact congratulate themselves that their policies in the Middle East have been highly effective. As evidence, they see Israel in place, relatively secure, especially since the Camp David Agreement which neutralized Egypt; Israel has more territory than the UN had allocated for it; Israel is economically developed, technologically advanced, militarily superior, and a friend and ally of the US. The US policy may be seen as effective also because in spite of its biases, the US is still able to count most Arab regimes as friends, probably including the PNA led by Yasser Arafat.

If one explores the dynamics of US policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict, it may come as a surprise to discover that that policy has been indispensable for Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. US policy has reduced the potential losses of the Arabs in the war with Israel, and it facilitated realization of their achievements. For example, by promoting a cease-fire, which ended the 1948/49 war, US intervention stopped potential further Israeli expansion into Arab territory. By endorsing UN Resolution 194, the US kept alive the Palestinian right of return or compensation, as well as the idea of an international status for Jerusalem; the US has so far refused to recognize Israel's annexation of Jerusalem as its own capital. In 1956, the US put an end to the Israeli-British-French occupation of the Suez Canal and other parts of Egypt. By sponsoring the passage of UN Resolution 242 after the 1967 war, the US created an international legal and logical basis for demanding Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and from other occupied Arab territories. US intervention in the 1973 war between Egypt and Israel saved Egypt's third army, which Israel had managed to besiege and threaten with annihilation. US intervention also saved the encircled PLO forces in Lebanon in 1982 and arranged for their safe passage out of Lebanon to Tunisia, with their light arms. US mediation has also facilitated the Rabin/Arafat handshake and thus helped to resurrect Palestinian dreams of a state of their own. Finally, US material aid has played an important role in building the Palestinian economy and society, even though it is like a drop in a bucket compared with aid to Israel. A cynic might suggest that the US has done all this to help Israel keep its territorial and security war gains, or that the US has interests of its own in the region such as oil. That may be so, but the effects on the Palestinians remain positive, given Arab inability to help them, and their own isolation, disorganization, and poverty. Looking at US policy from this perspective, it appears to have been indispensable for the Palestinians. Which other power could have helped the Palestinians resurrect their national dreams, salvage most, as expected, of the occupied territories? The US is the only power with sufficient military, economic, and political clout to significantly influence events in the UN and on the ground. It is the only power that can influence Israel as a friend and benefactor; and it is the only Western power with no colonial history in the Middle East. Whether or not the Palestinians should be grateful to the US is their own decision to make, but they should recognize the significance of the role of the US in realizing the achievements they have made and the ones they hope to make in the near future.

## **The Legacy of Hafez Al Asad of Syria**

### **July 2000**

Most observers would probably say “wait and see” what the legacy of Hafez al-Assad will be because it is too soon to assess what his impact has been. However, the facts of his presidency and leadership will not change with the passage of time, although more facts may become known and the interpretations may change. But it is important, especially for the Syrians and the Arab world at large to look at the facts and explore the lessons that may be learned, even this soon after his eternal departure.

Hafez al-Assad has been described as the creator of political stability in Syria and, to an extent, in Lebanon. His party and regime have been in power for over three decades, following a decade of coups, assassinations, and disorder. During most of this time he was at the helm with an iron hand. Elections were held but the results were always fantastic, bordering on unanimous national support for him. Was that continuity of unchallenged rule in “republic” a sign of political stability? To the extent that there was no room for opposition or dissent, the apparent stability was an imposed one, based on force and oppression, which virtually exclude popular participation in governance, freedom of expression, or any form of political choice. The test of stability is to open up the system and let the people decide freely. This did not happen under Hafez al-Assad, nor is it likely to happen soon, since his Ba’th party has rushed to anoint his son as successor. To be able to do so, the parliament has promoted his son Bashar from colonel to general, made him commander of the armed forces, amended the constitution to allow him at 34 to be president instead of waiting till the age of 40 as had been required. Furthermore, the party has already nominated him as the only candidate for president in the special elections to be held shortly. If successful, as it is most likely to be, this extraordinary process will set a precedent in the Arab world, thus transforming a

republican regime into a pseudo-monarchy, barely different from the archaic monarchies of the region.

Al-Assad's economic and social achievements were a little more positive than the political, as measured by the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI), though not by Syria's per capita income ranking. Infant mortality has gone down radically during the last three decades, life expectancy has increased, and adult literacy has almost doubled. Safe water has become much more accessible and the means of communication have been expanded. Even so, Syria's economy is still underdeveloped, as measured by factor productivity, per capita income, the levels of technology and industrialization, and the composition of the import and export baskets. Syria is hardly any more competitive on the global market today than it was three decades ago, in terms of quality and quantity of output, as well as in terms of efficient utilization of resources. Its national debt has grown and the service charges absorb a big part of the export earnings of foreign exchange. Furthermore, Syria's economic infrastructure is still relatively backward and incapable of supporting a developed economy. While Syria has been somewhat insulated from the global economy by plan, it has failed to build an efficient, developing economy on its own. Instead, corruption has been widespread at all levels of government; a former prime minister committed suicide a few months ago to avoid exposure. To its credit however, Syria has increased food production, guaranteed a surplus of calorie supply, and has tried to reduce the poverty index, though with only limited success.

Hafez al-Assad was a military man and therefore it was not surprising that he has tried to build a strong military machine. He often spent more on the military than on education and health combined, but few positive results can be attributed to the high expenditure on the military. Syria was quickly defeated in 1967 when al-Assad was minister of defense and commander of the air force. Syria was again quickly defeated in 1973 when al-Assad was president, after its initial surprise successful retrieval of most of the Golan Heights; in no time the Golan Heights were occupied again by Israeli forces. Syria's military encounters with Lebanese warlords and with Palestinian forces in Lebanon can hardly be regarded as tests of power, given the inherent weaknesses of both of these adversaries compared with a regional "military power." Hardly any other positive impact can be attributed to al-Assad's military power other than suppressing opposition within the country.

Al-Assad's intra-regional and international policies have had no evident positive results. Syria has tried to play a leadership role in the Arab world to promote Arab nationalism, but only in rhetoric. There has been little success in realizing Arab unity, establishing recognized regional leadership, or reducing friction among the Arab countries. Even al-Assad's friendship with Iran has been more an expression of negativism toward Israel, Iraq, and the west than on unity of policy and objectives. It is interesting that al-Assad opposed Israel vehemently but he maintained peaceful borders with that country even though the borders are within Syrian territory. He placed Syrian troops in Lebanon to bring about stability but they have become occupiers and most Lebanese want them out, though they are helpless in that endeavor. In the meantime Lebanon has become almost permanently divided between factions at the expense of the central government.

Hafez al-Asad has been steadfast in refusing to conclude peace with Israel at the expense of Syrian territory, and rightly so, but he has failed to produce an alternative approach that would make it unavoidable or too enticing for Israel to come to the table,

surrender all occupied territory, and sign a peace agreement. He criticized the Palestinians for compromising with Israel but he offered them little substantive help to fortify their position and render compromise unnecessary. He also condemned Egypt and Jordan for applying land for peace formula, but then he became anxious to exchange full peace for full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian land, only to find out that Israel has in the meantime become more greedy for his land and arrogant enough to hold back its agreement.

Hafez al-Asad was certainly a survivor, but he survived by suppressing his people, as I have observed first hand in Syria. He tried to promote socialist secularism within the country but did not hesitate to crush his confessional and political opponents with brutal force as he did in the city of Hama. It is true that he maintained unity of the country, but at what cost, and was the unity of the country truly in danger?

What then is the legacy of Hafez al-Asad in Syria and the Middle East region? The facts suggest the following: 1) He left behind a slow moving underdeveloped economy; 2) he improved social conditions in the country, but poverty is still relatively high; 3) he created “political stability” by force and not by democratic and free choice means; 4) he adopted a position of steadfastness by saying NO to peace making efforts, but he produced no creative tactic or strategy to bring about peace; finally, 5), while Hafez al-Asad preached Arab unity, his Syria has been relatively isolated, at least in part because of his policies. Whether the future will vindicate Hafez al-Asad and feature him as a great leader and a hero remains to be seen, but it will be too late to achieve what might have been achievable in his lifetime.

## **CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

**August 2000**

The Middle East (M.E.) countries, members of the Arab League, Iran and Israel, face several common challenges as they enter the new century. All these countries, with minor exceptions, face the challenge of achieving economic and technological development, political stability, national security, a healthy environment, efficient use of natural resources, universal quality education, and internal social and economic integration. All of them need to reconcile religion and tradition with secular and rational approaches to decision making. They also need to balance population growth with their resource endowments. However, most important of all, again with minor exceptions, they face the challenge of institutionalizing basic freedoms, especially the freedom of thought and expression, freedom of belief, and freedom of choice in personal affairs and governance of the country. Of all these challenges two loom large as the most critical and deserving of immediate attention: the advancement of knowledge, and the institutionalization of basic freedoms. Knowledge comes from formal and informal education. Its impact depends on the quantity and quality of education, and on the integration of theory with application. M.E. countries have achieved high rates of adult literacy, reaching more than 90% of the adult population in some countries, but in others the rate is less than 50%, especially among females, in spite of mandated universal public education. The problem is of two kinds: laxity of implementation, and the poor quality of education. Some countries do not have sufficient facilities to absorb all prospective students and therefore implementation is slow on purpose. In other cases implementation is neglected to avoid conflict with tradition and religion, especially in female education. Even more disturbing is the automatic elevation of students from one grade to another

regardless of their qualifications and merit. I have observed this phenomenon among Israeli Arabs where graduates of middle school had little basic reading and writing proficiency. This is “schooling without education or knowledge”, which is not uncommon in any country of the region.

A more difficult challenge to M.E. educators is to transform the quality and content of the curriculum to make it more relevant, dynamic, analytical, and effective in meeting the demands of the new century. In particular, M.E. education, except in Israeli Jewish sectors, lacks emphasis on science and technology, analytical thinking and freedom of thought and expression. Rote learning is still the rule rather than the exception. Memorization of the text will guarantee high marks and quick advancement regardless of the ability to think, analyze, or solve problems. Even graduates with advanced degrees seem unable, or not free to apply analytical thinking. This handicap is so serious that foreign experts working in the region show little respect for or confidence in the educational quality or analytical ability of their local counterparts, as I have observed first hand. Even M.E. governments and institutions tend to defer to foreign experts at the expense of their own for similar reasons. Poor education begins in the home and in elementary school and continues through upper levels, in part because of the lack of resources, such as qualified instructors, laboratories, workshops, and seminar facilities. But the major reasons for the poor training and achievement in rational and analytical thinking are the sustained power of tradition, the ubiquitous influence of religion, and the absence of basic freedoms, especially the freedom of thought and expression. Academicians in various countries have been detained or fired because they raised questions about religion. Others have been arrested because they encouraged discussion of corruption. Still others have been harassed because they applied critical analysis to policies of the political leaders. Limitations on basic freedoms are most evident in the areas of social and political governance. All regimes in the M.E., except in Lebanon and Israel, are basically imposed, either by tradition, as in the outdated monarchies, sheikhdoms, and emirates, or by force and repression, as in the so-called republics. The former are taken as given and no one dares raise questions about their relevance, legitimacy, or people's choice. The republic's regimes impose themselves by suppression of the freedom of choice and expression, control of the media, disinformation, and tolerance and breeding of corruption. Even experts who have the knowledge and ability to serve society with efficiency and honesty find it unsafe to express their views. Others allow themselves to be co-opted to reap the benefits of conformity and compliance. Limitations on freedom are well illustrated by national elections, which produce close to 100% approval of the single candidate, usually nominated by the regime in power. The results of these limitations are generations of scared individuals, conformists, and rote learners who lack the ability and freedom to be analytical and creative. Those who deviate from this mode of operation are penalized and silenced, or they leave their home countries to the west or to Australia where they excel and flourish. M.E. countries have made some economic progress, but are still underdeveloped economically and technologically. They have made social progress and have become modern, but mostly as consumers, not producers. They have adopted models of democratic government but they continue to celebrate traditional and backward systems of government, which suppress freedom to stay in power. To face the challenges of the 21st century successfully, M.E. countries have no choice but to change their

approaches to both knowledge and freedom. Educators have to be free to educate students and help them to think, use modern facilities and tools of analysis, and express themselves freely, without fear of punishment or exclusion. Authors need to be free to publish in whatever field they wish without fear of censorship and reprisal. The media should be free to disseminate information on any subject, as long as the information is based on fact, or acknowledge, declared opinion or interpretation. M.E. countries need to pay more attention to freedom of the citizen to make choices in governance. And they need to bring knowledge to all residents, especially minorities and women who represent more than 50% of the population in most countries of the region. In the final analysis, knowledge and freedom are integral preconditions to all successful endeavors of development and growth in the economy and society. Knowledge without freedom keeps one in the dungeons of incapacitation. Freedom without knowledge leads into dark alleys or to rebellion. With knowledge and freedom, the major components of human capital, the M.E. people will be able to overcome the challenges facing them in the new century.

### **JERUSALEM: A KEY TO PEACE OR WHAT? September 2000**

Both Arabs and Jews or Palestinians and Israelis claim a right to Jerusalem. Israel claims all of a united city with certain rights for the others but under its sovereignty. The Palestinians claim a right to East Jerusalem, including the places holy to Jews, Muslims, and Christians. However, a little bit of reflection would suggest that neither party has a clear indisputable right. Neither party would win in an international court of law. Neither would win in a judgment of history, nor would either win by invoking religious belief and freedom of worship. The only way either party can win is by resorting to force and military power and vanquishing the competitor. Yet, both can win by relinquishing their insupportable claims and adopting a spirit of sharing and cooperation to render Jerusalem the eternal open city it deserves to be. The Palestinians' and Israelis' claims for Jerusalem are in violation of the outstanding judgment of the international community. United Nations Resolutions 181 and 194 call for the internationalization of Jerusalem, all of it as one united city. These resolutions are still valid and all actions by either party to establish sovereignty over Jerusalem are in violation and are sources of instability and political disorder. The Palestinians and Israelis claim Jerusalem as their own on grounds that it was theirs in the past. What that means is that at certain periods in the past Arabs or Jews had the power to rule over Jerusalem. The Jews ruled over the city for a combined period of about 500 years. The Arabs ruled over it for a combined period of 709 years, out of a period of thousands of years. Eventually both of them lost their power and Jerusalem fell under the rule of others, including Romans, Ottomans, and British. If the Jews and Arabs can have an historical claim to Jerusalem, why not all those others, and what is the nature of this historical claim? Is sovereignty over Jerusalem a matter of inheritance?

And are the Israelis and Palestinians living in Palestine today the legitimate heirs to that inheritance? The claims on the basis of history are neither supportable nor legitimate. On the contrary, these claims can be dangerous and destabilizing. Arabs and Jews claim Jerusalem on the basis of religion, Judaism and Islam, but what about the Christians? Do they not have as much right to claim the city, as do the Muslims and the Jews? Does spirituality validate claims to sovereignty? Members of all these religions can revere Jerusalem as a cathedral of their faith without having national sovereignty over it. Israeli rule over Jerusalem does not bring the Jews around the world any closer to Jerusalem as a holy shrine. Nor does Palestinian or Arab sovereignty mean that Muslims of the world are in spiritual ecstasy as a result, although in both cases there may be political ecstasy. In fact Muslims, Jews, and Christians do not need sovereignty over Jerusalem to be truly religious. Otherwise, the majority of members of all three religions who cannot be in Jerusalem or who are not Israelis or Palestinians would be condemned to being not truly religious. And that cannot be for they all believe in One God and that God is supposed to be everywhere. Therefore, they can worship God and be truly religious regardless how close or far they are from Jerusalem. Furthermore, to claim Jerusalem on the basis of religion may be a form of idolatry, which is contrary to the teachings of all three religions. Israel's strongest claim is one of power. Israel won the war and occupied Jerusalem. Unfortunately claims based on power are not legitimate and are sources of instability. The defeated party will always look to the day when it can overpower the occupier and reestablish its own claims. The Israelis know that the Palestinians and other Arabs will not willingly recognize Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem, even if they were to sign a peace agreement. Similarly, the Arabs know that Jews around the world will continue to say "next year in Jerusalem." Therefore, the cost of sovereignty over Jerusalem by force will be high for both Israelis and Palestinians. The Israelis will have to maintain a strong military, and the Palestinians and other Arabs will have to go on trying to build a strong military in anticipation of the ultimate showdown. Mutual disaster may be the only sure prospect if power is the determinant of who shall rule over Jerusalem. The same gloomy prospect would prevail if Jerusalem were to be divided between Israeli and Palestinian sovereignties because the divided city between 1949 and 1967 resulted from war and was in violation of United Nations resolutions. Such a solution would remain a source of conflict between them because both will continue to wish for and hope to, one day, rule over the whole city. If history, religion, and power are not sufficient grounds to establish legitimate claims that may gain recognition and lead to peace, only one alternative remains, namely cooperation and co-existence in Jerusalem as an open neutral city for all to cherish, revere, protect, and call home, at least spiritually. To achieve that objective, the United Nations has called for its internationalization. Israel at first agreed by accepting the Partition Plan and Resolution 181. The Arabs did not accept because they wanted all of Jerusalem. Now the Israelis want all of Jerusalem and the Palestinians would settle for the eastern part as marked prior to the 1967 war. However, both of these new claims, of Israelis and Palestinians, are in violation of the United Nations resolutions, which still carry endorsement of a majority of the nations in the world. Many Arabs and Jews support the idea of internationalization, though they may hesitate to say so publicly. Most Christians around the world would endorse the idea of an international open Jerusalem. The Pope has called for internationalization. Jimmy Carter, Anwar Sadat, and Menachem Begin agreed

on a plan for a united city under an international administration in their Camp David meetings. But most of all, the quest for peace and stability, is the best argument for an international Jerusalem. An internationally administered open, politically neutral Jerusalem, allows Arab and Jewish residents to continue to live peacefully where they are. It will allow pilgrims and tourists to come and go safely and joyfully. It will spare the city the dangers of conflict between the respective claimants and destruction by war. It will serve as a bridge of peace and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians and between members of all three relevant religions. It will also establish a model and precedent for conflict resolution through sharing and cooperation. An internationally administered Jerusalem, as determined by the United Nations, would also help to establish the primacy of international decision making in conflict resolution. Finally, an international administration might permit both Israelis and Palestinians to place presidential offices in Jerusalem as their symbolic capital where the diplomatic corps would be welcome. The future of Jerusalem and the relations between Israelis and Palestinians depend on the willingness of these people to perceive the powerful attraction of this win-win solution. Jerusalem will remain united, open, apolitical, and a symbolic capital for both peoples. Jerusalem will also become the bridge to a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, a goal they both have desired for a long time.

**FAITH AND RELIGION IN NATIONAL POLITICS:  
THE LIEBERMAN CONTROVERSY  
October 2000**

The selection of Senator Joe Lieberman as the Democratic candidate for Vice President of the United States has been another major step in taming ethnic discrimination. For the first time in US history a non-Christian has been nominated by a major party to be on the national ticket and first in line to become president, should the president be unable to perform his/her duties according to the Constitution. This step should be most welcome in a country that prides itself as the home of diversity, democracy, freedom, and equality, its persisting shortcomings notwithstanding. Senator Lieberman was elated by the invitation to be on the ticket with Al Gore. He also was emboldened enough to inject faith and religion into the campaign and implicitly into his prospective impact on policy. So far he has missed no opportunity to emphasize the significance of faith in his life. But he also has been promoting the idea that faith has a place in public policy, building character, safeguarding morality, and in improving society at large. At the same time he has done little to discourage his characterization by the media as an Orthodox Jew, although he may be more appropriately described as a practicing Jew, or simply as an American, fully qualified and entitled to run for national office. Senator Lieberman has invoked the US Constitution to bolster his belief that religion has a place in public life. I warmly welcome Senator Lieberman's nomination for Vice President as an important step in combating ethnic discrimination and prejudice, and I shall vote for the Gore Lieberman ticket. Nevertheless, I consider Senator Lieberman's position regarding faith and religion in public policy to be wrong, divisive, constitutionally indefensible, and socially inappropriate. I should note, however, that

Lieberman was not the first in this election year to bring religion into campaign politics. George W. Bush pronounced Jesus as his ideal philosopher and as Governor of Texas, he has instituted a Jesus Day for annual celebration--I wonder if he is contemplating a Moses Day, a Mohammad Day, a Buddha Day, and so on, in sympathy with his diverse constituents all of whom have votes in the election. Al Gore has described himself as a reborn Christian. Apparently both he and George Bush have redefined Christianity to allow themselves to be in favor of the death penalty.

Joe Lieberman has the right to his faith and religion and also to profess both in public if queried about them as a way of letting voters know him better. But as a candidate for national office he has neither mandate nor obligation to preach his faith or religion in the campaign for that office. Had the voters wanted a missionary as Vice President, Al Gore would have selected a preacher, and he did not. Joe Lieberman was selected for candidate as a Jew in the ethnic sense, not in the religious sense, which he certainly knows but chooses to ignore.

Mr. Lieberman says that the Constitution guarantees "freedom of religion" but not "freedom from religion." However, it is not possible to have one without the other. Freedom of religion does not stipulate having a religion, and not believing in or having a religion may itself be a religion. The US Constitution does not require citizens to declare their religion or lack of it. Accordingly, it guarantees freedom of and, implicitly, from religion.

Senator Lieberman regards religious faith as a source of morality, but he does not explain the morality he has in mind. What is moral in one system of beliefs may be quite different in another. The teachings of various religions, denominations, and sects range widely from fully forgiving your enemies to vanquishing them, with all sorts of "moral" guidelines in between. Mr. Lieberman would have a hard time defending those who restrict women to the home and forbid them from getting any education, or working for a living even when they are totally destitute, all in the name of faith and religion, as in Afghanistan. He would have a hard time defending those who open fire on people praying in their house of worship, all in the name of faith and religion, as some Israelis did in the city of Hebron. And he would have a hard time defending polygamy, which is illegal in this country, even though it may be based on faith and religion, as happens in the State of Utah.

Mr. Lieberman says that faith builds character, but he does not explain the character he has in mind. Would he as a national leader in public office prescribe the faith that would produce the desired character? Faith may produce fanatics, blind followers, and dependents, who can hardly make a decision on their own. The fanatics would go to extremes in the name of faith and religion, e.g., Baruch Goldstein, Rabbi Meir Kahane, Osama bin Ladin, and Ayatollah Khomeini. Others would follow the leader blindly and inflict atrocities on others in obedience to the leader who uses faith and religion to command his followers. And still others may become so absorbed in and dependent on religion that they lose their own independence in making decisions or facing the experiences of life rationally and efficiently. These people begin to regard their position in life as predestined by God and that they should do nothing about it. This is a dilemma in the Middle East where people almost mechanically explain and accept the good and bad as God's will. In that same spirit they tolerate the worst kind of government and all levels of poverty, ignorance, and corruption, as if these conditions

were ordained by God. Of course the leaders encourage such blind faith and dependence on religion, which breed docility and conformity. One might argue that these are extreme results of fanaticism, but how does one draw a line between extreme and reasonable without infringing on freedom of religion and freedom of belief and expression?

The nomination of Senator Lieberman as Vice President should be hailed as a brave move toward ethnic integration in the US. However, by continuing to inject religion into the campaign, Mr. Lieberman may be causing divisiveness and disintegration instead. Some might ask why a Jew and not a Black or Hispanic, given that there are more Black and Hispanic than Jewish voters in the US. The fact is that Joe Lieberman has been nominated on his merits as a leader, who also happens to be a Jew by ethnicity, rather than because of his faith and religiosity. To make more of his nomination as a Jew is bound to invite questions, which can only lead to disharmony and potential conflict.

Finally, secular and rational decision-making, combined with science and technology, have proved to be the most efficient engines of growth and prosperity, and the best guarantors of individual freedom and human rights, as experiences of the developed countries clearly illustrate. In contrast, the traditional, confessional, non-secular, and apparently non-rational countries have continued to be backward, underdeveloped, and lacking in all kinds of freedom and respect for human rights.

For all these reasons the Gore/Lieberman campaign would fare much better in the national arena. It would be more consistent with the US. Constitution if the candidates would fully respect the separation of church and state and the peoples' freedom of and from religion. The candidates would be wise to respect the many other sources of morality, character building, and social harmony in society, beside faith and religion. They also would be more effective and admired as leaders if they promote goodness, harmony, and social sensitivity, each for its own sake, rather than for the sake of faith or religion.

**ISRAEL AND ITS ARAB CITIZENS: FORCE AND DISCRIMINATION  
DO NOT MAKE LOYAL CITIZENS  
November 2000**

“We shoot only when they shoot at us,” an Israeli representative of the Israeli embassy in Washington said on the Lehrer News Hour program last week. That statement is absolutely false, unless the Israeli spokesperson equates stones with bullets and slingshots with helicopter gunships. Many people in the United States will no doubt believe the statement and endorse Israel's bloody stand against the Palestinians as defensive in nature, even though the reality is otherwise. Not only do the Israeli security forces shoot at Palestinians before hearing a shot from them, but Israeli police have aimed bullets at Israel's own unarmed Arab citizens. Ten Arab citizens lost their lives as a result. The police action was not in self-defense or protection of human life. No Jewish citizen or policeman was threatened by those demonstrators, nor was any killed.

One might argue that the demonstrators were throwing stones and rocks and that these are lethal weapons. After all David vanquished Goliath with a stone from his slingshot, and citizen demonstrators could have vanquished the police and the army with their stones, but only if the stone throwers are Arabs. Jewish citizens of Israel (religious and otherwise) have often demonstrated against the government. They threw stones, barricaded whole streets, and used firearms against unarmed Arabs, including Israeli citizens, and yet the Israeli police and army have never feared being vanquished by them enough to use firearms against them. The Israeli police and army have not killed Jewish demonstrators and stone throwers, nor have they broken their arms or detained them indefinitely in an arbitrary fashion. Israeli authorities have done all this against Israeli Arabs in defiance of the Israeli laws that are supposed to apply equally to Jews and Arabs alike. The authorities, also arbitrarily, often invoke emergency laws to give themselves liberties in dealing with Arab citizens. The fact is that Israel has always discriminated against its Arab citizens when they demonstrate and when they do not. Evidently Israel

has yet to mature as a democracy for all its citizens. It has yet to mature as an ethnically non-discriminating society. It has yet to mature as a civil society that values human life and the human rights of all humans, even those who are not citizens. Israel has established that image in the West, but it has yet to live up to that image.

Discrimination against Arabs in Israel has been legend: in jobs and economic opportunities, in civic planning and community services, in protection of private property, and in the quality of public education. In all these areas Arabs enjoy less than equal benefits. Israeli Arabs have complained in government offices. They have appealed to the Knesset (Parliament) and the cabinet. They also have complained in the media and the courts of law. So far they have realized little of the equality they are entitled to and which would make them feel like equal citizens. With the new Antiradar (uprising) in the Occupied Territories, discrimination has acquired a new form: the use of firearms by public officials against unarmed citizen Arab demonstrators. By contrast, similar Jewish demonstrators are cajoled and handled with silk gloves.

Some apologists might question the loyalty of the Arab citizens to the State of Israel. They might regard them as a security risk, a fifth column, or potential saboteurs within the Israeli society and economy. The facts show otherwise. A majority of the Israeli Arabs was born after the establishment of the state. Most of them know Hebrew as well as or better than they know Arabic. Many occupy strategic positions in industry and commerce, though not in government, except in ineffective token positions. They have rarely, if ever, displayed acts of disloyalty to the state. They have not participated in acts of violence, spying, or sabotage against the state. It is true that they sympathize with other Palestinians who live under occupation, in refugee camps, and in the Diaspora. They also have criticized government policies and police brutality but only within limits of the law. They have never called for the destruction of the state or questioned the legitimacy of its existence. On the contrary, Israeli Arabs have tried to act as a bridge for peace and understanding between Israel and Palestine. They have done all these things openly as Arabs and citizens of the State of Israel.

Israeli Arabs are about 20 percent of Israel's population and they are there to stay. The quality of their human capital has been rising, and their contribution to the health and wealth of the economy has been positive. They are a political and civic force that can make a difference. They can also help in improving relations between Israel and its neighbors. However, rather than encouraging them, the various Israeli governments have been driving them in the opposite direction by misguided or intended discriminatory behavior. After more than half a century of statehood, Arab citizens in Israel have yet to be integrated in the Israeli society as equals. They have yet to enjoy the same benefits in employment, education, and in the implementation of the law. They have yet to feel secure in the state like certain other citizens. And they have yet to feel protected against discrimination and arbitrary and cruel behavior by the police and the army. Killing them, though unarmed, for demonstrating in sympathy with the injured Palestinian people is a horrible form of discrimination, when Jewish extremists seem to be free to use firearms against unarmed Arabs, and go unpunished.

Force and discrimination do not make loyal citizens. Ethnic discrimination has no place in a democratic, civil, humane society, which Israel claims to be. Israeli intellectuals, civic leaders, the media, and the authorities know all this and they have the responsibility and the ability to promote equality and apply it toward Arab citizens. They

have the responsibility and the ability to make sure that police brutality and arbitrary actions against Arab citizens and all other citizens will not be repeated. They can and should set the example for full equality of all citizens, before the law, in its letter and spirit, for only when all citizens can feel secure and equal, will any citizen be truly secure and equal.

### **Israel and the Palestinians: Time to Rethink Their Strategies and Tactics December 2000**

Events of the last few weeks in Israel and Palestine have had tragic results, including loss of life, injuries, business and property destruction, and loss of confidence in the Israelis' and Palestinians' commitment to peace and cooperation. As expected under occupation, the occupied Palestinians have suffered most of the casualties. However, the bereaved Palestinian and Israeli families and the injured people are the victims of avoidable follies and wasteful tactics of the leaders on both sides. Those events have also brought into question the current strategies and tactics of Israelis and Palestinians alike. The intensity of actions and reactions displayed since Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount suggests that it is time to rethink those tactics if peace and security are truly their mutual objective.

Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount did not have to cause problems, were it not clad in demonstrably provocative symbolism. Since both Israelis and Palestinians have always declared commitment to keep the Holy Land places accessible to all, Sharon should be like all others free to visit. But Sharon did not have to have a gigantic police force to accompany him. He evidently wanted to assert Israel's dominance, provoke confrontation to obstruct the peace process, and promote his own political objectives. Though the Palestinian reaction was predictable, the Israeli government allowed that drama to take place and even provided the armed forces for that role.

The Palestinians took Sharon's bait quickly; fell right into the trap, and let their emotions carry the day. They resorted to stone-throwing demonstrations, as if throwing stones at Israeli soldiers is a benign civic activity, intended only to tease the soldiers and protest certain government policies and action. Israel's reaction should also have been predictable. Israel has always reacted forcefully against stone throwers, and it did so this time. Of course Israel's "excessive" use of force was not called for since Israel's real security was not in jeopardy, but one should not expect organized armies to receive

stones hurled at them with equanimity and humor. The obvious result has come true: the stone throwers suffer most as casualties.

The intensity of the flare-up was no doubt beyond the expectations of both sides, as were the reactions. For example, Israel did not have to use heavy equipment and live bullets against the demonstrators; nor did it have to use helicopter gun ships to demolish buildings or fire missiles at vehicles to assassinate Palestinian leaders. Nor should Israel have permitted the burning of a mosque in Tiberius. These acts were as horrible as the destruction of Joseph's Tomb in Hebron by Palestinian mobs and the killing of Israeli soldiers already in custody in Ramallah. All these actions could and should have been avoided, were it not for the laxity of the authorities on both sides in allowing provocateurs to enflame the situation. In spite of their military powers, the Israelis are nervous and scared, and the Palestinians' anger at Israel's failure to withdraw from the occupied territories is deep, but these predicaments do not justify abhorrent actions by both of them. All this leads to the conclusion that, given the strategy of a lasting peace, the current tactics are not working and rethinking the future by both sides is urgent and necessary.

Israel should remember that the use of force beyond the minimum necessary to maintain law and order can be detrimental to its own cause. Its military went into Lebanon, under the guidance of Ariel Sharon, with full force. They came back twenty years later with nothing but casualties and a legacy of hatred towards them.

Israel needs to remember that armed settlers who act as vigilantes against Palestinians in their own land do undermine Israel's moral standing and its presumed search for peaceful coexistence with its neighbors. The vigilantes are even more destructive to the peace efforts than the so-called Palestinian terrorists who attack civilians indiscriminately. The Palestinians can claim that they are fighting for their freedom, not for expansionism into other peoples' lands as the settlers do.

As for the Palestinians, it is equally important to remember that provocative elements are always on duty (Sharon, et al), and they should not fall in the trap so easily. They should remember also that stones can be lethal and no organized army will allow itself to be a non-responsive target.

The Palestinians should remember that the intensity of their anger does not justify mob rule, the desecration of holy places under their protection, or the killing of helpless opponents already in their custody. To allow such behaviors undermines their efforts to promote peace and create a civil society. It also undermines the authority of their government.

The Palestinians should remember that their children and youth are the generations of the future who will need all the skills, wisdom, and maturity they are capable of to be able to build healthy, viable Palestinian economy and society on the ruins of the past wars and years of occupation. To allow the young or to encourage them to go to the streets, throw stones, and be killed or maimed, when they should be in schools and in shelters away from the dangers of war, is an unjustified and unnecessary sacrifice. Guerilla warfare and mass demonstrations are the business of grown-ups who make policy and should be responsible for it.

Both sides should remember that there are alternative ways to resolve the conflict, minimize the costs, and establish peace. First, Israel and Palestine know that the end of

occupation is imminent and is the only permanent solution to the conflict. They both know that UN Resolutions 242 and 338 have set the limits for the boundaries between them. The Palestinians cannot accept less than provided by these resolutions and Israel cannot keep more than provided by them. If adjustments to these boundaries are necessary, they should be made by negotiation. In the meantime Israel can take the major step of mapping its withdrawal, with a specific published timetable, and the mechanism for implementation. Such a step will not only show commitment for peace, it will also reduce the costs to the Israeli economy and society, as well as gain moral international backing. The Palestinians will then have little excuse to pursue violence in their efforts for liberation.

At the same time, Israel needs to put an end to the expansion of Jewish settlements in Palestinian territory, both to put an end to its threatening expansionism into Arab land, and to avoid conflict with the fourth Geneva Convention which prohibits alteration of occupied areas by the occupier.

Another essential step for Israel to take is to disarm its civilians, especially the settlers, who show no respect for law or order in dealing with the Palestinians. Creating security is a process of give and take, but carrying arms when not on active duty can become a self-perpetuating source of fear and insecurity for the armed persons and for their presumed enemies.

Finally, Israel should refrain from collective punishment of Palestinians, appropriating their land, and destroying their property arbitrarily. This tactic has only created hatred and sustained insecurity for the Palestinians and for themselves.

The Palestinians, on the other hand, should, first and foremost, begin to act like a civil community state. For example, before embarking on violent demonstrations, they should try diplomacy, take up with the Israeli government any infringement by its forces, and even appeal to the United Nations and the world community. And if they have to demonstrate, let the demonstrations be peaceful as becomes the citizens of a civil society. The Palestinians may, by such means, mobilize support of Israelis who oppose violence and honestly seek peace with them.

The Palestinians, like the Israelis, should at all costs avoid turning the conflict into a religious one: the conflict relates to territory and sovereignty, not to religion. Making it a religious conflict can only widen its scope, involve outsiders, and lead to disaster far beyond the Palestinians and Israelis living in the land of Palestine.

Finally, it is time for the Palestinians to stop playing victim, even though, to a large extent, they are victims. Playing victim has brought them little more than barren support and rhetorical sympathy. Seeking justice as victims may work in a court of law, but in international affairs it is diplomacy, power politics, and viable alliances that count.

The Israelis and the Palestinians are deeply involved in the peace process. It may be difficult to reach a peaceful solution, but it is more difficult and wasteful to stand still or revert to the pre-peace-process situation. There is no turning back. Therefore, it is to the advantage of both to rethink their strategies and tactics, resolve the deal directly with each other, and continue on the road to peace, even if the process is painful and slow.

## **The Palestinians and the Israeli Elections**

### **January 2001**

National elections are an ideal situation that would be the sole business of the voters of the specific country. However, in an international conflict situation, the combatant countries would consider it as part of their fight to influence each other's electors to their own advantage. In view of the vast difference between the two major contestants of the Israeli premiership in their relations with the Palestinians, it should be obvious that the Palestinians would try to promote Israel's Labor Party and Ehud Barak, and defeat Likud and Benjamin Netanyahu or Ariel Sharon in the forthcoming elections. The Palestinians can do so by careful use of the media, persuasion of Israeli Arabs to vote for Barak, his failure to implement agreements, and his use of excessive force against them notwithstanding. However, a careful look at the history of the official Israeli-Palestinian relations would show that progress toward peace and recognition of Palestinian rights has been possible only under Labor, in contrast to all the negative results under Likud.

Labor and the last three Labor prime ministers have not been kind in their relations with the Palestinians. In fact they share with Likud many of the abhorrent Israeli policies toward the Palestinians inside Israel and in the West Bank and Gaza (WB/G). To illustrate, both parties and their leaders have been vague, ambivalent, and dishonest about any attempts to advance Israeli-Arab equality within Israel. Both parties and their leaders have been proactive in appropriating Arab land and building settlements within Israel and the WB/G. Both parties and their leaders have used excessive force against armed and unarmed Palestinians. Both have used advanced weapons and heavy war equipment against stones, slingshots, and noisy demonstrators. Both parties and their leaders have arbitrarily demolished Arab homes, uprooted Arab orchards, and closed the borders between Israel and the WB/G as collective punishment of a whole people. Finally, both parties and their leaders have acted harshly against the Palestinians by using arbitrary detention, bone breaking, torture, and other inhumane practices. If so, the Palestinians

have little reason to prefer one party and its leaders to the other. But this is only one side of the Palestinians; Labor has also accumulated positive marks while Likud has done nothing of the sort. Relations with Labor have a silver lining while relations with Likud have brought nothing but disaster.

In 1978 Menachem Begin concluded a peace agreement with Egypt at Camp David in the basis of UN Resolution 242, as the formula of land for peace. At the same time, Begin and President Anwar Sadat, under the auspices of former President Jimmy Carter, agreed on a proposal for peace with the Palestinians. However, at the last minute Begin refused to make the proposal public and thus killed it before it was born. Presumably he did that because the Palestinians had not yet publicly recognized Israel's right to exist, had not renounced violence, and had not accepted Resolution 242, as had been stipulated by Henry Kissinger years before. But even after the Palestinians had agreed to these three conditions in 1988, Likud, under Yitzhak Shamir, would not deal directly with the Palestinians, let alone recognize their existence as a national entity. Though Shamir attended the Madrid Conference in 1991, he insisted that only WB/G residents be represented and their representative would be integrated as a part of the Jordanian delegation. Furthermore, Shamir would not allow any discussion of refugees, borders or a state of Palestine. Benjamin Netanyahu hardly improved on that attitude, even though the political situation had changed by the time he became prime minister. By then the PLO has come to Palestine, and the PNA had been put in place. While he could do nothing but deal with the PNA, he manages to procrastinate, postpone, interpret and reinterpret UN resolutions and the Oslo Agreement, make and break promises, and end up doing nothing but advance peace or approach a resolution of the conflict with the Palestinians. On the contrary, he excelled in planning new and expanded settlements on Arab land.

In contrast, Labor under Yitzhak Rabin took major steps in the direction of peace. Rabin reached an agreement with Yasser Arafat, co-signed the Declaration of Principles, withdrew Israeli forces from some Palestinian territories, and surrendered power to them. He also signed a peace agreement with Jordan, and almost reached an agreement with Syria. Rabin did not live long enough to consummate peace as he visualized it. Rabin's co-peacemaker and successor, Shimon Peres, was in many ways the major Israeli force in favor of the Oslo Agreement, the peace negotiations, and cooperation with the Palestinians to promote peace. Though Peres was slow in his march for peace, he made the mistake of using excessive force against civilians in Lebanon just prior to the elections, which brought in Netanyahu. In part, Peres lost because the Israeli Arabs withheld their votes from him and some voted for his opponent. He paid the price for using excessive force, but the Palestinians also paid a heavy price by inheriting Netanyahu as prime minister.

Ehud Barak was elected as prime minister on a platform of peace, withdrawal from Lebanon, and revival of the economy. He did withdraw from Lebanon. He also revived negotiations with Syria, and embarked on peace negotiations with the Palestinians. By all accounts, Barak made the most substantive concessions to the Palestinians by any Israeli leader. Though these concessions were less than the Palestinians wanted, they were positive indicators of his intentions in favor of peace. These presumed concessions include the recognition of a Palestinian state, withdrawal from about 94 percent of the areas occupied in 1967, and some compromises on

Jerusalem. Even though the peace negotiations did not result in a peace agreement, the seeds were sown and nurtured by Labor leaders and the coalition parties working with Labor.

Now Barak is facing elections against Netanyahu or Sharon. The Palestinians need Barak, Peres, Yossi Sarid, Yossi Beilen, and other promoters of a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The Palestinians can influence the elections in Israel and advance the cause of peace by promoting the party that has committed itself to peace in word and deed. That party is Labor and its current leader is Ehud Barak. The Palestinians have an opportunity to enhance their own cause by favoring Barak and Labor, and they can do so by at least four ways. First, they would serve their own cause by declaring a unilateral cease-fire as a good will gesture toward the Israeli people; at the same time they will save Palestinian life and limb. Second, the Palestinians would do well to promote a media campaign to illustrate the positive and the negative actions of the two parties, as they have experienced them as these actions have affected peace efforts. Third, they can persuade the Israeli Arabs not to waste their votes by abstaining, or by voting for Barak's opponents. Finally, the Palestinians can and should redefine their strategy to allow for a compromise agreement with Barak while both he and Bill Clinton are still in power. Failing to do so could delay for many years any new opportunities for peace. It would also inflict more loss of Arab territory for new and expanded Jewish settlements. The opportunity is still there and the Palestinians should not miss it.

**CLINTON'S PARAMETERS FOR A PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI COMPROMISE  
SETTLEMENT: IT IS TIME TO SAY YES!  
FEBRUARY 2001**

President Bill Clinton has now made public his ideas for a settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He describes his proposal as a framework or parameters for ending the violence, resuming negotiations, and reaching a settlement. He has left the details to be negotiated by the two parties, with the United States' help when necessary. Ehud Barak has accepted the parameters, though with some reservations. Yasser Arafat still has serious reservations, but some of his aides have been individually declaring rejection of Clinton's proposal, though it is not clear whether they speak on his behalf. It is probably tempting for the Palestinians once more to say "NO", even though it would be wiser to break the pattern and say, "YES". By doing so, they would sustain international support, especially of those countries that are urging them to accept. They would realize most if not all of their expectations. They would also save Palestinian life, material, and land, and for the first time begin to taste the potential fruits of peace.

The Palestinians have certain reservations, and justly so. They have little trust in agreements signed by Israeli officials. They believe Bill Clinton is biased in favor of Israel. They want details of the parameters before saying yes. Some believe that violence is the only language Israel understands. Others believe time is on their side and the longer they wait the more of their demands they will realize. Finally, they want support of their position by the Arab League members, which does not seem to be forthcoming. These are compelling reasons to say "NO" to Clinton's proposal. However, a careful review of the parameters, the history of the conflict, and the possible alternatives to achieve peace would suggest that it is time to say, "YES", even at this late hour of Clinton's administration.

The Palestinians distrust Israel for its failure to implement past agreements, but the Israelis also distrust the Palestinians on similar grounds. Had there been mutual trust

between them, there would probably be little remaining conflict. There is a risk in saying, “YES” and proceeding to negotiate, but the Palestinians can and should be able to face that risk. The Palestinians complain that Clinton is biased in favor of Israel. So what? Is there any leader who is not biased in one-way or the other? It is the contents of Clinton’s proposal and the feasibility of implementation that count. Bill Clinton has been blunt and candid in expressing his sympathy with Israel. He also has been the most persistent and vocal United States president in recognizing the basic rights of the Palestinians, even those who pressure Israel to accept the concept of a State of Palestine, to withdraw from close to 100% of the Occupied Territories, and to share sovereignty in Jerusalem. In fact Clinton’s parameters address and support most of the basic demands of the Palestinians. Some of the demands, however, may be considered unrealistic and unlikely to be fulfilled, short of a war that vanquishes the opponent—who shall wage that war, when, and at what price?

The parameters, at first reading, seem to meet the Palestinians’ border and statehood expectations in terms of size of territory, contiguity, and sovereignty. Any potential loss of territory to Israel is to be compensated for by acquiring an equal area from Israel. The parameters meet the expectations on Jerusalem, at least in part, by formulating a general system of sharing land and sovereignty. It is true that the parameters do not offer the Palestinians all they want, but they do not offer both parties more than UN Resolution 194 offers them, which is internationalization. The Palestinians and Israelis seem to have implicitly ignored internationalization and conspired to share the city. President Clinton has paved the way for them to do so.

The parameters address the refugee question and offer a solution, which certainly does not meet Palestinian expectations of their return to their original villages and homes within Israel. However, the parameters recognize the Palestinians’ right to return to a homeland with compensation and help to make that right a reality, including partial repatriation to Israel. Strangely enough most Palestinian leaders have been aware of the extreme difficulty of repatriating the refugees to Israel. Some leaders have insisted that recognition of the right of return as “sacred”. It is not clear, however, how it has become sacred, and by what power. Problem solving by peaceful means involves compromise, trade-off, and negotiation to reduce costs and maximize benefits. To claim that the right of return is sacred and immutable is to nullify any possibility of reaching a settlement by peaceful means.

The Palestinians hesitate in adapting the parameters partly because they have sought but not received full and explicit backing by members of the Arab League. The Arab countries have been consistent in declaring support for the Palestinians in vague and useless ways. They object to compromise on Jerusalem and the refugees right of return but they offer no viable alternatives. Apparently none of the Arab leaders wants to appear soft on Israel, and brave enough to break the pattern and address the issues publicly in a pragmatic and realistic way. Yet they persist in blocking any compromise on Jerusalem and on the right of return, while the Palestinians pay the price. In a sense the Arab countries have been part of the problem, not the solution. The Palestinians should think twice before believing that time is on their side, or that violence is the only effective language with Israel. The more time has lapsed, the more life and material losses they have suffered, and the more land they have lost to Jewish settlements. And every time they have encountered Israeli forces they have suffered most of the losses and gained

little in return. The current violence delivers the same lesson: more loss of life and material, while more settlements are being built. Violence is not the way, nor is it a waiting exercise to see who can outwait the other.

Finally, the Palestinians complain that the parameters do not offer enough detail. However, details are the subject matter of negotiation, which the two parties must deliberate on. The Palestinians presumably have experienced negotiators and it is for them to bargain as best as they can to maximize the benefits; the parameters leave the door open.

Israel is preparing for the election of a prime minister. If not Ehud Barak, it will be Ariel Sharon. By rejecting Clinton's parameters, it is believed that they will be aiding Ariel Sharon, the way they aided Netanyahu against Peres in 1995. Like Netanyahu, Sharon will be thankful for Palestinian help and he too will express his thanks by oppressing the Palestinians even more, and by appropriating their land to build more settlements.

### **Greed and Instability or Peace and Security: Israel Must Decide March 2001**

Ehud Barak claimed that the Israeli people would be voting for peace or for war; he, as a peacemaker, has lost, but many observers suggest that the people voted against Barak himself and not against peace. I should like to think that the people of Israel do want peace, although they seem to want it only on their own terms. However, their terms for peace are not clear, and they have given few signals to generate confidence in their commitment to peace with the Palestinians.

The Israelis must decide whether they want peace and security within recognized international boundaries, or they want to be greedy for territorial expansion even at the cost of continued instability and violence.

The Israelis are entitled to have peace and security, but peace and security cannot be guaranteed by force or suppression of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Territorial greed, in contrast, is a sure prescription for continued instability and violence. The international community has set the outlines of a peaceful settlement, as stated by UN resolutions 242 and 338. Israel can end the conflict in a summary fashion if it decides in favor of peace and security, rather than in favor of territorial expansion beyond those outlines.

The Palestinians claim that all they want is to live peacefully in state of their own side by side with Israel, Jordan, and Egypt in the West Bank and Gaza, as they were demarcated before June 4<sup>th</sup> 1967. That includes East Jerusalem, which would serve as their capital. Ehud Barak came close to delivering on their request, but not close enough and not without infringing on the integrity of these territories by chipping away large segments for Jewish settlements. Some American and Israeli observers were shocked that the Palestinians would not accept a peaceful settlement with a recovery of 95% of the occupied territories. Yet one might turn the question around and ask why would the Israelis forego the chance for peace for the sake of 5% of the territory that is not

legitimately theirs in the first place. The security of the State of Israel does not depend on keeping those disputed areas. Nor are the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories essential for security; actually they endanger Israel's security by provoking conflict with their Arab neighbors. Israel can quickly end the conflict by declaring its intention to withdraw completely from the occupied territories in accordance with Resolution 242.

The Palestinians claim East Jerusalem, which was occupied by Israel in 1967 as their own and as their capital. Ehud Barak was willing to dole out certain symbolic privileges to the Palestinians but not all of East Jerusalem as it was (in Arab hands) before 1967. There are two problems with regard to Jerusalem: First, both Israel and the Palestinians are illegitimately claiming an area, which has been designated as an international city in UN Resolutions 181 and 194. Thus Israel is not only infringing on the Palestinians' claim for East Jerusalem, but it is also infringing on the UN resolutions by claiming to have a right to the whole city of Jerusalem. Second, East Jerusalem is not essential to the security of Israel. Religious, cultural, and historical claims notwithstanding, Israel's position on East Jerusalem do not support its declarations in favor of peace with the Palestinians. Greed for territory and power, apparently, supersedes the desire for peace. Once again, Israel can quickly end the conflict by accepting to go back to the 1967 boundaries in accordance with Resolution 242.

The Palestinians claim that the refugees have a right of return to their homes, which they left in 1948, or receive compensation for the property they left behind. In the past Israel had agreed to admit 100,000 refugees, as part of a family reunion program, while most of the refugees would presumably be compensated. In fact Israel established a department to manage what is called abandoned property. It is fully understandable that Israel will not welcome the bulk of the refugees back to their homes because of both security and state identity effects. But it is not reasonable for Israel to abdicate all responsibility for the refugee problem. Israel played a major role in creating that problem. I recall vividly how Palestinian villagers were loaded on trucks and transported to the Lebanese borders in 1948/9. I recall how villages were leveled immediately after the inhabitants had been evicted and frightened away in panic in order to prevent the return of those inhabitants to their homes. Israel cannot escape its share of the responsibility for the refugee problem if peace and security are its primary objectives. It is possible that Israel would not want to accept responsibility because by doing so it might encourage the Palestinians to revive UN Resolution 181, which institutionalized the 1947 Partition Plan and which allowed Israel one third less than the territory it has occupied within what is called the green line. Such fears, however, are unwarranted since the Palestinians have already accepted Resolution 242, which applies the land-for-peace formula to the territories occupied in 1967. If Israel wants peace for security, it must share in the responsibility for the refugee problem, even in only in principle.

Once again I assert my conviction that most Israelis want peace with the Palestinians. Yet it is puzzling to watch the peace seekers apply extremely restrictive and cruel measures against the people with whom they wish to establish peace. These measures have not assured security and definitely they do not promote peace. Starving the Palestinians, creating unemployment, demolishing homes, uprooting orchards and olive groves, and the assassination of leaders who instead could be captured and brought to trial, all these are measures that bode ill will rather than god will toward peace and neighborly coexistence. Israel can enhance the prospects of peace and bring the conflict

closer to resolution by putting an end to those measures that are inflicting costs on Israel itself as well as on the Palestinians.

A minority of Israelis and a minority of Palestinians probably still dream of having the whole of Mandate Palestine to themselves, at the expense of the other party. The majorities on both sides have adjusted to the idea of coexistence. The trick is how to make that coexistence peaceful, viable, and productive. Certainly this will not happen by violent means. If I were advising the Palestinians I would suggest an end to violence, sustained peaceful demonstrations for their rights, and passive resistance to the occupation. In that same spirit I would suggest to the Israelis to relax all the restrictions, allow the Palestinian economy to recover and flourish, and show a certain degree of empathy and understanding. Regardless of the form of the new Israeli government, the outlines of a peace settlement are known. It is up to the Israeli and Palestinian majorities to make peace according to those outlines a reality.

**ARAB ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT:  
SYRIA CAN LEAD THE WAY  
April 2001**

Leaders of the Arab countries have just concluded their summit in Amman. The summit gave them a chance to review events and policies of the recent past and formulate their claims on the future. It gave them an opportunity to vent their protests against the injustices they believe are inflicted on them by the developed countries, especially the United States. They had a forum and they used it to condemn the West's favoritism of Israel, Israel's harsh measures against the Palestinians, Israel's failure to comply with United Nations resolutions, as well as its continued occupation of Arab land. The Arab summitters must have felt good after delivering their rhetorical statements, congratulated themselves and each other for the imaginary success of their summit, even though they could not agree on the main issues of the summit: relief for Iraq, and justice for the Palestinians. The problem is that all the Arab countries are relatively underdeveloped, weak, and, with the exception of some oil-rich countries, poor. They have little clout in the international arena. Therefore, their main weapon is words, and their main victories are empty declarations, hoping to be noticed and rendered justice, equality, and evenhandedness by the powerful and developed countries of the West. Apparently the Arab leaders need to be reminded of a few general principles of international relations. 1) Regardless of all the idealism expounded in the literature and speeches delivered from the political pulpits, power determines the meaning of justice among nations. The victors decide who the villains are, what to do with them, and how. Even-handedness is a myth unless the combatants are of equal power and determination. 2) Power determines which countries or states are to be treated as equal, and which are more equal than others. 3) Power alone determines the degree of independence a country enjoys. Even though all members of the United Nations are officially independent, some are more independent than others. 4) Power and independence are related and both are functions of the individual country's level of economic and technological development. The more

economically and technologically developed a country is, the more power it has and the higher probability of equal and even-handed treatment it would enjoy. A country's resource endowments make a difference on the margin, but without the economic and technological capability to produce and compete internationally, even a resource-rich country will still be relatively dependent and weak. The Arab countries, without exception, are weak, dependent, and hence are vulnerable to injustice, inequality, and bias in the international arena. Furthermore, until they achieve a competitive level of economic and technological development, they, individually and collectively, to be would be treated as less equal and less deserving of justice than they expect. This is where Syria may make a difference. Syria can play a major role and lead the way among the Arab countries to realize enough economic and technological power to be treated fairly. Syria has a more balanced natural resource endowment and more potential for development than any other Arab country. It has human capital, land, water, minerals, and a strategic location for trade and commerce, which could enhance its economy. However, Syria lacks technical knowledge and the capacity to produce sufficient manufactures and technology to render it powerful enough to achieve equality and real independence. Most of all, it apparently lacks the will and attitude that favor economic and technological development. On the positive side, beside natural endowments, Syria enjoys a favorable land/labor ratio, water resource endowments, limited but favorable resources of oil, coal, and natural gas, and an entrepreneurial population that has a tradition of business and trade proficiency. It also has a positive balance of trade and a relatively low level of inflation. The new president, Bashar al-Asad, has already demonstrated willingness to institute needed changes. He has released political prisoners, permitted at least one private newspaper, private banking, and some rationalization of the exchange rate. These changes are limited but they could be the beginning of a new attitude toward the economy and society. On the negative side, Syria suffers from a relatively high rate of population growth, low literacy rates, especially among females, and a relatively low per capita income. It also suffers from relatively high military expenditures, and an underdeveloped market system. Most of all, Syria suffers from technological and economic backwardness. As a result it has low productivity of labor and limited ability to compete on the international market. This is best illustrated by the composition of its export and import baskets. Syria exports mostly raw material and handcrafts, and imports mostly manufactured goods, machinery, and technical knowledge. Thus, Syria has remained behind in the process of economic development, technology transfer, and the production of technology, all of which are prerequisites for achieving power and equality. Even so, Syria has the potential to develop and end its one-sided dependence on the producers of manufactures and technology, and thus set a standard for the Arab world to follow. Syria can go its own way toward development and avoid the unnecessary economic reforms that are in vogue at the behest of the World Bank, the IMF, and the United States Department of State. For example, it is not essential to privatize the economy in the name of economic reform or as a matter of principle. Let privatization result from a rational analysis of each industry or economic endeavor and its own merits. It is not necessary or rational to leave all economic decisions to the market, as prescribed by the drive for globalization, especially when the market institutions are relatively underdeveloped. Finally, technological development does not mean that a developed country should produce technology on a wide scale, but it

does mean that a country should be capable of producing technology and competing on the international market so as to gain power, the right to be equal, and the expectation of fairness in relations with the developed countries. Syria faces a challenge and it can meet that challenge. Here are a few steps that may help to pave the way.

First and foremost, Syria's political, social, and business leaders need to recognize and acknowledge the country's need for development as a primary objective, and that it takes all segments of the population to achieve that objective. Second, Syria needs to declare war on illiteracy, both literary and technical, among the young and the old, and among males and females. This war must be waged within the school system, in business, and in society at large. Third, it is essential to remind and educate the public that the consumption of technology does not lead to development. The adoption of technology, whether by emulation or by invention, and its integration in the production system are basic to economic and technological development. Fourth, while the state may find it rational to unleash the market forces, the state may still have to create the physical and institutional infrastructure for development. The state may have to create the basic utilities such as power, communications, sanitation, and financial institutions. Finally, probably the most strategic step would be to promote and encourage freedom of thinking and expression, rational analysis, innovation and discovery, and the belief in the peoples' ability to transform their economy and society to a higher level of development and prosperity. This revolutionary change can be instituted by letting academicians, researchers, and explorers pursue knowledge freely, by putting resources at the disposal of the creators and innovators within the academy and in business, and by rewarding the achievers for their efforts. Syria's resources may be limited, but the investment in education and critical analysis and innovation usually pays off well enough to justify diverting resources toward these objectives. Syria can lead the way in the Arab world. By doing so, it would guarantee that justice, equality, and independence are genuine values earned and enjoyed by its own people, and eventually by the Arab world at large.

**WHO ADVISES YASSER ARAFAT, OR DOES HE ACCEPT  
ADVICE FROM ANYBODY?  
May 2001**

If Yasser Arafat has advisors and he heeds their advice, he should replace them. If he does not heed their advice, he might reconsider and begin to heed. And if he does not have any advisors, he should invest in experienced and analytical experts as an advisory resource. For all practical purposes, the policies of the PNA in the last few years have resulted in one failure after another. The peace process has floundered, the Palestinian economy has virtually collapsed, and losses in life and property have continued to mount. The Palestinians blame Israel for all their woes. Israel certainly is not innocent, but it would be wise for the Palestinians to look at their own policies, reassess their actions, save life and property, and salvage what they can of the land they love and claim as their own.

The policies of the PNA, headed by Yasser Arafat, may be questioned on the basis of their results, logic, and political analysis, illustrated as follows:

1. As soon as Bill Clinton had ended his second term as president of the United States, the PNA attacked him as biased in favor of Israel. Why did it take Arafat and his ministers almost eight years to recognize Clinton's bias, especially that Bill Clinton never hid his sentiments toward Israel? The PNA should know that criticizing Clinton after he had left office would bring them no benefits. Would it not have been more diplomatic to acknowledge that Clinton brought them closest to realizing their territorial and political objectives than they had ever come before, and to thank him for his sustained efforts to bring about peace?

2. The PNA foresaw or should have foreseen clearly that Ehud Barak would lose the election if he did not deliver on his promise to bring about a breakthrough in the peace process. They also knew or should have known that Ariel Sharon would replace Barak and bring in a totally different play to the stage, a play that could not be favorable to their cause. Why then did the PNA wait until two weeks before the Israeli elections to come, half-heartedly, to Barak's aid? Barak lost the elections and they lost the peace prospects.

By the same token, how did the PNA and the Arabs in general come to believe that George W. Bush would be more even-handed, more understanding, or more helpful to their cause than Bill Clinton was, or Al Gore would have been? Neither the United States presidential history nor the contents of the political campaign could have led to such a conclusion. Now the PNA leaders feel disappointed and disillusioned with George W. Bush, but such disappointment is due to false and unwarranted expectations based on poor policy analysis and shallow strategy making.

3. According to available reports, Yasser Arafat had agreed with Bill Clinton and Ehud Barak at Camp David, that an incomplete agreement is no agreement. They also agreed that whatever is agreed upon verbally would be null and void if the negotiations break down or once Clinton and Barak had left office. Why then would the PNA expect Ariel Sharon to resume negotiations at the point where they broke down, especially since he had publicly stated that he would not honor any such unrecorded agreement? Was not the example of the disputed Rabin-Asad indirect verbal agreement sufficient to warn them that unwritten and unsigned possible agreements do not count?

4. It has been clear since 1948 that the Arab countries cannot and will not deliver the Palestinians from the snare of the Zionist forces. It was clear also that the Arab countries could be an obstacle to a solution. Why then would Arafat defer to the Arab countries before deciding whether or not to accept the most radical and as yet most favorable proposed solution, as put forward by Clinton? Why would Arafat give the Arab leaders the opportunity to be the spoiler, as they in fact were? Did he not learn from the example of Anwar Sadat who would not consult the other Arab countries before making a deal with Israel because he knew that they would do nothing but object? The Palestinians have consulted and now they are suffering the consequences. The Arab countries, as represented by their leaders, have been generous in boastful rhetoric, short on material assistance, and predictable spoilers in reaching realistic and viable decisions by the PNA, the PLO, and the Palestinians' leaders that preceded them.

5. Why do the PNA leaders publicly insist on Israel's acceptance of the Palestinian refugees' right of return, and at the same time deny any insistence or high expectation that the refugees would return to the homes they left behind in 1948? Do they insist on acceptance of the right of return only to gain a moral victory, to embarrass Israel, or to keep alive a claim on all the territory allocated to them according to the 1947 Partition Plan (UN Resolution 181), which they had rejected? To rhetorically insist on the right of return can only give the refugees false hopes, compound the waste of their human capital, and keep them as wards of the United Nations one generation after another.

6. Why does the PNA insist on an all or nothing agreement when their entire existence as an authority on Palestinian soil has been facilitated and legitimized by a partial rather than a complete agreement? There are many lessons in history, which show that it is a good strategy to take what you can now and ask for more later, within the framework of what may be considered internationally acceptable and legitimate. To say "NO" to partial solutions and to insist on an all-or-nothing agreement has certainly cost them more loss of life and territory.

7. Why would the Palestinians expect Israel to meet violence with mercy or kindness, and why would they expect it to end the occupation under the pressure of violence when it faces no threat of being defeated or of its forces being vanquished by

stone throwers or suicide bombers? Given the economic, military, and organizational power gap between them and Israel, why do the Palestinians believe that they can end the occupation by means other than by negotiation? Stone throwing, violent demonstrations, United Nations commissions and resolutions, and all the Arab leaders' rhetoric have gained them little compared with the direct face-to-face negotiations with their adversary, the Israelis.

8. Why expect Israel to protect the viability of the PNA economy, knowing that in a state of war a weaker economy is less threatening than a stronger economy? Complaining about the economic losses inflicted by the Israeli policies and actions, and appealing for outside help to survive these losses, can only strengthen the Israeli resolve to overcome Palestinian violence by choking their economy as much as by military cruelty.

9. Finally, why do the Palestinians persist in sacrificing their children and young people, putting them in the forefront of the struggle with Israel when neither history nor logic would justify sacrificing the young to do the work of the decision-making adults? The Israelis send their children to school and to shelters when there is danger. The Palestinians expose them to danger and deprive them of the education they need now and in the future if they were to create and sustain a viable Palestinian economy and society.

The lines of conflict between Israel and the Palestinians have been drawn, and so also the lines of peace and cooperation between them. The Palestinians have many legitimate claims and many Israelis agree with them. However, the Palestinians have yet to formulate viable policies toward Israel and stop playing the victim. They should not give up their claims but they can pursue them in other ways. They may, for instance, resort to organized totally nonviolent demonstrations, statesmanship, and diplomacy. At the same time they may redirect resources toward economic revival, development, and independence.

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ISRAEL**  
**June 2001**

It is now about fifty-four years since the bus taking us to work was ambushed by a Jewish group on the way from our village to Haifa, Palestine. Six passengers were injured, including the driver and the person next to me. All of us were innocent people on our way to work. Confusion ensued, the injured were transported to a hospital, and the rest of us resumed our daily commute the next day until the Arab-Jewish-British conflict became so intense that commuting was no longer possible. I mention all this to assure you that I fully understand the agony and bitterness that could result from attacks on innocent civilians, Arabs and Jews alike. I also want to assure you that a large part of my efforts ever since has been directed to promote peace between the Arabs and Israelis. In the process I have discovered that it is more constructive to look more to the future than to the past, to peace and cooperation than to partisanship and adversity, and always to tranquility and security for both people. I regret to say that your policies have rarely come to grips with the feelings and suffering of the Palestinian people and as such these policies have rarely generated confidence or promoted the cause of cooperation and peace with your neighbors. I am not defending the Palestinian policies or actions, but this message is addressed to you, and not to the Palestinians. I am convinced that the Palestinians have accepted the idea of peaceful coexistence with you, but your policies and actions have not given them a chance to reflect their change in attitude. The closest to an acceptable peaceful solution has come from Ehud Barak, but even that proposal was presented in an atmosphere of closure, settlement expansion, and brute force against the Palestinians. It is now evident that the policies of occupation, force, closure, assassination, demolition of homes, uprooting of orchards and olive groves, and scraping of Arab land have all failed to advance peace and security. On the contrary, these policies have created bitterness, hatred, hardening of positions, and utter despair among the Palestinians, in addition to the loss of life and property on both sides. If so, is it not worthwhile to explore other ways to achieve the peace objective? Let me illustrate.

1. Continuing to occupy Arab land is most vexing and provocative, especially when there are ways to end the occupation quickly. Pierre Mendes France promptly ended the occupation of Indo China; Charles De Gaulle quickly ended the occupation of Algeria; Menachem Begin ended the occupation of Sinai; Yitzhak Rabin started a process of ending the occupation of Palestine, and Ehud Barak put an end to the occupation of Lebanon except for the disputed Shebaa Farms, with encouraging results. Why not continue the process of withdrawing from the remaining occupied areas of Palestine, even if unilaterally, in order to reduce costs, as a gesture of good will, and to expedite the

inevitable? Strong armies are hard to drive out, but strong armies can afford to withdraw unilaterally and by doing so they help to bring peace closer to realization.

2. Violence breeds violence. Israeli forces are presumably under orders not to initiate violence but to react to it when threatened. Who acts and who reacts is not always easy to determine, especially under conditions of suspicion, distrust, and insecurity. Unfortunately the actions and reactions by the Israeli forces have rarely been purely defensive or encouraging to the promotion of peace. In fact they have led to the opposite, even though there are ways to counteract violence and still serve the cause of peace. For example:

a. Shots come from a certain building and even though rarely anyone is hurt, the Israeli forces proceed to demolish that building, regardless whether the owner or occupant of that building is responsible for the shots or not. If that building is suspected as a fortress and a source of danger and needs to be demolished, why not compensate the owners to allow them to build a replacement that is not threatening, but also to show that your action is only for security purposes and not as blind punishment of possibly innocent owners?

b. Snipers and ambushers may use olive groves and orchards as hiding places and sources of danger and threat. If so, and you find it necessary to eliminate these sources of danger and threat, why not compensate the owners, who most probably are helpless and innocent? By doing so you allow them to replant seedlings that would not shelter the snipers in the near future, you allow them to continue to earn an income, and you build good will among those who have little to do with ambushing and sniping.

c. Young people throw stones and the Israeli army reacts with bullets. In my idealism I feel like saying: “why not respond to the stones with candy and flowers,” but I know that such will not be the case. However, if you cannot stay out of their way, on their own land, tear gas can be very effective to disperse them with little permanent harm to anyone. Such action would reduce casualties, reduce the agonies and bitterness, and prevent the martyring of misled and misused children and youth. Eventually the stone throwers would discover that their behavior fails to provoke violence and will not make heroes of them.

d. Israeli forces have tended to target individuals and eliminate them by using undercover assassins, helicopter gunships, missiles, and most recently jet fighters, evidently with little consideration for who else might be in the targeted locations. If indeed the targeted individuals are known to be terrorists, directly or indirectly, why not arrest them, bring them to justice, and judge them? To indict, judge, and execute blindly by military forces can hardly fit the image of a democratic country seeking to live in peace and security with its neighbors. In fact such behavior puts the state of Israel and its armed forces on the same level with the “terrorists” who attack civilians blindly on either side of the conflict.

e. A bomb explodes and hurts Israelis. The armed forces proceed, in addition to other forms of punishment, to impose closure and siege around Palestinian towns and villages, presumably to guarantee security. However, closure has tended to generate the opposite effects. Closures have prevented Palestinians from working in Israel, have reduced economic trade between the Israel and Palestine, and created poverty, unemployment, and idle time among the unemployed. Many of the unemployed youth end up throwing stones, joining radical groups, and losing hope that peace will one day

become a reality. Would it not be more productive to allow labor mobility and trade activity to continue, with the usual security checks, and thus maintain good will and reduce the despair that often leads to frustration and violence?

3. You have accepted UN Resolution 242, which calls for withdrawal from the occupied territories in exchange for peace. Yet you have continued to appropriate Arab land and build settlements on it. Though you have promised not to build new settlements and only to expand existing ones to accommodate natural population growth, the Jewish settlement population and housing capacities have exploded far beyond any measure of natural population growth. Freezing construction in the settlements cannot hurt Israel, but it would enhance the peace prospects, particularly that a large unused housing capacity already prevails in the settlements.

4. Finally, Palestinian children deserve protection just as much as do Israeli children. Innocent Palestinians deserve protection as much as do innocent Israelis. Punishing innocent people can only hurt the cause of peace, hurt the image of the state, and leave behind feelings of hatred, bitterness, and despair. Is it not time to try other approaches? Ending the occupation is one such way, even if unilaterally. Sparing the innocent, including their homes, orchards, and olive groves, is another. Arresting the suspected terrorists, rather than assassinating them without certainty or fair judgment is a third. Refraining from the imposition of futile closures and allowing the continuation of economic activity is a fourth. Taking these steps may be painful for it guarantees little, but it cannot lead to worse than the existing conditions. Yet, imagine the benefits if these steps prove successful and how peace, security, and tranquility for both Israelis and Palestinians may again be a potential reality. Every day that passes without peace and security is a day lost by both people. The sooner you revise the sterile and futile policies of the past, the sooner you will revive hope that peace and security will some day prevail.

**THE DEATH PENALTY IN THE UNITED STATES REVISITED:  
A MCVEIGH LEGACY?**

**July 2001**

The United States government executed Timothy McVeigh on June 11 for blowing up a federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, and injuring many in the process. The government and some observers considered the execution an administration of justice, a closure of the case for the survivors, and an example to those who might contemplate such heinous crimes in the future. To others, by executing McVeigh the US government has granted him what he wanted, namely to publicize his anger at and condemnation of that government. By executing him, it has lowered itself to his level, using the same methods of revenge, punishment, and “crime prevention” that he used. But to still others, the US government has violated human rights, extricated itself from the community of developed, mostly Christian nations, which have abolished the death penalty (DP). It has also set a poor example for the individual American states that are debating the merits and functions of the DP, especially by failing to consider alternatives that might be more effective in dealing with criminals like McVeigh. Whichever position one takes, it is clear that the McVeigh execution has refocused attention on the functions, fairness, and economics of the DP.

McVeigh committed a violent act he considered a justifiable response to the violent, restrictive, and “evil” behavior of the US government, as illustrated by its actions at Waco, Texas, and Ruby Ridge, Idaho. Apparently he did not know a better way to express his anger with the government. His army training must have convinced him that the use of force is the only effective way to deal with a violent government. He was decorated by the army for shooting two Iraqi soldiers representing an “evil government” with one shot in Desert Storm--assuming that to be true. Strangely enough, the US government behaved in the same way, using execution in cold blood against a person for his “evil” doing, as if society and the government, including the army, had nothing to do with his aggressive criminal behavior.

By executing McVeigh the US government has separated itself from the community of developed nations, which have abolished the DP for humane reasons and because it is ineffective against crime. These countries include most of Western Europe and Canada, all of which refuse to extradite criminals to the US where the DP is still legal. Furthermore, the US, which behaves as if it were a Christian nation, is in violation of Christian ethics and morality, which promote love, forgiveness, and rehabilitation, and have no place for willful killing whether by the state or by individuals. Even Israel, which has more reason to apply the DP as part of the Judaic law, has refrained from using

it for humane reasons and because it is ineffective against crime or terror. One has to look only at Saudi Arabia and China, which execute criminals in short order to see how little effect the DP has in preventing crime.

By executing McVeigh the US government claims to have brought to closure the agony and frustration of the victims' survivors. Yet even some of those survivors question the accuracy of that conclusion. To them the injury and the scars are permanent and McVeigh's execution does little to reduce their sorrow or fill the gap left by the loss of their dear ones. In fact some survivors did not want a closure and would have preferred to see McVeigh stay in prison for life as a more just punishment than his execution. One might add that by keeping him alive, McVeigh might have had a chance to repent and do something positive to compensate the surviving victims and the government for the losses he had inflicted on them.

The execution of McVeigh and others like him once again raises questions about the logic of the law dealing with crime and punishment in the US. It seems that tradition, belief, conviction, and emotion play a major role in adopting, maintaining, and enforcing the law. Had the law been based on logic, costs and benefits, and efficiency in preventing crime, the DP would have been abolished long ago. First, there is no foolproof way of determining guilt and innocence of the accused, as has been demonstrated by the numerous overturned convictions in recent years. How many innocent people have been executed for crimes they did not commit will never be known. Second, there is little evidence that the DP prevents crime. Even the swift and sundry executions in Saudi Arabia and China have done little to deter people from committing crimes punishable by death in those countries. Executions in Saudi Arabia are public and bloody and yet the rate of crime has not abated. Executions in the State of Texas are equally illustrative of the ineffectiveness of the DP in preventing crime. Third, the DP implies that there is no hope of rehabilitating a criminal, which certainly is not true. Criminals have been known to respond to rehabilitation in prison, enough to become productive, law abiding, and missionaries against crime. Fourth, the DP does not benefit the victims or their surviving families. While some feel relief that "justice is done," many oppose the DP because it does little good for them or for society. On the contrary, the DP punishes innocent people by bereaving the families of the executed for crimes these families did not commit, with little consideration for their human rights and feelings. It is even possible that some of those bereaved might become so antagonistic in response to the execution of their own and seek revenge of their own. Fifth, the DP entails more costs and fewer benefits than the alternative punishment of life in prison without parole. The execution costs cannot be redeemed by the dead person, but a prisoner for life can work and help to offset those costs and possibly compensate his victims even if only symbolically. Sixth, and most important, the DP reduces the value of human life. The authorities are supposed to protect human life, but by taking a life in cold blood in the name of laws of their own making, they undermine the value of human life in general. Even the life of a criminal is still a human life that deserves to be protected. But when the state allows itself to extinguish the light of human life, it sets a bad example for people who have a grudge or cause to rebel and who then decide to become judge, jury, and executioner all in one.

To restore value to human life and rid the US laws of the DP, the federal and state governments may begin by reconsidering the justifications for and alternatives to the DP.

Experiences of the other developed countries, which have abolished the DP, are quite convincing that life imprisonment without parole is a viable alternative. Human rights groups have been lobbying for abolishing the DP, for reforming its application to reduce the probability of error, and to make it fairer. However, since the probability of error cannot be totally eliminated, and since fairness is only a matter of degree, injustice and unfairness seem to be inherent in the DP and its application. Therefore, the only way to avoid injustices and unfairness and to revalue human life is to abolish the DP altogether. Federal and state governments are unlikely to initiate action to abolish the DP without pressure of the constituents. The American people have the last word in this matter and it is up to them to initiate action, pressure Congress and the President to get rid of the DP, and establish a value system that venerates and protects human life rather than destroy it.

## **THE MYTH OF HIZBULLAH'S TRIUMPH AND ITS LEGACY OF DESTRUCTION IN LEBANON AND PALESTINE**

**August 2001**

Hizbullah, (Party of God), has been a menace to Israel in South Lebanon and Northern Israel, but never really a threat. It has inflicted casualties and generated fear, but it has also invited harsh responses from Israeli military. It has acquired fame and some respect in certain Arab circles as a force against Israel's occupation of Lebanon, though it hardly deserves credit for any major achievement. It is true that Israel has withdrawn from South Lebanon, but not because of Hizbullah, and the facts suggest otherwise. The notoriety attributed to Hizbullah is misleading and destructive to the Palestinian and Arab cause in their relations with Israel. Rather than setting a model of nationalism, unity, bravery, and effectiveness, Hizbullah has created a legacy of divisiveness and erratic and wasteful behavior. It has also displayed a poor model of national defense against foreign occupation. Evidently Hizbullah's imaginary triumph is based on a one-sided assessment of the costs to the enemy, and of the benefits to itself. Had Hizbullah accounted for its own losses and for the benefits reaped by Israel in the meantime, it would have found it necessary to reconsider its own activities. It also would have assessed the destruction it has caused in the villages of South Lebanon, the detrimental effects on the polity and economy of the South, as well as on the national unity and economy of Lebanon at large.

The Israelis have suffered casualties at the hands of Hizbullah members and after two decades of occupation the Israeli forces have withdrawn from South Lebanon. However, the Israelis themselves decided the time, the pace, and the extent of their withdrawal, holding on to the Shebaa Farms, which they consider tied to the fate of the Golan Heights and Israel's relations with Syria. Therefore, to say that Hizbullah forced Israel to withdraw is an exaggeration. On the contrary, one might actually argue that had there been Hizbullah terrorism, the Israelis might have withdrawn sooner, or soon after they had disposed of Palestinian resistance from within Lebanon. But in spite of Hizbullah, the Israeli forces continue to go in and out of Lebanon, freely and at will, by land, by sea, and by air.

Hizbullah claims to be fighting against foreign occupation of Lebanon, but that claim is unsupported. If Hizbullah were truly against foreign occupation, how would it defend its role in ushering in Iran's influence into Lebanon, or its role in the continued occupation of parts of Lebanon by Syrian forces, the opposing wishes of the Lebanese people notwithstanding?

Against the exaggerated achievements of Hizbullah, one should look at the costs inflicted by its actions on its own members and on the rest of the Lebanese community.

First, it is common knowledge that for every casualty inflicted on Israel, multiple casualties were inflicted in response. How many members of Hizbullah and how many civilians from the villages of the South have been killed or maimed is not readily known, but the number certainly exceeds by far the casualties suffered by Israel. Second, the Israeli punitive response has usually extended to homes, shops, and fields, many of which were destroyed in retaliation for Hizbullah's actions. Furthermore, the actions and reactions of Hizbullah have crippled the economy of South Lebanon, created massive unemployment, caused destruction of capital, and increased poverty. As a result many Lebanese have left the South, while others have become dependent on aid by Hizbullah and other agencies just to survive.

Third, Hizbullah's doctrine and behavior have been divisive and destructive. Hizbullah's mission is to establish a Muslim state in Lebanon on the model of Iran's Islamic regime, which is reactionary to say the least. Hizbullah plans to impose that model on Lebanon by force if necessary, with little regard to the wishes of the majority of the Lebanese people, who do not agree with Hizbullah. While developed countries have been promoting national unity, religious and cultural diversity, Hizbullah has been trying to impose its version of Islam (Shi'a) on the rest of the country. But what about the Christians, the Sunni Muslims, and the Druze? Hizbullah's doctrine and apparent behavior would suppress the various ethnic and religious groups. It would set up Muslim against Muslim, Christians and Muslims against each other, the Druze would have to fend for themselves. In fact it seems that Hizbullah may have already succeeded in creating ethnic and religious splits in and outside Lebanon. The national Lebanese government has lost control over much of Lebanon, in certain places to the Palestinians, in others to Hizbullah, and in still others to Syria. Iran's occupation of Lebanon is ideological, economic, and terroristic, with Hizbullah as its proxy. And while Hizbullah claims to be helping the Palestinians, it actually has done little to advance the cause of Palestine. On the contrary, Hizbullah has misled certain Palestinian groups into believing that violence and suicidal attacks on Israel are the only or best way to fight occupation, despite the large gap between the military power of Israel and that of Palestine. Hizbullah has replaced realism, strategic planning, and objective assessment of the results by emotional and disorganized sporadic attacks on Israel, which have led to more losses in life and property. The promise of peace through negotiation seems to have no place in the approach of Hizbullah. Instead, reinforced by Hizbullah's ideology and behavior, extremist Palestinian factions, have made peace by negotiation virtually impossible. And by doing so they have given Israel the excuse it wants to broaden its occupation of Palestine, build more settlements, and increase its punishing attacks on Palestinian life and property.

Learning from experience is an effective way to avoid past mistakes and to improve prospects in the future. The Hizbullah experience suggests that inflating little successes does not make great successes. Instead it creates a false image of one's ability to overcome obstacles and achieve the desired objectives. Hizbullah's experience shows that violence has not been effective to end occupation. Negotiations, compromise, and realistic assessment of the alternatives are indispensable to achieve liberation. Hizbullah's experience also shows that divisive doctrines and actions are a sure way to weaken the community, split the country, undermine the national government, and lose the battle against the adversary. Finally, Hizbullah's experience shows that Israel is

always on watch for excuses to advance its own interests. Hizbullah's behavior has given Israel exactly the excuses it wants and Israel has made the best out of those excuses to the detriment of the Palestinian resistance. It is now time for the Palestinians to recognize that violence is not the most efficient way to end Israeli occupation or to create a Palestinian state side by side with Israel. It is also time to recognize that Hizbullah is a poor model to follow in trying to promote and sustain national unity in Lebanon and in Palestine, to end foreign occupation, and to establish peace, freedom, and security for all. Negotiation, compromise, and implementation of reached agreements are the surest way to peace and a fair settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict.

## **EGYPT'S ECONOMY WILL TAKE OFF, BUT ONLY BY REVOLUTION**

### **September 2001**

Yes, Egypt needs a revolution, not a violent or a political one, but a revolution in self-confidence, in determination to develop, in education and technology, and in the freedom to innovate, create, produce, and market its products.

Egypt has a population of about sixty-two million people. It is classified as a middle-income country, not because it has a relatively high per capita income, but because at least eighty other countries have a lower per capita income. In terms of technology and economic structure, Egypt's economy is underdeveloped, overall poor, and its economic future is far from promising. To change that dismal outlook, Egypt must develop its economy. It must develop because its leaders want to modernize, its people desire a higher quality of life, and its economic independence needs reinforcement. The relatively high rate of growth of its population is building into a dynamic source of pressure on its natural resources, land, water, and minerals. A significant source of its income is rent from oil, the Suez Canal, and tourism. It also depends on income from employment abroad. However, these sources of income represent little development of the production economy or advancement of Egypt's technology. But Egypt does not have to remain underdeveloped, nor does it have to face the threat of sustained dependence on the outside, or economic, social, and political instability because of unfulfilled expectations of its people. Egypt's key to economic development, a higher labor productivity, and a higher per capita income, is the adoption and assimilation of more advanced technology, a change in the structure of its economy in favor of industry and manufacturing, and more self-reliance than has been the case in recent decades.

To its credit, Egypt has made strides in the direction of economic development. It has raised the level of literacy, made some improvements in the infrastructure, and has enjoyed a stable government for decades. However, these achievements have been less than adequate for economic take-off. Over a third of the population remains illiterate, and technical illiteracy is much higher. Egypt has an impressive supply of engineers and scientists, but most are underemployed, unemployed, or out of the country. While the export of skilled labor is an important source of income and foreign exchange, it has little direct impact on the domestic production economy or its level of development. In fact the export of labor has deprived Egypt of the expertise of a large segment of its human capital and made it dependent on employment outside the country, which is neither permanent nor guaranteed, given the role of politics in the Middle East region. Egypt has enough resources to build a developed economy. It has adequate potential savings, a more than adequate supply of energy, access to advanced technology, and a relatively open market. It enjoys a fairly sophisticated banking system, good economic data, and

significant geographic and political advantages that should enhance development. Why, then, has Egypt remained underdeveloped, and why does its economic future seem so gloomy? The reasons are not hard to find. Egypt suffers from certain social, economic, and political obstacles that have become institutionalized enough to stunt any effort to change the direction of the economy. Most probably Egypt's experts know the reasons but are unable to overcome them because of the institutionalized handicaps they face. The only way out of this trap of underdevelopment is to experience a revolution in four dimensions: a revolution in self-confidence, a revolution in determination and the will to develop, a revolution in education and technical know-how, and a revolution in the freedom to innovate, create, and compete in the open market. These various revolutions must emanate from within the Egyptian society, and once these begin to materialize, the other prerequisites for development will follow.

These revolutions are simply forms of fundamental change in how Egyptians feel about themselves, in their approach to development and how they prepare for it, and in their freedom to challenge the existing obstacles on their own. Egyptian experts go to Europe, the United States, and other countries and excel, but in their home country they have little opportunity to utilize their expertise. Either the facilities do not exist, or they have to make room for imported foreign experts who are rarely better qualified, except that they are from Europe or the United States. Evidently, the Khawaga Complex (foreign is better) is still predominant. Foreign companies are invited to build subways and dams, even though Egyptians know all the tricks of the trade and in fact do all the work as employees of the foreign companies. To illustrate further the impact of policy on self-esteem, the ministry of communications in Egypt has sponsored a program to make computers available to every Egyptian. According to this program Egypt would import obsolete or out-of-order computers, take the good parts and reassemble them into functioning machines. While the effort seems admirable, the implications are devastating: Egyptians would continue to be dependent on obsolete equipment, which lags in efficiency and productivity, given the state of the art, and hence in competitiveness. How much more uplifting it would have been had the ministry of communications decided to promote the production of new computers! Egypt can acquire the technology, has the experts and the resources, as well as the market. Years ago Brazil did exactly that and ended its dependence on the more expensive import market for computers.

The second prerequisite for development is a strong will to develop, by utilizing advanced technology and changing the structure of the economy towards industry and manufacturing. Agriculture and services are important, but industry and manufacturing are the main vehicles of development. That is how a country can break away from underdevelopment and initiate a take-off in its economy. This determination may be represented by a plan to industrialize, by setting up targets, and by securing the necessary resources to embark on the road to development.

To support the above two prerequisites, Egypt must transform its education into a system of secular, analytical, and technical education, with universal literacy as an immediate target. After more than a century of trying to spread education, there is little excuse for Egypt to suffer the high rates of illiteracy that still prevail. Rote learning has no place in modern education. Emphasis on rational, analytical, and critical thinking

is essential if the country is to develop. The concept “appropriate technology,” which has been promoted as a way of expanding employment in developing countries, must be reinterpreted to mean appropriate technology for the desired level of development. Full employment with primitive technology is not a way to development.

Finally, Egypt's development requires freedom for thinkers, scientists, entrepreneurs, and potential innovators and creators to put their ideas into action. They need freedom from the grip of politics, the burdens of tradition, and the high-handed power of the confessional leaders who strangle the individual and as a result the society at large. Egyptian experts study abroad but when they come back to Egypt they rarely have the freedom to apply their new knowledge or system of thought within the context of Egypt's economy and society. They quickly find themselves reverting to the old traditions and practices that sustain and nourish underdevelopment. The prerequisite freedom will unleash the power of these experts, to their own benefit as well as to that of Egypt.

These revolutions cannot be imposed, nor created by a magic wand. It takes the whole country to cooperate, initiate, and support the changes that would culminate into what is described here as revolutions. But the initial steps must come from the experts themselves, as educators at all levels. These experts can also set the example as parents by demonstrating how they help in the education of their own children at home, and in Egyptian institutions. They can lobby the media to promote their cause on behalf of Egypt, and both they and the media can recruit the state and government to facilitate, promote, and sponsor the needed changes.

These revolutions in thought and action are dynamic forces, which are bound to generate actions and reactions that may become contagious throughout the economy and society. Once Egyptians achieve a high level of self-confidence and show determination to develop, the foreign community will have to reassess its perceptions of Egypt's capabilities, prospects, and independence. These changes will take time but Egypt has little time to waste. The sooner the seeds are sown, the sooner they will germinate and grow into strong movements for economic and social development, by Egyptians, in Egypt, and for Egypt.

**PEACEMAKING AND THE IMMORAL WAR  
ARABS AND JEWS IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
October 2001**

This is the title of a book I published in 1972. The Arab-Israeli war is immoral because it is based on ignorance of the issues; it is a war that no one can actually win; a war that penalizes innocent people who have little to do with conflict... Peacemaking seems futile because of the untruthfulness and hypocrisy on all sides of the conflict. The policy makers, if they say anything, do not say what they mean and rarely mean what they say, they hide discrepancies under the vague concept of diplomacy. Yet, the war goes on, hatred mounts...and meaningless talks about peace continue. We can only wonder whether either party really wants peace, and if so at what cost. It is not true that there is no solution...nor is it true that both sides are trying for a solution, although they talk about it constantly. It is apparent that each side has become so deeply immersed in this immoral war that it has almost become a way of life.

Several relationships have changed since then. Egypt and Jordan have signed peace agreements with Israel, although it seems that the result is only a "no war" situation, but not real peace. The Oslo Agreement has led to the creation of the PNA in the WBG. A number of Arab countries have informal relations with Israel even though they formally maintain a state of war. As a result the focus of the conflict and peacemaking has centered on Palestinian-Israeli relations, as it should have long ago. However, the same indicators of immorality surrounding the conflict have persisted and are continuously being reinforced. As for the Arab countries, collectively and individually, they continue to pay lip service to the cause of Palestine. They provide little help, generate token international pressure to solve the conflict, and shower the Palestinians with empty rhetoric in support. While no one expects the Arab countries to wage a war against Israel, they have failed to provide adequate economic aid; they have failed to provide genuine diplomatic backing; and they have failed to use their oil and trade and finance cards in favor of a reasonable solution. Furthermore, they continue to hold to outdated and unrealistic resolutions regarding the Palestinian refugees and thus hinder their settlement as well as the making of peace. The Arab countries know that most of the refugees will not have a chance to go back to their original homes in Israel, and yet they refuse to acknowledge that situation and help to settle the refugees on a permanent basis.

The Palestinian leaders have fared even worse in terms of integrity, honesty, and truthfulness with their constituents. They acknowledge in intellectual and diplomatic

circles that they do not expect more than a small percentage of the refugees to return to Israel, but they will not tell this to the Palestinian public. They let the refugees languish in false hopes of return and increasing hatred of Israel. The Palestinian leaders do not seem clear or forthcoming on the expected boundaries of a Palestinian state: whether they are willing to settle within the WBG and recognize the legitimacy of the Israeli state; whether they aim at the boundaries specified in the 1947 United Nations Partition Plan, or whether they still target the whole of Mandate Palestine as a united democratic secular state for both Arabs and Jews. This uncertainty is being nourished by the various voices that speak in the name of Palestine. Why, for example do some non-governmental organizations close to the PNA circulate maps of the whole of Palestine? And why did the PNA reject Ehud Barak's proposals for peace, which would have given them virtually the whole of the WBG, even though some details still had to be negotiated? On the other hand, although the Palestinian people are suffering under Israeli occupation and are fully justified in resisting occupation, how do they justify killing Israeli civilians in cold blood? How do they justify suicide bombing of restaurants, train stations, or shopping centers? The Palestinians claim to want a secular democratic state, but continue to steep their liberation movement as a struggle in the name of Islam and 'Uruba (Arabism). The Palestinian leaders claim to respect human life, family institutions, and the value of education. Yet they permit provocative acts against Israelis, which result in loss of life. They permit children to go to the streets and throw stones at Israelis, which results in injury and more loss of life, disruption of family life, and loss of education for whole generations. Finally, the Palestinians claim to respect human rights, but the PNA leaders are among the first violators of human rights of their own people by tolerating a low degree of law and order, paying little attention to due process, and harboring widespread corruption. Ethics and morality seem to be a luxury, if they exist at all.

Unfortunately Israel is even more deeply ingrained in hypocrisy and immorality, especially in their conflict with the Palestinians. From desiring a national home for the Jews, they have become an occupying state; from exploitation of United Nations resolutions to gain legitimacy as a state, Israel has totally disregarded most relevant United Nations resolutions to promote its own territorial and political ambitions. Israel seems to have created its own system of morality. It has reinterpreted the Fourth Geneva Convention which protects occupied people and territories to justify the establishment of Jewish settlements on occupied land, the appropriation of Arab land and property, and wholesale alteration of the landscape of the territories under their rule. And, like the Palestinians, the Israeli authorities will not announce their real objectives regarding state boundaries, future of the occupied territories, or their future relations with the Palestinians and other Arabs around them. They talk of peace with the PNA but continue to display maps of a "Greater Israel." They memorialize their suffering as minorities and refugees, but they ignore the suffering of the Palestinian refugees and discriminate against their own Arab citizens. They deny any responsibility for the Palestinian refugee problem, even though they systematically terrorized those Palestinians into fleeing the country and evacuated many of them forcibly. They keep reminding themselves and the world of the collective suffering and abuse they have experienced, but they do not hesitate in inflicting collective abuse and punishment on the Palestinians. Their jets bombard villages, destroy buildings, and assassinate individuals, all in the name of the vague concept of security. As to due process, the military acts as policeman, judge, jury,

and executioner all in one. The Israeli authorities condemn people for presumed guilt by association; they demolish “innocent” homes; they uproot “helpless” orchards and olive groves; and they strangle the livelihood of innocent people by besieging them and turning their villages and towns into ghettos. They do all this while they talk of peace, presumably on their own terms, which keep changing, become more demanding, and therefore more difficult to accept. When it comes to human rights, Israel has been condemned by its own citizens for mistreatment of Palestinians, both in the WBG and in Israel itself. Again the Israeli authorities, sometimes backed by the courts, try to justify such actions by invoking the vague concept of security.

Israelis claim that all they want is to live in a peaceful and secure state of their own. If so, the shortest route to peace and security is to end the occupation of the WBG, recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to a state of their own, as defined by the United Nations. Once these steps are implemented, all other matters can be negotiated.

The Palestinians claim that all they want is a Palestinian state of their own within the WBG as per Resolution 242. If so, they should say so clearly, resist the occupation by peaceful and diplomatic means, and put an end to the violent and life wasting activities. They should also focus more resolutely on rehabilitation and stabilization of their economy and society, in spite of the burdens of occupation.

The Palestinians and the Israelis blame each other for failure of the peace process, but they rarely look into their own behavior to see what they had done that might have choked the peace process instead of helping it. Both also blame other nations, Israel for interfering too much and the Palestinians for not interfering enough, even though they both know that the two of them are the only parties that can make peace a reality. The Israelis and the Palestinians are bound to reach a peace agreement, and they are bound to compromise to reach that agreement. The sooner they do so, the sooner they will restore morality and ethics to be a guiding light in the future of their two peoples.

**THE UNITED STATES AND THE MIDDLE EAST  
AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001  
November 2001**

The attack on America on September 11 has ushered in a new framework of international relations, especially between the United States and the Middle East countries. The perpetrators of the attack have so far been identified as primarily of ME Arab origin, but the US has not accused any Arab or ME country as a culprit. However, as the US has declared a war on terrorism, it has beckoned all other countries, including those of the ME, to join an alliance to apprehend those behind the attack and eradicate terrorism altogether. Furthermore, the US government has, foolishly, put out a warning that countries not joining the alliance would be regarded as on the side of terrorism. The ME countries have found themselves on the spot, challenged to declare whether they are for or against terrorism. Reactions from the ME were quickly forthcoming. All governments except that of Iraq expressed sympathy for the victims of terror in New York and Washington. Even Iraq seemed in sympathy but chose to explain that their failure to express sympathy was due to the continuing bombardment of Iraq by the US and British air forces. Most countries declared themselves ready to join the alliance, although it was not yet clear how the war on terrorism would proceed, nor what was expected of the members of the alliance. Eventually the US declared its pending attack on the Taliban in Afghanistan, and possibly on other countries that harbor terrorism. It also announced its expectation of the alliance to help in apprehending terrorists, foiling their plans and networks, and communicating intelligence that would help in the fight against terrorism. Soon the US air force began its attack on Afghanistan where Osama Ben Laden and his Al Qaeda were supposed to be. Once these air attacks had started, reactions from the ME and other Islamic countries became conditional and variable in the form of support to be expected. Virtually all countries still agreed that fighting the terrorists was justified, but almost all had reservations. Many wanted more evidence that Ben Laden and the Taliban were responsible for the September 11 tragedy. Others, including the OIC, wanted a clear definition of terrorism. Still others worried about possible civilian casualties. A widespread reaction was that the US should remove its bias in favor of Israel against the Palestinians. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Yemen have in the meantime made some arrests, but that has been the extent of the ME participation in the alliance, as far as can be ascertained.

The people in the Middle East had a more significant reaction than the reactions of their governments. A small minority of people in various countries has held protests, at times loud and violent, against the US raids in Afghanistan, considering the US actions

as against Islam. In some countries protests were absent because protesting is simply not allowed, as in Saudi Arabia. But the most serious reaction has been the passive stand adopted by the silent majority in all ME countries, even where the expression of opinion is somewhat permissible. This passivism should be of concern for the policy makers in the US, for the alliance, and even for the respective regimes in the ME. Under this passive attitude lies a battery of grievances against the US and indirectly against those regimes, which stand by the US. These grievances have been gleaned from various anonymous sources for reasons of personal safety and professional standing.

On one hand, it is possible that the majority may be silent because they fear being branded as anti-Islam or as pro West and therefore can be easy targets of terror in their own countries. On the other hand, whether the grievances are justified or not, they do exist and directly address US policies in the ME. Foremost among these grievances is the unabashed bias of the US in favor of Israel and against the Palestinians. Most people in the Arab countries and Iran hold the US responsible for the cruel and expansionist policies of Israel. Equally grave is the charge that the US accommodates and supports outdated autocratic, totalitarian, and dictatorial regimes, for its own interests, regardless of the impact of these regimes on the welfare and freedom of the people in the region. The US is also held responsible for dissipating much of the oil wealth of the ME, by encouraging the purchase of arms by their friends in the region, even though such arms are of little use to those countries. Evidently, according to the critics, the US uses arms sales as business deals, but also to give its own forces and a foothold in the region. Another grievance is that the US tries to impose globalism, economic reform, and capitalism on countries of the ME. In the process, the people suffer severe austerity and unemployment, while the US shows little concern for these people, or whether the economies of the ME are ready to join the global system, given their economic and technological underdevelopment. Still another grievance is that the US has done little to end the civil war in Algeria or the bloodshed in Sudan, even though both countries consider those problems internal affairs. At the same time, the US (and Britain) continue to pound Iraq, frighten its people, and keep them in deprivation.

Sometimes the expression of these grievances is interpreted as hate of America and Americans. The fact is that people in the ME are very hospitable to Americans; they have a great desire to migrate to America; they try to learn English, and they dream of enjoying American products. One can even observe a streak of envy of America and the American way of life.

All the above grievances, individually and collectively, do not justify the horrible tragedy inflicted on September 11 or any act of terror against the US. Even so, it is important that the US reassess its relations with the ME, particularly with the silent majorities who will make the difference in future relations between the US and the ME region. Most important, however, the US should concentrate on fighting terrorism by all legitimate means, especially within the framework of the United Nations Charter. Working through the United Nations is particularly important to dispel any charges that the fight against terrorism is a fight against Islam. At the same time, the US should focus less on Islam and religion, and concentrate on the criminal and terrorist acts of the individuals and organizations concerned. The US does not have to defend its actions against the terrorists who exploit religion to arouse protest and enlist recruits by misleading them into thinking that they are serving religion. The US should apply

economic, social, and political pressure on all countries, if needed, to have them apprehend the criminals, destroy their networks, and rid the world of their menace. At the same time, the US may find it most valuable to reassess its relations with the various countries in the region. For instance, it should not support oppressive regimes and help them stay in power. It should not turn a blind eye to what goes on in countries considered friends and allies to the detriment of human rights and freedom of expression. The US may find it helpful to revise its policy on arms sales in the region and encourage the purchase of capital that is badly needed for development. In the final analysis, the US should make it clear to those countries that they need the US at least as much as the US needs them. The US needs their oil, but they also need US products, capital, technology, and support. The US should make it clear to the ME governments that to gain support of the silent majority in their own countries they should promote freedom of expression, economic and social development, and rational education and decision-making. And by doing so, they would also sustain the friendship and support of the US.

**THE THREAT TO CIVIL LIBERTY IN AMERICA  
INSECURITY OR PARANOIA  
December 2001**

The aftermath of September 11, 2001 has witnessed a display of compassion and patriotism, sadness and anger, and a strong urge to rid the world of the menace of terrorism. Rhetoric has been accompanied by hate crimes and hasty legislation, followed by air power pounding of the Taliban strongholds in Afghanistan. Other countries have been warned that they may be on the list of potential targets in the US campaign against terrorism. The Taliban forces have been strangled but not yet totally defeated. Osama ben Laden has been pursued but not yet beaten. The morale in the US is on the mend but not fully recovered from the dent of September 11.

The Bush administration has been groping for ways to choke the terrorists and wipe out terrorism, and bring back security and peace of mind to the people. The Patriot Act against terrorism has been signed into law, an airport security act has been adopted, and an Executive Order has been issued providing for military tribunals to deal with foreign suspects of terrorism, including those who are legal residents though not yet citizens. These legal instruments may be good for political purposes but not for security reasons. This is especially true of the Patriot Act which extends the power of the Attorney General and the FBI to detain, wiretap, target foreign nations, subpoena e-mail records, and put under surveillance all means of communications of suspects. The military court does not have to follow due process as in civil court. It may keep the adjudication secret, and its verdict cannot be appealed.

The White House and Congress may pat themselves on the back for adopting these legal measures in short order, but they have yet to explain three issues. First, there is little evidence that the authorities were hampered by the lack of legislative power to apprehend and detain terrorists. They simply were inefficient in tracking down the potential terrorists and apprehending them before they committed the crimes of Sept. 11. There is little evidence that suspected criminals could not be detained pending investigation. Actually detention of Arab and other Middle Eastern people started almost immediately after the event. About 1200 people are still in detention and no information about them is forthcoming, even though the American Civil Liberties Union has been asking for such information. Another 500 recent arrivals in the US from the Middle East are scheduled to be questioned, even though little specific information is available to make them suspect. At the same time, the US did not hesitate in issuing warnings to other countries suspected of harboring terrorists, without the power of the new legislation. In other words, the new laws and Executive Order changed little with respect to the practical power of the authorities in apprehending and detaining suspected terrorists. On the other hand, these legislative measures do threaten the civil liberties of

all people in this country. They invade the privacy of individuals before they are indicted or convicted. They pave the way for abuse of power by the police who are asked to profile certain ethnic groups. They inflict hardships on residents, both citizens and non-citizens by promoting suspicion on the basis of ethnic characteristics. The invasion of privacy has been extended to allow wire tapping of consultation between lawyer and client. Even members of the police force (in Oregon) have questioned the need for and the efficacy of these measures and have refused to comply with them.

The Executive Order allowing for military tribunals to judge non-citizen terrorists, as defined by the President, is superfluous. Those who are willing to die for their cause will not be deterred by the threat of facing a military court. The military court may deprive these suspects of a forum for their radical views, but they do not need a forum. They publicize their causes by their actions rather than by facing a judge in a courtroom. In fact, confidential proceedings in a courtroom will reinforce their claim that the US is prejudiced against them and their people and does not want the facts to be known. Furthermore, confidentiality of the proceedings and the lack of option to appeal are major violations of the spirit and letter of the US constitution, especially when the country is not formally or dangerously at war with another nation. Strangely enough, the US is practicing what it considers unacceptable when practiced by other nations, such as targeting individuals or disregarding due process against them. And by doing so, the US has already weakened the antiterrorism alliance with other countries, including the presumably strong European allies. Spain has decided not to extradite suspected terrorists to the US if they are to face military tribunals or the death penalty. Thus, the bastion of freedom and civil liberty and the proponent of human rights is now seen as a violator of these values by its own friends and allies.

The US is a powerful country, partly because of its wealth, advanced technology, and enterprise, but also because of its solid civil institutions and respect for the law in letter and spirit. The attack of September 11 should not be allowed to weaken the national commitment to honor these institutions nor lessen the nation's respect for the law. The US will be much more successful in eliminating terrorism by rededicating itself to the spirit of the law, to human rights, and above all to civil liberty and equal protection of all its citizens. To fight terrorism, first and foremost, it is necessary to adopt a standard definition of terrorism and apply it to all, friend and foe alike. Second, suspected terrorists and those who are accused of harboring them should be indicted by a grand jury or convicted by a court of law, even if in absentia where necessary, before they are made a target of violent action against them. Failing to do so would bring us back to the law of the jungle where the more powerful will simply wipe out the less powerful. Third, the US should continue to set an example for respect of the law by bringing suspects to face judgment in an open civil court with full due process. Let the suspects condemn themselves by their own uttering and testimony. If a case against them cannot be won in open court, it should not be won in a secret court. Fourth, the US should confine its attacks to the criminals and avoid condemning people by association or in collective punishment because the criminals cannot be identified or apprehended. Finally, the US government and people should remember that this is a country of ethnic groups. To subject any ethnic group to profiling, harassment, abuse, or hate crime would mean that all other ethnic groups may one day be subjected to similar behavior. That would be the worst indictment the US can inflict on itself, for only when even the

weakest ethnic group can feel secure and able to enjoy civil liberty will any other group be able to enjoy security, liberty and the basic freedoms, which the US Constitution guarantees for all.

**THE POVERTY OF DIPLOMACY AND STATESMANSHIP  
IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL  
January 2002**

The tragedy of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues to cause fatal casualties, destruction of capital, and reinforce feelings of insecurity and hatred by both peoples toward each other. These horrible effects could be avoided or at least minimized if only the Palestinian and Israeli leaders were to practice a certain degree of statesmanship and diplomacy. One may wonder whether they are capable of doing so; why else would they persist in inflicting suffering on their own people, even though they are not bringing them any closer to peace and security?

It is possible that Mr. Arafat feels so trapped by Israeli actions that he is unable to initiate actions of his own as a statesman and diplomat in the cause of peace. However, it is more likely that he has failed to depend primarily on statesmanship and diplomacy for at least three reasons. First, having compromised and lost so much, he has little left to offer and negotiate to induce a favorable reaction from Israel. Second, Mr. Arafat may have been constrained by the poverty of diplomatic skill among his aides and advisors. Finally, the Israeli leaders have consistently taken stands to make it difficult for Mr. Arafat to be more conciliatory, put trust in Israeli leaders' good will, or take more risk in favor of peace. That is probably why Mr. Arafat has been over-cautious and slow in facing the Palestinian perpetrators of violence against Israelis.

The position of the Israeli leaders is quite different. They have many options in dealing with the Palestinians, but evidently they have a dire need for statesmanship and diplomacy in selecting and practicing those options. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has demonstrated the utmost poverty of these classical international political instruments in reaching for peace with the Palestinians. For instance, had he any respect for diplomatic relations, Mr. Sharon would not have declared Mr. Arafat "irrelevant," but would have continued to deal with him as the legitimate leader with whom he has to conclude a settlement. Mr. Sharon and his cabinet would have acknowledged that it is up to the Palestinian people to say who their leader is, and who can negotiate peace with Israel. Mr. Sharon, as a statesman and diplomat, would have known that it is futile to expect Arafat to stop violence against Israel while the Israeli forces engage in excessive force and collective punishment against the Palestinian people. The blind and excessive use of force does not punish only the terrorists, but also inflicts harm on the people, buildings, institutions, and on the police establishment that is expected to control the violence against the Israelis themselves. It is ironic that the Israeli leaders should ask Mr. Arafat to arrest Palestinian citizens on the basis of accusations and rumors, with little explicit evidence of guilt and still maintain his authority as an elected leader of his people. Israel

prides itself on being a democracy and yet its leaders request Mr. Arafat to act as a dictator. Finally, were diplomacy and statesmanship the path of Israeli leaders, they would have hesitated in requesting Mr. Arafat to arrest leaders of Hamas and Jihad while Jewish extremists continued to harm Palestinians, seize their land and build settlements with public material and military backing and support. One-sided policies do not lead to a negotiated settlement.

The list of contradictions in Israeli policies can be expanded but there is little to gain by doing so. What is needed is for Palestinian and Israeli leaders to rediscover the essence of statesmanship and diplomacy in their search for a way out of the present stalemate and onto the road to negotiating a peaceful settlement. For example, it would be most appropriate for each party to put itself in the position of the other party and ask, "Being in this alternative position, how would we behave to 'get to yes' in dealing with our opponents?" Neither Palestinians nor Israelis seem willing to appreciate the other's predicament with sympathy and compassion. In fact they seem to be talking past each other most of the time. There are a few exceptions such as General Yariv, Moshe Sharret, Haim Darin-Drabkin, and Simha Flapan on the Israeli side, Issam Sartawi, Feisal Hussein, Hanna Siniora, and Sari Nusseiba on the Palestinian side.

Second, it would be equally appropriate for both Palestinians and Israelis to ask themselves whether they have been doing something wrong to incite the negative behavior of the other party toward them. For instance, the Palestinians may ask themselves why they resort to violence instead of peaceful protests and diplomacy in trying to end the occupation. The Israelis may also ask themselves why they use excessive force to suppress the Palestinian struggle for freedom, instead of ending the occupation and thus removing the sources of violence. Both parties have accepted resolutions 242 and 338. Now they may ask themselves why they are not implementing those resolutions.

Third, both Palestinians and Israelis have been using violence against each other for decades and yet violence has failed to end the conflict. It has made it worse. It is true that the Israelis have gained territory beyond what was allocated to them by the United Nations, but they have failed to subdue the national power and commitment of the Palestinians to be independent on their own land. On the contrary, by resorting to violence the Israelis have assured themselves of continued insecurity and wasteful expenditures to ensure survival. Similarly, the Palestinians must by now recognize that violence has not realized their national objectives. Instead, it has compounded their human and material losses. Fourth, both parties should recognize that neither of them can win trust of the other by making favorable declarations at one moment and countering them with violence at the next. To declare in favor of peace and then send suicide bombers to inflict harm on the other party is not the way to peace. It is equally futile to peace to declare interest in a peaceful settlement and at the same time announce intentions to hold on to a large part of the occupied territory permanently.

Finally, rather than prevent Mr. Arafat from attending Christmas Mass in Bethlehem, Mr. Sharon would have shown himself a great statesman and a shrewd diplomat had he encouraged interfaith participation by sending a representative of his government to join the procession. Mr. Sharon would have acquired a legacy as a statesman and diplomat had he supported and not vetoed Israeli President Katsav's proposal to address the Palestinian Parliament and declare a truce for one year.

Arafat and Sharon have much in common: background in violence, dedication to their national causes, and abundance of constraints they both face among their constituents. The main difference between them is that Mr. Sharon has a great military power (internal and external) behind him, while Mr. Arafat has to depend mostly on the moral power of his people's calls for freedom, independence, and justice. Moral power was the initial vehicle that brought Israel into existence, even against the military power of all the Arab countries combined. Moral power is also capable of restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinians even against the great military powers of Israel and its supporters. The sooner the Palestinians and Israelis recognize that statesmanship, diplomacy, and moral power are the surest way to peace and justice, the sooner they will get there.

## **SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY: A PALESTINIAN STATE NOW<sup>20</sup>**

**February 2002**

**E. Kaufman and M. Awad**

“September 11” has undoubtedly signaled a major crisis, and as the Chinese language represents this word, it is combined with the characters of both “danger” and “opportunity.” Major catastrophes during the last century have created opportunities for significant developments that have spilled over into the Jewish-Arab struggle for Israel/Palestine. World War I, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the Balfour Declaration supporting the idea of a Jewish national home and President Woodrow Wilson's “14 Points” together paved the way for the British mandate over Palestine. World War II and the post-facto revulsion against Nazi genocide strengthened support for the establishment of a Jewish state. Only a decade ago, after the Gulf War, President Bush Sr. announced a “New World Order” that triggered the Madrid Peace Conference, which was followed by the Oslo breakthrough of Israeli-Palestinian mutual recognition and the call for “no more war.”

Can President George W. Bush now seize the opportunity and help Israelis and Palestinians to halt the bloody cycle of “violence breeding violence?” It now matters little whether Osama Bin Laden's identification with the Palestinian people has been a ploy to elicit support among the Muslim masses, or a cynical stand shared with similar fundamentalists to stop peace and reconciliation efforts between Israelis and Palestinians. Whatever the motives of fundamentalists and rejectionists, statehood will help remove the Palestinian issue from their agendas and will contribute to an already growing consensus that attacks against innocent civilians are not the heroic acts of “freedom fighters,” but are both morally and politically wrong.

Involving Senator Mitchell and the Zinni-Burns Mission in implementing President Bush's plan to get both sides to cease violence and negotiate is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. As much as it would have been preferable to arrive to the “two-state solution” through a mutually agreed process, the chances for genuine negotiations between Sharon and Arafat do not exist this still leaves the option of unilateral action. However, the expectation of a US-imposed solution is unfounded. Foreign minister Peres' suggestion of unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza strip was quickly dismissed by the Likud-led government. The option of military struggle has been wastefully exhausted. So, there is little left but an innovative Palestinian initiative. To break this deadlock we need to “think out of the box.”

We, therefore, strongly urge Chairman Arafat to proceed to realize the Palestinian wish for statehood, as declared at the 19<sup>th</sup> Palestine National Council meeting in 1988, and to ask for formal recognition of Palestine by the world community as a full member

---

20

of the United Nations. The majority of the Palestinian people still favor a sovereign state in the entire West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital -- 22% of historic Palestine, living side-by-side at peace with Israel. The time has come to ask that Palestine be given a full seat at the UN General Assembly, and with membership will come the Palestinian undertaking to adhere to all human rights and other international conventions. The Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority would be recognized as the first president of an independent Palestine. All the signs are already pointing in that direction. An overwhelming majority of the member states of the United Nations are ready to welcome such an initiative. Great Britain has been supportive of a "viable Palestinian State." President Bush has expressed support of a "state of Palestine" next to Israel. Even Sharon has hinted that he has no objection to such a state. September 11th has revealed the preference of the world community and the US to relate to established and recognized states as the cornerstones of international security.

Furthermore, recognition of the Palestinian right of self-determination should not depend on approval by the Jewish state, but on universally recognized principles. After all, Israel sought full membership at the UN without waiting for recognition by the Arab States. So, why not try generating different dynamics by a unilaterally empowered Palestinian peace initiative? Obviously, there may well be advantages and disadvantages to a unilateral declaration of a state of Palestine. The most serious disadvantage is the risk that the Palestinians control only 40% of the West Bank and Gaza, and the government of Israel may decide to annex the remaining 60%. That is not much worse than the continuously deteriorating status quo and expanding land appropriation on the misleading premise of "allowing for the demographic growth in the settlements." Such action may in fact unmask the protracted policy of creeping annexation through expanding settlement. Israeli governments have been willing to negotiate the Golan Heights with Syria after they were unilaterally declared annexed by the Knesset, but without any international legitimacy. Even if the success of such a move is still doubtful, it may dissolve the current coalition with Labor and totally isolate Israel.

The suggested approach relies on "justice," not in terms of power politics, but as determined by the international courts of justice, and through alternative methods of conflict resolution. In regard to disputed territories and borders, there are several possible approaches:

a) The State of Palestine could request a ruling by the International Court of Justice at The Hague, as asked earlier by other UN member states to deal with such disputes.

b) The State of Palestine could request determination of the vital issue of final borders by arbitration. Under the leadership of former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, Israel accepted the principle of signing a peace treaty with established neighboring Arab countries, with outstanding issues still to be determined by arbitration; on that basis, Taba was returned to Egypt.

c) The State of Palestine could request the UN Security Council, author of the famous resolution 242 to draw up a map of "secure and recognized borders" which would lead to a "just and lasting peace." Given that both sides are on record as having accepted this November 1967 resolution, and given the 1947 precedent in which a clearly delimited Partition Plan was accepted by Israel, it would be difficult for an Israeli

government today to reject a configuration that offers far more than the 1947 plan. Furthermore, room can always be left for border rectification by mutual agreement.

There are numerous advantages to declaring a Palestinian state now: it will provide a way out for totally ceasing the violent struggle out of respect for the ability of judges to deal with the issue of borders without threats or undue pressure. Adhering to universal principles and covenants will get Palestine closer to likeminded regimes. The rule of law would facilitate succession by constitutional means, promote economic prosperity through replenished international aid, and provide an opportunity to constructively tackle other pending issues, notably the plight of the Palestinian refugees.

The establishment of Palestinian statehood now will reduce the appeal of violence and terror as legitimate forms of struggle to restore Palestinian rights. The political wing of Hamas will find it necessary to instruct its military wing to end all violent actions, given the option for power sharing. For the international community, bringing Palestine into the family of nations will heal an open wound and will atone for the dissonance that resulted from the world's support for the creation of a Jewish state in 1948. And, last but not least, the declaration of a Palestinian state now will also be good for Israel. Mainly, it will shift the debate among Israelis from how best to respond to violence and ensure their personal security to what kind of democratic society they aspire to. Once their own self-determination in a Jewish state is fully accepted and recognized, they will have to find ways to move from confrontation to reconciliation with the Palestinians, who will be their neighbors, aspiring to enjoy the same security and universally-recognized rights that Israeli citizens have claimed for themselves.

It is now solely in the hands of the Palestinians to empower themselves, constitute in their minds a self-perception as fully independent, and non-violently struggle for justice. The time is ripe: President Arafat, take a risk for peace. Go for a Palestinian state NOW.

Eddy Kaufman (ekaufman@cidcm@umd.edu) is a Senior Researcher at the Truman Peace Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland, College Park; Maryland; Mubarak Awad (Mubarak\_Awad@nyap/yap@nyap.org) is the founder of the Palestine Center for the Study of Non-Violence and President of the National Youth Advocate in Washington DC. An earlier version was published in the Jerusalem daily Al-Quds, Oct. 30, 2001. The views expressed above are those of the authors and do not represent AVP.

**Can A Non-violence Approach Resolve the  
Palestinian Israeli Conflict? Why Not Try?  
March 2002**

The call at this time for a non-violence approach to resolve the Palestinian Israeli conflict and bring about peace may seem anticlimactic and hopeless, given the recent escalation of violence by both sides. It seems as if both parties have committed themselves to mutual annihilation, disregard for human life, and the false expectation that peace can be imposed on one party or the other. The call for non-violence, however, has logic and a merit of its own: to rekindle hope that peace can be achieved at a much lower cost than the current violent approach. The idea of a non-violent Palestinian strategy has been recurrent in the recent history of the conflict. The United Nations and the American Friends Service Committee have led the way and have persisted in appealing for a non-violent approach to solve the conflict. In 1984 Mubarak Awad called on the Palestinians to adopt a Gandhian approach and has since continued to promote non-violence. In 1989 Johan Galtung argued for non-violence as a pragmatic approach by the Palestinians. Ralph E. Crow, Philip Grant, and Saad E. Ibrahim co-edited a book of essays on Arab non-violence in 1990. Even Yasser Arafat and Ariel Sharon have expressed their preference for peace through negotiations and non-violence. This platform, *Another Viewpoint*, has published a number of essays to arouse interest in non-violence in the context of the Palestine Israel conflict. However, the most recent call for a Palestinian strategy based on non-violence has come from James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute in Washington.<sup>21</sup> These various arguments for non-violence have had their origin in religion, ideology, political rhetoric, and only rarely in the pragmatic operational strategic thinking this one proposes.

This call for non-violence should apply to both Israelis and Palestinians, but I think it applies more to the Palestinians who tend to pay the higher price for violence and gain less from it than do the Israelis. I would argue further that the Palestinians would gain more through a non-violent struggle for independence and statehood than they would by violence. This argument is based on a pragmatic rational review of the costs and benefits of non-violence as a way to achieve those objectives. To put the costs and benefits in perspective, let us look at the results of the violence approach. First, it is evident that the violent struggle for almost a whole century has failed to realize its objectives. Second, although the Palestinians are fully justified in seeking an end to the Israeli occupation of their territories, pursuing that objective through violence has given Israel, the stronger party, an excuse to claim a right to defend itself, penetrate farther into Arab territories, create settlements, and entrench itself to protect them. Third, the Palestinians have in the meantime, suffered thousands of fatal casualties, tens of thousands of injured and maimed, billions of dollars in material losses, and devastating

---

<sup>21</sup>

blows to their psychological, educational, and social health, as well as to their morale. The depravity of educational opportunities over three or four generations has added up to a major loss of human capital and economic and social development. The long run impact of these inflictions has yet to be estimated, but no one can doubt the immensity of the tragic effects the Palestinians have suffered. On the other hand, the violent approach has exhausted its potential to draw attention to the suffering and justness of the Palestinian cause. And, while people in many countries express sympathy for that cause, few outside the Middle East approve of their tactics of violence, suicide bombing, or attacks on civilians. Therefore, to minimize the cost of the fight for statehood and independence, and gain the upper moral hand in the dispute, it seems imperative for the Palestinians to abandon violence and adopt non-violence as their new approach to end the conflict.

To abandon violence does not mean abandoning the goals of independence and statehood in a secure, peaceful, and viable environment within the legitimate boundaries recognized by the international community. On the contrary, the struggle to realize these objectives may be intensified, but without violence: no firearms, no stabbing, no stone throwing, and certainly no rockets or suicide bombing, whether against soldiers or civilians. The struggle may take the form of non-violent protests, sit-ins, passive resistance, and non-cooperation with occupation forces. It may also include non-violent obstruction of the activities of the Israeli authorities, such as the appropriation of land, the building of settlements, or the control of water resources. All this can be done while negotiations are going on, and appeals to the international community for justice and restoration are intensified. Of course, there will be risks. The process may be slow, casualties may be suffered, and other losses may be anticipated, but all these losses will in no way be on the scale of the losses suffered through the violent approach. However, the gains may be monumental.

First and foremost, by resorting to non-violence the Palestinians will gain the power of moral and human values. They will enlist large segments of the Israeli public to strengthen the call for an end to occupation and resolution of the conflict peacefully. Israel's PEACE NOW will come alive again, and so will other dovish groups that have been in relative dormancy in the last 15 months. Non-violence will deprive the Israeli authorities of the excuses they use to suppress the Palestinian people and inflict harm on them. By the same token, world public opinion will certainly shift in favor of the Palestinians and against the Israeli aggression. Public opinion in the United States will be revolutionized and become much more even-handed than has been possible so far.

The impact within the Palestinian community can hardly be overestimated. Human and physical capital will be spared and redirected toward developmental and creative objectives. The economy will have a chance to recover and grow. The schools will be opened and restored as educational institutions. And the border closures will lose all justification, real or false. Even the extremists in Israel will find it difficult to mobilize public opinion or blackmail the authorities into aggressive military action against the Palestinians. Finally, the Palestinian negotiators and policy makers will now have the upper moral hand when facing their Israeli counterparts, and when they seek support and aid from the international community.

The non-violent approach is not easy. It takes a high degree of patience and self-discipline, both of which deserve strengthening among the Palestinians. It is far more

difficult to practice non-violence than to carry a gun and shoot, but the short and long run benefits are certainly worth the effort. In the short run there will be a drastic reduction of costs. In the long run the Palestinians will be able to achieve independence, statehood, and a viable economy and society. These are the objectives they have been dreaming about for decades.

The Palestinian leadership, public and private, can lead. The educators can educate. However the public at large must be active participants if the non-violent approach is to materialize. The sooner the Palestinians start on the road of non-violence, the sooner they begin to realize the potential gains that await them.

## **BUSH, CHENEY, RUMSFIELD, AND ASHCROFT: AN AXIS OF CONCERN**

### **April 2002**

This quartet of the United States leaders is an axis of concern and anxiety for Americans and others because they are gearing national and international policies into unhealthy and dangerous water. They are doing more where they should be doing less and less where they should be doing more to guarantee security, international stability, and domestic freedom and prosperity. Economic stimulation is almost nonexistent, expenditure on the military is expanding, deficit spending is on the horizon, and the gap between rich and poor has become chronic and immune to corrective action. Corporate corruption, as illustrated by the tragic fate of Enron and Arthur Andersen, leaves a stigma on this axis of concern, especially in view of Vice President Cheney's code of secrecy regarding the corporate role in the making of energy policy. The domestic policy of profiling is a threat to democracy and individual freedom.

Mr. Ashcroft insists that non-citizens, who were invited to be interviewed, are doing so voluntarily, which is totally unconvincing. The failure to appear in response to this command performance can only raise suspicion and lead to self-incrimination. Some of these non-citizens hail from west-European countries, but only those with Middle Eastern ethnic background are so cordially invited to appear. Many of these profiled Middle Easterners have been detained for months, without charges, and little is known of what will become of them. Mr. Ashcroft now plans to invite several thousands more people of Middle Eastern ethnic background for investigation. Fear, discrimination, and domestic conflict are sure fruits of this misguided policy, which has done little to increase security or restore peace of mind and tranquility to US citizens here and abroad.

Terrorism in all its forms should be condemned and eliminated. But the fight against terrorism can be discrete, international, and carefully targeted. It can be covert enough to prevent terrorists from escaping apprehension and punishment. However, to combat terrorism most effectively would be to treat the causes rather than the symptoms. The US war on terrorism has turned into a large scale war on ghosts. Using heavy and most advanced weapons against bands of lightly armed people, raining havoc and destruction on unseen enemies, combatants and noncombatants, far away from US borders, sets a dangerous precedent for others to follow. Mr. Rumsfeld has kept a blind eye on the number of civilians and innocent casualties in Afghanistan. Israel has followed suit by using similar tactics indiscriminately against the Palestinians. US actions have made Sudan's use of helicopters against the rebels in the South seem totally acceptable. US policies have apparently inspired India to introduce legislation against terrorism, which seems to undermine civil liberties and democracy in that country. The US now appears to be condoning and encouraging what US legal experts have described as state terrorism.

The US is sinking into a war psychology. Yet, Congress has not declared a war, the target of war has not been well defined, and the components of victory have remained vague. Expansion of US military activities in the Philippines, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan,

Georgia, Yemen, Bahrain, and Columbia, in addition to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and South Korea can hardly be regarded as benign military cooperation with friendly countries. If anything, these expanded activities are bound to provoke resentment and opposition as possible means to expand US influence and support military, dictatorial, and corrupt regimes.

The war on terrorism has passed its first phase, but there is little information on what comes next except for the dramatic increase of propaganda and threats against Iraq. Mr. Cheney's failure to mobilize Middle Eastern support for war against Iraq may have been educational. He has received no endorsement except possibly from Israel. Several countries have raised questions regarding evidence that Iraq has connections with Al-Qae'da, or that it is producing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). By contrast, Mr. Cheney has discovered that US priorities are in conflict with those of the Middle Eastern countries, which consider solution of the Arab Israeli conflict as top priority.

Of course the main force in the axis of concern is President Bush. His actions and inactions shape both the domestic and the international fields. His open-ended statements on the war against terrorism are discomfoting because they suggest no end to the conflict in the foreseeable future. He tends to judge other countries by whether they join his policies on war or not, leaving no room for neutrality. His expanded defense budget to fight terrorism comes at the expense of the basic social services, without addressing the causes of terrorism and insecurity. The proposed expenditure on the antimissile missile program is an invitation to resume an arms race. The administration's strategic plan for the possible use of nuclear weapons against Libya, Syria, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China, is provocative and dangerous. While it is doubtful that the first five of these countries have nuclear weapons, it is easy for them to develop chemical and biological WMD, and justify the possession of such weapons as defense against the threat of nuclear weapons. Apparently the US feels justified to have its own arsenal of WMD and to use them, as in Japan and Vietnam, but not for others to do so unless they are friends and allies such as Israel, the UK, and France. This selective judgment of who shall and who shall not have WMD is a major source of concern, especially in the Islamic countries, which, rightly or wrongly, feel threatened by the West.

Mr. Bush has tried to win favor of the poor countries by addressing poverty and proposing the establishment of an international fund to which the US will contribute up to an annual sum of \$5 billion by 2006. This sum is too small to make a difference; it is just about what Israel receives in one year from US public and private sources. Dispensation of this fund will be conditional upon instituting policies and structural changes dictated by the US, the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO. In other words, to get help, a poor country must surrender to the institutions of globalization, whether it is ready or not. Even Pakistan, which is one of the closest US allies, has already voiced severe criticism of the proposal.

Still in the international arena, Mr. Bush is making history by instituting a special military court to deal with Taliban and Al-Qae'da detainees. The proposed institution is supposed to be fair, but due process is not guaranteed, clarity is lacking, and the process is so slow that no one can see an end to the blind tunnel in which those detainees find themselves, regardless of whether they are guilty or innocent.

Mr. Bush has generated concern on the domestic scene as well. He of course stands by the policies of his companions in the axis of concern, but he also has disturbing

policies of his own. Probably the most disturbing is his faith-based program, which is an indirect way to support religion in contravention of the Constitution. This faith-based program is bound to create a quagmire and become a source of profiling and discrimination in distributing the benefits. Would Mr. Bush like federal funds to go to fundamentalist and extremist Muslims, Christians, or Jews? What if atheists apply for federal funds for worthy causes, declaring atheism as their faith? The same questions arise in the context of school vouchers, which Mr. Bush favors greatly.

It is not too late for the axis of concern to turn itself into an axis of hope, peace, and cooperation. It can do more of the positive by increasing international aid and basing it on need and use for development. It can pursue a more even-handed policy in the Middle East and elsewhere. It can also revise its policy and declare those “who are not against are with us,” and thus respect the right of nations that feel neutrality is the best policy for them.

On the other hand, the administration can put an end to profiling, and to the detention of non-citizens of Middle Eastern ethnic background for which the administration lacks sufficient evidence for indictment. The administration can reduce its expenditure on the military and rhetoric against other nations and instead direct resources to dealing with the possible causes for antagonism and terrorism against the United States. Finally, the US can shift the responsibility to the United Nations whenever possible for collective action against international abuses. The Ugly American may thus be transformed into a fair, generous, helpful, and truly peace loving American.

**“IT’S DARKEST BEFORE DAWN”: MAYBE SO IN ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN  
RELATIONS!  
May 2002**

The month of April has been described in many ways, which suggest that Israelis and Palestinians may have just seen their darkest hours in fighting each other in the name of peace, security, and independence. If so, then a dawn should be about to break and light their way towards their objectives. Whether such hopes will come true remains to be seen, but eternal optimists always look for a silver lining. But why did conditions between the two peoples deteriorate so much, so fast, and bring horror and misery to both of them? I suggest that Yasser Arafat and Ariel Sharon bear most of the responsibility; internal and external constituencies should share the rest of the responsibility.

Yasser Arafat bears a great responsibility for failing to anticipate how Ariel Sharon would react to terrorist activities and suicide bombers who were targeting civilians indiscriminately. He should have known that Sharon would not turn a blind eye to the suicide bombers who were spreading fear and insecurity throughout the land. He should have known that the arrogant well equipped Israeli army would not conduct war with velvet gloves, even if the enemy threw only stones, used light arms, or used their own bodies as deadly weapons. Arafat should have known that the Sharon he had encountered in Lebanon would not be less cruel or aggressive now than he was then. Arafat and his advisors might have had something else in mind. They probably thought that outside forces would intervene to prevent atrocities against them. Or they might have thought that Israel would simply withdraw its strong army and end the occupation under pressure of Palestinian attacks. Probably Arafat also thought that should Israel reoccupy Palestinian territories, or subject his people to cruelty, world public opinion would come to his aid and he would realize a moral victory, as some Palestinians are claiming at the present time. Unfortunately Arafat once again fell into a trap woven out of misinformation, false expectations, and poor strategy and policy making. Thus, instead of changing the form of resistance to occupation, he let violence and terror get out of hand, and it backfired. If Sharon had wanted an excuse to dismantle the Palestinian infrastructure, terrorize the Palestinian people, crush their economy, and reoccupy their land, Mr. Arafat handed it to him on a silver platter.

Ariel Sharon is equally responsible for the deterioration of relations with the Palestinians. He gave the orders for the atrocities inflicted on the Palestinians, as any good analyst would have predicted. Sharon would attack with brute force, punish and terrorize his enemies, and cause them as much harm as possible in order to cripple their machinery of violence. Sharon had a history indicative of his behavior in war, as in Lebanon. He also had made enough public declarations of his intentions to make his words believable, and it all came true. Backed by a unity government, Sharon ordered his army to kill as many as deemed necessary, arrest and detain any “suspicious” character, and overcome every obstacle that stands in its way in the fight against Palestinian terrorism. The army obliged. It killed combatants and noncombatants, some say by the hundreds, arrested and detained by the thousands, and tried to humiliate the

whole Palestinian population and its leaders. The army demolished hundreds of homes and rendered thousands of Palestinians homeless. It ransacked offices, destroyed equipment, removed records and data banks cut off communications, disabled utilities, and laid siege to most of the towns and villages in the West Bank to cripple the economy and society. Ariel Sharon responded to Palestinian terrorists with state terrorism, only on a much larger scale. The extent of the losses of life and material is yet to be assessed. Incursions into Palestinian territory continue and there is little evidence that Sharon and his armies have managed to put an end to violent resistance to the Israeli occupation, or that they have realized security within Israel or the territories. An important question to ask is why and how could Sharon and his government inflict such harm on the Palestinians in a world in which human rights and the right of self-determination have become almost a universal logo?

Ariel Sharon carried out his campaign with excessive power and violence because he thought he could crush the power of the Palestinians quickly, liquidate or arrest their leaders, including Yasser Arafat himself, and put an end to violence once and for all. He also expected or knew that little outside intervention would be forthcoming to prevent him from carrying out his plans. He was obviously correct. The Israeli people, for example, while suffering from insecurity and fear caused by suicide bombing, apparently saw nothing wrong with subjecting the Palestinian people to similar atrocities and insecurity. Except for a few voices here and there, the Israeli public stood behind Sharon and his cruel tactics. They did not protest targeting individuals and assassinating them, without judge or jury; they did not protest collective punishment, or the massive destruction of homes, offices, and government structures. Sharon had good reasons to believe that he did what his people wanted him to do and he did it in a big way.

At the same time Sharon had little to worry about from outside forces. The Arab governments, as was predictable, reacted in such a benign way that Sharon had little reason to rethink his strategy and tactics. The Arab leaders met, protested, complained, met again, protested, and still complained, but only in words and no action. They had little with tangible effect to restrain Sharon and his army. They did not even hint at applying diplomatic, economic, or political pressure to prevent Israel's aggressive actions, nor did they threaten to restrict trade, stop the flow of oil, or suspend diplomatic relations. And given that the Arab countries had long ago decided against the use of force, Sharon and his government had no reason to consider the declarations of the Arab governments serious enough to make a difference. The Arab people were also vocal and loud in their demonstrations and protests, but only from a distance. Israel could watch but did not tremble. Yasser Arafat should have known that little effective help might be expected from the Arab countries.

The EU expressed its anger and criticized Israeli actions as violations of human rights, excessive force, and as cruel and tragic, but that was all. Words are never enough to dissuade an army unless those words are backed up by measures that could render certain benefits if obeyed or inflict harm if disregarded. Israel foresaw no potential benefit or harm from failing to take EU criticism seriously. In the meantime the EU has extended aid to the Palestinians to help them survive, but did little to strengthen them against Israel. The EU did not stop or threaten the flow of trade, capital, or immigrants to Israel.

The same rhetorical criticism of Israel did come from the United Nations. The UN passed resolutions to stop the violence and to withdraw from recently occupied towns, but no mechanism of implementation was put in place. Given the history of Israel's selective disregard of UN resolutions, it is not surprising that Israel had no compelling reason to comply or modify its behavior.

The only outside force that could have made a difference is the US. Israel depends heavily on the US in military, economic, diplomatic, and moral relations. But the US had a number of handicaps in dealing with Israel. On one hand, Israel made it clear that it was fighting terrorism in the same way that the US fought terrorism in Afghanistan, using sophisticated heavy equipment against poorly armed or trained bands of fundamentalists. The US destroyed structures and bombed buildings and caves in which there were people, combatants and others. Hence, Israelis have been asking: if it is appropriate for the US to use such force, bomb and destroy indiscriminately, why can't we. On the other hand, the US has never faltered in aiding Israel against the Palestinians. Even when US leaders try to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians, it is taken for granted that peace must be largely on Israeli terms. Thus, when President Bush asked Israel to withdraw from Palestinian towns, he left it to Ariel Sharon to decide the time and pace of withdrawal, and re-entry. And he always accompanied his calls for Israeli withdrawal with criticism of Arafat and renewed demands that he put an end to terrorism. Ariel Sharon could hardly expect more implied or explicit support from the US than he received. The declaration of support was also augmented by the sustained flow of public and private aid, sale of arms, and diplomatic and moral backing in and out of the UN. Given all these circumstances, Sharon would have been insane to end the military operations before finishing the job he had started.

In spite of this gloomy picture of the events of the last few weeks, there may be hope for a resolution of the conflict. The hope springs from two sources: the extreme weakening of the Palestinian authority and economy, and an apparently changed attitude in the US. On one hand, it is possible that Israel may be willing to end the occupation of Palestinian territory because Palestine is much less of a threat now than it was a month ago. The weakened Palestinians may also be more willing to negotiate terms than they did before. But more important is the apparent change in US attitude toward resolution of the conflict. The US wants to fight global terrorism, replace Saddam Hussein, and assure the continued flow of oil from the Middle East. Cooperation of the Arab countries in all three objectives is essential. To gain that cooperation, a little pressure on Israel might be judicious, especially that since resolution of the conflict would assure peace and security for Israel within parameters already known and widely accepted by all parties to the conflict. If so, it may be darkest now and a new dawn may be about to break in Palestinian Israeli relations.

## THE MYTH OF JENIN<sup>22</sup>

June 2002

H. Shehadeh

I was four years old when my parents, my elder brother, my sister and I were compelled to leave our home in Kufur Yasif in 1948. In the spring of that year Jewish troops were to take over our village and our family found a safe place for several weeks in the neighboring Druze village, Yirka in Western Galilee. That unpleasant trip on foot is still vivid in my memory and in particular two things: one, the huge camel that carried some of our basic belongings and my being afraid to ride it, and, second, my spontaneous question to my parents, "Why should we leave our home?"

The tragic cycle of violence and bloodshed continues in the West Bank and Israel. The phenomenon of suicide bombers against civilians is tragic, immoral, and insupportable. This does not mean that killing civilians by sophisticated means such as missiles is justifiable. The Hebrew term *hissul*, meaning liquidation, used in such cases should arouse some negative associations among the Jewish people who suffered so much in modern history.

It is obvious that acts of suicide bombers swiftly attract attention and overshadow the core of the problem, namely the continued occupation of Palestinian land. Ariel Sharon promised during the last elections to bring security to Israel in three months, but he has failed. His ongoing war against the Palestinians may be described as: war for the security of the settlements, war for the homeland, war against terror, war against Arafat, invasion, re-occupation, bloody adventure, military operation, operation defensive shield, or military offensive.

The declared aim of this war, which has mobilized 20,000 soldiers besides tanks, helicopters, and military jets, is to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure of the PNA. It is still unclear how killing, humiliation, arrests, siege, torture, collective punishment, vandalism and destruction of homes and offices would achieve that objective. The institutions of the PNA established in 1994 were damaged on April 2002, but more efficient ones will replace them as soon as possible, probably.

Gaffe Yarkoni, the national singer of Israel, has described the Independence Day as "the worst Independence Day I can remember. I have never seen things more dismal or black. I feel we are at the edge of the abyss." Such terror, called by others resistance, exists in the souls of millions of Palestinians and of Arabs alike. A Palestinian child who watched the dreadful scenes in the camp of Jenin will probably not think much before becoming the suicide bomber of tomorrow. The state of entire despair and the feeling that this young generation has nothing to lose anymore should immediately come to an end.

The word terrorism is being used to blot out the justification of resistance against occupation. A few dozen Israeli soldiers were killed while perhaps hundreds of Palestinians have died, though no one knows exactly how many. The number of arrested and wounded persons may reach thousands. At the same time, there has been no destruction in Israel, in contrast to the heavy destruction in Palestinian towns, villages,

---

22

and refugee camps, especially in Jenin and Nablus. Palestinian civil life has also been destroyed. UN Secretary General Kofi Anan appointed a fact-finding team but it was dissolved before it started its investigation due to the refusal of Israel to co-operate with it. This means that a detailed, trust-worthy and balanced report will not be forthcoming, and the UN, the USA, and the world community have been rebuffed. It is not a secret that Israel has rejected almost every UN resolution since 1948.

The American secretary of state, Mr. Collin Powell, in his ten-day visit to the Middle East, did not find it necessary to pay a short visit to the camp of Jenin or to the besieged Church of the Nativity. Yet, he rushed to the market of Mahoney Yehuda in West Jerusalem in the wake of a suicide bomb attack. Many voices will be wondering: What happened to the world's moral compass? Will the double-standard policy succeed in the long run?

The West has devoted little attention or discussion to the 35 year Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territory, which has been the longest in recent times. After eight years of sterile peace discussions between Israel and the PNA, more than seventy five percent of the Palestinians are unemployed and seventy percent live in poverty on less than two dollars a day. Since the second Intifadah, September 2000, Israel has sequestered Palestinians in more than 200 little ghettos in the Western Bank and Gaza Strip.

Unfortunately, occupation seldom ends willingly. The occupier agrees to return land for peace only when he feels that there is no other choice. Such a circumstance can emerge as a result of the implementation of UN resolutions such as nos. 194, 242, 338, and 1405. How to do that is the responsibility of the UN, and the civilized and democratic countries. The words of George W. Bush "When I say withdraw I mean it" are still fresh! Another approach talks about resistance in all forms so as to plant and spread horror and cause heavy casualties to the occupier and thus force it to comply with the UN resolutions and withdraw.

We believe that the ideal strategy for the Palestinians and the peace movements among the Israelis and the rest of the democratic world would be to put the focus on ending the occupation through non-violent resistance. Such a non-violent Intifadah should concentrate nationally on ending occupation and settlement and lead to peace and statehood for the Palestinians in the remaining 22 percent of historical Palestine. The peace and liberal movements and parties in Israel would join such a just and peaceful campaign for the mutual benefit of Israelis and Palestinians and thus allow them to live next to each other peacefully and with respect.

A near-saint leader such as Mahatma Gandhi is not on the horizon in the Middle East. Therefore it is morally imperative that the international, democratic, and civilized community intervene to end the bloodshed, hatred, violence, and destruction in the Holy Land, and bring security to both Israelis and Palestinians. America's credibility in the Middle East has been damaged, especially among the Arab people who number approximately 300 million. A peace broker in a conflict situation has to try to be even-handed and not a partner in the conflict. Nice words have little weight when calculations and considerations of elections and economic interests take top priority. It seems that other parties such as the UN, the European Union, Russia, Japan, and China can be more active to bring about a just, everlasting, and comprehensive peace with security between the State of Israel and the Palestinians on one hand, and with the rest of the Arab world

on the other. Ending the conflict and establishing normal relations with the Arab World would be a major achievement for Israel.

The camp in Jenin is small, approximately one square kilometer and the number of its inhabitants is about thirteen thousand. It is estimated that fifty Israeli tanks, 250 missile strikes a day and dozens of F-16 sorties, hammered the camp for over a week during the month of April. Over a third of its population became instantly homeless. Napoleon said “in war, morale considerations account for three quarters and the actual balance of force only for the other quarter.”

Myths are very important for nations throughout the world. The fighting in Jenin will be described in history by various terms and settings depending on ideologies of the writers and historians. It may be described as a story of disaster, an earth quake, a nest of terrorism, tough resistance, a massacre, a second Sabra and Shatila, the Stalingrad of Palestine, or just beyond belief. Jenin might be regarded as the Palestinian Massada similar to that of the Jews against the Romans in 71 A.D. However one thing is clear, what happened in Jenin will not be among the glorious chapters of Israel's modern history. The Myths of the Jenin camp and of Arafat's compound, or *muqata'a* in Ramallah, may fire up the consciousness of the Palestinian people. They may demonstrate the power of weakness against the weakness of power. After 54 years of suffering as refugees, the Palestinians look for peace and justice, while the Israelis look for peace and security. Does security lead to peace or does peace lead to security?

Haseeb Shehadeh was born in Kufur Yasif, in the Galilee, educated at the Hebrew University, and is a professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Helsinki, Finland. His e-mail address is Haseeb.Shehadeh@Helsinki.Fi. The views expressed are those of the author and do not implicate the University of California or the publisher in any way.

**THE ARAB WORLD LOOKS ONE WAY AND THE US CONGRESS  
LOOKS THE OTHER WAY  
July 2002**

The United States Senate passed a resolution on May 2nd by a majority of 94 to 2 “expressing solidarity with Israel in its fight against [Palestinian] terrorism.” The House of Representative passed a similar resolution by a majority of 352 to 21. On May 6th 42 out of 50 US state governors signed declarations of support for Israel. The language of the resolutions by Congress was so strong against the Palestinians that President Bush found it necessary to suggest toning down that language. But then Mr. Bush came back on June 24 with a statement of his vision of a Palestinian state that was no less one-sided or harsh than the statements by Congress and the declarations by the governors.

Blind US support of Israel has been legend since Israel's creation in 1948. To support Israel now in the fight against terrorism should therefore be predictable. What is surprising, however, is the landslide support by both houses of Congress and by the governors, among both Democrats and Republicans. Even though these resolutions and declarations are not binding, they reflect a political situation that should worry the Palestinians and Arabs at large. Apparently all Arab efforts to attain some degree of US even-handedness between Israel and its neighbors have been to no avail.

There is pull and push forces in favor of or against Israel just as there are pull and push forces in favor of and against the Palestinians and other Arabs, which influence US policy. The pull forces in favor of Israel are political, economic, and cultural. The creation of Israel has in many ways been a replay of the drama of the creation of the US itself, especially in relation to the land and the native people. This drama is a major source of empathy with Israel, which is continuously being reinforced by Israel's modernity, Western culture, technological advances, and economic achievements, for which the US takes much credit. The highly organized professional lobby on behalf of Israel is another powerful pull force. The lobby utilizes personal contact, the media, and financial backing of candidates and causes that are dear to the candidates and their constituencies. Major media outlets are on the side of Israel. Large segments of the academic and business communities are also sympathetic with Israel. The candidates for Congress or governorships take notice of these leanings.

However, there are also push factors that could discourage support of Israel against the Palestinians. For instance, support for Israel has carried a price tag of close to one hundred billion dollars so far. Backing Israel blindly has the potential of estranging the Arabs, including the oil exporting countries, the big buyers of US-made arms, and the states that regard themselves friends and allies of the US. Furthermore, backing Israel blindly has the potential to draw a wedge between the US and the Islamic world. Yet the net effect of the pull and push forces is evident in the almost unanimous support of Israel.

The Palestinians and other Arabs have pull forces on their side. For example, the Palestinians consider their claims for independence, self-government, and a Palestinian state as just and therefore should automatically gain sympathy in the US on principle. Another pull force is the inherent power of oil from the Gulf States, especially from Saudi Arabia. The power of Arab oil is augmented by the power of oil money, which is

recycled back into the US economy in the purchase of arms or other expenditures and investments. Furthermore, the Arabs have a lobby in the US, which tries to improve the Arab image and gain support for Arab causes.

Apparently the push factors against the Arabs have been more effective than the pull factors in forming the image of the Arabs and Palestinians in the US. Probably the most damaging push factor is the use of violence and terror against Israelis citizens. The US and other Western powers find suicide bombing against civilians especially repugnant. This negative image has been in circulation for a long time, but it has been heavily reinforced by the horrible attacks of September 11, 2001 against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Although no Palestinians have been identified among the perpetrators of September 11 terrorism, the majority were of Arab origin.

Another push factor against the Palestinians is the lack of credibility of their leadership. The Palestinian leaders have rarely been able to make firm decisions. They always hesitate, procrastinate, say no, and come back later to say yes to any proposal for resolving the conflict with Israel. Unfortunately they tend to come back too late to secure what had been offered them in the first place. By doing so, they give Israel more time to appropriate land and build settlements, but they also lose credibility as firm and rational decision-makers. The most recent example is Mr. Arafat's acceptance of President Clinton's proposal for peace a year and a half after he had first rejected it. The Palestinian leadership is viewed as corrupt, totalitarian, and uninterested in peace with Israel. Unfortunately, the Palestinian and Arab lobby has been ineffective in improving the Arab image. The Arab leaders have been too slow or unwilling to change their own behavior and create a new and more positive image. Still another push factor against the Palestinians is the weak support they receive from their own people and leaders of the other Arab countries. Though the Arab countries have always declared support for the Palestinian cause, the support has been more rhetorical than real, and may have been counterproductive. The negative image may also be attributed to the action and inaction of the Arab countries themselves. After half a century of trying to develop their economies, they remain economically and technologically underdeveloped, poor, overpopulated, and dependent. Even the oil exporting Arab countries, which appear as modern in consumption and expenditure, are still underdeveloped in production and technology and totally dependent on the outside. The Arab regimes depend largely on the military and on religion to stay in power as dictatorships or outdated monarchies that have little in common with their people. The Arab people in general leave a negative image as not having enough self-respect and will to challenge these regimes and claim their rights as in a truly democratic society. In addition to depending on the military, the Arab governments tend to overlook corruption enough to let it become institutionalized as part of daily life, thus perpetuating wealth of the few and poverty of the masses. Probably the most recent push factor against the Palestinians and other Arabs is their failure to condemn and rein in the terrorists that function within their jurisdictions. Finally, a major push factor against the Palestinians and other Arabs is a certain degree of intellectual and analytical laziness among the legislators, governors, and policy makers in the US. These leaders are influenced by appearances, the lobbies they face day in and day out, political correctness, and by self-interest, especially winning elections.

The Palestinian and Arab cause, nevertheless, is not a lost cause. The Palestinian and Arab leaders and people can still influence the making of their image and the

formulation of policy in the US by what they do and how they do it. There is underway a \$20 billion Arab campaign to improve their image. This will help a little. However, much more can be achieved by modifying their own behaviors, and by reaching out to the members of Congress, governors, party leaders, and other influential constituents in a genuine effort to promote mutual understanding between them and the US leaders and people. For example, it would help if the Palestinians and other Arabs acknowledge US assistance over the years; e.g. in the 1956 Suez war; in the 1973 war, and in the siege of the Palestinians in Lebanon in 1982, and the liberation of Kuwait in 1991. The Arabs may also take firm steps against terrorism. If they cannot stop terrorism on their own, they can ask for aid from the UN, the US, the European Union, or other countries. Still another step would be to define their claims against Israel clearly, as an end to the occupation of their land in accordance with UN resolution, which also guarantees the security of Israel, and the creation of their independent state side by side with Israel. Finally, the Arabs may embark on the long-run objective of sharing governance with the people. They can do that by taking immediate steps to promote and protect civil rights, freedom of expression, and equality before the law, within the framework of secular and democratic forms of government commensurate with the hopes and expectations of people around the world. Even a small beginning in that direction will go a long way toward creating a more positive Arab image, which the US Congress and the state governors will find impossible to ignore.

**UNITED STATES DEFENSE AGAINST TERRORISM:  
WHAT ABOUT ITS Prevention?  
August 2002**

The US government has put in place multiple measures to defend the country and the people against terrorism, as if terrorist attacks were imminent. The defense budget has been raised. The security forces have been rewarded with higher salaries. All branches of the armed forces now have more resources than they had dreamed of a year ago. Access to airports has been restricted. Travel security screening has been promoted to levels unheard of in recent US history. A Department of Homeland Security is in the making and will employ about 170,000 employees. Security at public functions and around government buildings has been introduced and tightened.

The US government has taken severe measures to restrict immigration from certain countries. Visitor visas are now hard to get. Non-citizen legal residents have become subject to investigation, detention, and surveillance, with no charges against them. Even US citizens originating from certain regions have been subjected to profiling, suspicion, and harassment. The US government has also imposed a pseudo-alliance with various countries against terrorism by declaring any country that does not join the fight as a supporter of terrorism. Furthermore, American forces have been deployed in the Philippines, Yemen, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and others on the pretense of training local forces to fight terrorism.

Are we more secure now than we were a few months ago? The administration says we are, but in reality we seem to be suffering from deep feelings of insecurity and paranoia. How else would we allow the Department of Justice to infringe on civil liberties, freedom of movement, and due process? How else would we tolerate the Operation TIPS, even as an idea, and ask our utility service people to snoop on their clients and report anything suspicious they observe, with no training or expertise in what to look for? The postman, the truck driver, and the gas and electric company representative may now all become informers. Probably the Department of Justice will require all of us to spy on each other, on our neighbors, and on anybody we care to and report what we want against them in the name of security and the fight against terrorism. The imaginary security touted by the US administration may turn out to be nothing but compound insecurity, for now one should be afraid not only of terrorists but also of the potential informers who live next door. If this is not insecurity and paranoia, why are small planes still taboo in the skies of Washington, DC? Why have all functionaries at Capitol Hill been furnished with "Escape Masks" to be able to escape when the terrorists attack?

The insecurity and paranoia injected into the American society, in spite of all the measures taken and still underway, are due more to omission than to commission by the administration. It is not only that the measures put in place cannot prevent a determined terrorist, say a suicide bomber, from causing harm and creating terror. It is the failure to take measures to prevent terrorism at its roots that renders those measures inadequate. If the administration were to find the causes of terrorism and remove them, the potential terrorists will have no cause to fight for, nor will they have support for their actions in host countries. The allocation of large budgets and cadres of human and physical capital to fight terrorism may be justified, both to scare away terrorists and to reassure the people

that public safety is a top priority. But these allocations are at the expense of other sectors of the economy and the freedoms and liberties of the people. For instance, could security not be realized at lower than the estimated costs? Could the administration achieve its objectives without infringing on the environment of liberty, freedom of movement, and feelings of security that prevailed before September 11, 2001? Could the administration make the imagined security more real and complete than has been the case? The answer to all three questions is YES.

Probably the first step is to find out why terrorism is aimed at the United States more than at any other Western developed rich country. Second, it is important for the US to balance its interests in other countries with the interests of the people of those countries. Third, it is safer and more productive to bring about change in other countries by co-opting the people than by imposing change on them. Finally, it is more prudent and efficient to seek security at the lowest possible cost than to operate on the motto of "security at any cost," as seems to have been the case.

It may be difficult to identify the causes of terrorism. However, some indicators suggest that the placement of US forces in certain countries is regarded as an infringement on their sovereignty, even if agreed to by the regimes in power in those countries. Another possible cause is the flagrant violation of the principle of fairness, even-handedness, and neutrality in dealing with conflict areas such as the Middle East, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict. Still another possible cause is the insistence of the US administration that other countries introduce reform before they can receive assistance from international institutions, regardless of whether those countries are interested, willing, or equipped to institute reform. In most cases those countries find themselves unable to face the immediate negative effects of the proposed reforms; the US administration pays little attention to the suffering of the people in question. Unfortunately the US government has done little to assess whether such grievances are genuine, serious, and causal in explaining terrorism. On the other hand, there is little indication that the placement of US forces abroad has been subject to review and analysis, with interests of the host countries taken seriously into consideration. If anything, the declarations of the US government suggest reinforcement of the policy of deployment of US forces abroad to fight terrorism, to topple Saddam Hussein of Iraq, or to combat drug trade in Colombia, regardless how the people of those countries feel about these actions.

There is little indication either, that fairness and even-handedness in foreign affairs have been enhanced in recent months. Looking at US policies relating to the Arab Israeli conflict, one wonders whether fairness, neutrality, or even-handedness exist in the dictionaries of the US government or the Congress.

The slogan of security at any cost has virtually been institutionalized, in the sense that allocations for security are rarely questioned or scrutinized by either party. Yet, one can imagine how much more effective the expenditure of a few billion dollars on development and cooperation with other countries would be, rather than spending them on arms that will never be used against terrorism in this country or abroad. One can imagine how positive the impact could be of a grant of a few billion dollars to the budding Union of African Nations, especially if offered with no strings attached. The most important benefit of such expenditures would be to weaken the support the terrorists enjoy in the poor and underdeveloped countries. Finally, the US has shown little

sensitivity to the negative impact of its globalization policy on most developing countries, with little positive results to show for it. Even the World Bank and the IMF have found it necessary to reconsider their approach. Yet, the rhetoric of the US administration and its attempts to impose reform and to spread globalization has persisted. All this is not to say that defensive measures are not necessary. It is to argue that such measures can be more effective when combined with an attack on the causes of terrorism. It is also to argue that a review of US economic and trade relations with other countries is necessary, taking into consideration the interests of those countries, as well as of those of the United States. Fairness and even-handedness, and concern for the viewpoints of others will go a long way toward reducing grievances that might be used as excuses for terrorism. The fact that allies and friends of the US in Europe and elsewhere do not agree with US policies in the Middle East calls for a critical review of these policies. Finally, trying for security at the lowest possible cost is more efficient than seeking security at any cost. Working with other countries to change policy or fight terrorism is more economical than demanding their compliance with policies that may not be to their benefit, as they see them. The US has no option but to look for the causes of terrorism and remove them, if it is to overcome terrorism and not just defend against it.

## **THE VARIOUS FACES OF TERROR**

### **September 2002**

The product of terrorism is terror. To terrorize is to create fear, which is unexpected, harsh, and lasting. Terrorists target the weak and helpless, where it hurts society most, to make the survivors and others remember. Terrorism may also be the weapon of the weak against the strong, in terms of conventional weapons and arms strength. It may also be the weapon of the weak in terms of justice, the cause they fight for, and the ability of attaining what cannot be attained by legitimate means.

The World Trade Center was vulnerable and helpless and most of those in it were presumably innocent. The attack on the World Trade Center was terror, which the whole country feels and remembers.

The villagers in Algeria who are slaughtered during the night by fundamentalists fighting the government are innocent, weak, and presumably helpless. The government frets and threatens, but gives little protection and the villagers continue to suffer. Why the villagers do not establish a night watch is baffling. Fear spreads, and it is remembered.

The Palestinian suicide bombers hit mostly civilians in restaurants, at bus stations, or in celebration halls. That is terror, for the victims are not in the battlefield or in combat. Some are innocent children who may be terrorized for life. The Palestinians say it is a fight against occupation, a weapon of despair, but it is terror and no excuse will make it fair.

It is terror to live where one cannot think freely, express thoughts openly, or question the behavior of those in power without fear of retribution. Most governments of the Middle East practice this form of terror against their own people who become afraid of the government and of one another. Every other person becomes a potential informer and hence one must beware of the consequences of uttering what may be regarded contrary to the policies or declarations of the government. Should that happen, one might be visited unexpectedly during the night, taken away, and for months or years no one will know where he or she is.

Terror can be the weapon of individuals, gangs, organized groups and militias, or of the state, which makes its actions legal, but it is terror just the same.

State terrorism has become a science and an art at the hands of the government of Israel. The net of terror by the Israeli military is quite wide. They scrape the agricultural land of the Palestinians and denude it of its topsoil. The land is terrorized and for years will produce no more.

They uproot the orchards and olive groves. Some of the trees are exiled to Israeli plantations, roadsides, or other landscape, but most are terrorized into death and annihilation. Even the seedlings get terrorized and become afraid of growing in the place of those orchards and olive trees, lest they meet the same fate without warning.

The homes of Palestinians are terrorized, as are their inhabitants, for they never know when a missile will hit, a bulldozer will roar, or explosives will blow up the structure and most of those surrounding it, even structures that are not intended targets. All this is legal, but it is terror just the same.

It is terror when children see their parents insulted, humiliated, and beaten by soldiers for no reason they can understand. It is terror when they suffer hunger and

malnutrition because the occupying army has restricted food availability for weeks and months at a time. And it is terror when the hungry cannot be fed, the sick cannot be healed, and the homeless cannot be sheltered, all because of actions or inactions of the state.

It is terror when education is held hostage, when schools are closed, and the teachers and students are herded away for interrogation, humiliation, or false arrest. It is terror when even the biased and racist textbooks become irrelevant because the actions of the state become the text for the children to memorize and remember. Nothing can erase these images of terror from the memories of children, as I have personally experienced.

It is terror when the assault by the strong and mighty comes from air, land, and sea against people armed with slingshots, stones, or obsolete and defective weapons or unarmed at all. The victims have no place to hide for they, their homes, and their orchards are now the prey.

It is terror when due process is suspended in a democracy. Suspected criminals are assassinated with unseen and unexpected missiles, rather than arrested and judged according to the law of the land. Thousands are detained for months and years without charge. Even citizens are threatened with loss of their rights as citizens.

It is terror when even friends and allies of the state become critical of its actions and collective assaults, which inflict pain and suffering and death on others who are innocent, and helpless.

It is terror when the state violates the ideals on which it is based. Israel was presumably built to fulfill humane ideals of Zionism. Instead, it is inflicting misery on another people.

It is terror when a cruel war takes the place of more effective and less horrible approaches in dealing with the enemy. Israel can arrest and judge, if it chooses to, rather than kill, destroy, and terrorize.

Israel can actually set the standards of humaneness in the Middle East rather than excel in the art and science of inflicting terror on its opponents. Israel can apologize and compensate for errors committed

The Palestinians have been wrong in allowing their fight for freedom to turn into a campaign of terror. They say they have no other recourse, but that is a false excuse. Is it possible that they do not want peace, or that terror is their mask for political and diplomatic ineffectiveness?

The Israelis have been even more wrong in turning their search for peace and security into terrorism to perpetuate the occupation of other people and their land.

Neither party can succeed. Terrorism has never attained victory, and the fight for freedom has never failed.

If peace and coexistence were objectives of the Palestinians and Israelis, they would do well to abandon terror, think of each other in humane terms, and transform their creative power into efforts to make coexistence, peace, and harmony a reality.

**THE ARABS AND MUSLIMS ASK:  
WHY IS AMERICA AGAINST US,  
OR IS IT?  
October 2002**

Scholars have in recent years suggested that there is a clash of civilizations between the Muslims (and Arabs) on one side, and the West (and Americans) on the other. The Muslims and Arabs, however, question the negative policies and actions of Western nations, especially the United States, and wonder why they are biased against them. They illustrate their curiosity by pointing to America's sustained blind support of Israel, and its apparent enmity toward Libya, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine. As to their own positions toward the US, they claim that they only react to the negative approach of the US toward them. Arabs and Muslims in general charge that the US tends to act with arrogance and condescension, and tries to impose its will on third world countries, including them. It also exploits them economically and politically to increase its power and perpetuate its dominance over them. Whether these charges are true or not, Arabs and Muslims perceive them as true and react accordingly, as adversaries.

Two main observations are relevant in this context. First, it is a fact that the US is a superpower, and has been the only superpower for over a decade. It is technologically the most advanced, militarily the most powerful, and the most influential nation in international affairs. Therefore, it is not difficult to perceive its actions as forms of arrogance, power play, and as impositions on the less powerful countries of the third world. Second, the Arab and Muslim countries fail to remember that respect, admiration, and equal treatment of countries or individuals have to be earned, rather than enjoyed as inherent rights or privileges. Though members of the UN are equal on the principle of one country one vote, their influence varies in accordance with their contribution to the UN budget, their ability to persuade others, and their willingness and ability to implement UN resolutions. The Arab and Muslim countries tend to be weak on all three criteria because most of them are relatively poor and cannot contribute much, especially to the UN budget and to implementation of UN resolutions. Hence, a closer look at their economic, political, technological, and military achievements in the last half century, or since they have become independent, goes a long way toward explaining why US policies and actions may seem as inherently condescending and adverse to the goals and approaches of the Arab and Muslim countries. While the American government may be playing its role with arrogance, the American people in general have little sympathy for underachievers, even though they extend help to them when in need.

American students of political economy of the ME often wonder why ME economies have lagged behind other countries with similar or fewer resources. Per capita incomes have remained relatively low and so have the rates of growth of GDPs. Several Arab countries do enjoy high per capita incomes, but their incomes are derived from rents rather than from commodity production. These countries depend on the export of oil, natural resources, and unprocessed agricultural products. They also depend on trade in transit and on remittances of their nationals working in other countries. Observers of these economies find the growth of labor productivity to be lacking, even though the labor force has had exposure to productivity-raising techniques for decades. When scholars look at the history of patents and inventions in the last few decades, they find

little originating in the Arab or Muslim countries. Furthermore, almost all Arab and Muslim countries have remained dependent on economic and technological aid from the outside. Finally, the Arab and Muslim countries have shown little success in military confrontations they have experienced. In other words, the Arab and Muslim countries lack most of the economic, technological, and military characteristics admired by Americans.

The political and institutional differences between the US and Arab and Muslim countries are equally responsible for the apparent conflict between the two sides. American ideals tend to be the rule of law, democracy, and free trade. Though the US has been involved in international wars, Americans explain their involvement as aid to others in pursuit of peace, or the rule of law, democracy, and free trade. Americans have enjoyed internal peace between the states since the end of the Civil War. They have abided by the Constitution and the rule of law. By contrast, most Arab and Muslim countries have been involved in civil war or in war with their neighbors, but they have rarely achieved absolute victories and have in most cases needed UN intervention to resolve conflicts. Any apparent national or regional stability in Arab and Muslim countries seems to be sustained by dictatorship, oppression, and military rule, or by outside intervention. These features have lasted so long that Americans wonder whether Arabs and Muslims are capable of enjoying peace and stability in their own countries or with each other.

American skepticism also applies to the ideals of democracy and free trade. They wonder whether democracy, as they understand it, has any hope of growing or surviving in Arab or Muslim countries. They find it difficult to understand why freedom of religion is constrained, why civil rights are restricted, and why human rights advocates are at risk of being arrested and jailed. While Arabs and Muslims may have different perceptions of democracy and individual rights, Americans are still bewildered, believing that such restrictions on basic freedoms are difficult to justify in any situation. At the same time, the Arabs and Muslims have to improvise substitutes for democracy that would provide for internal stability with guaranteed civil rights.

Finally, the US preaches its own ideal of free trade as represented by capitalism and free enterprise. Though foreign trade restrictions are sometimes imposed, trade among and between the fifty states is free and unrestricted. By contrast, the Arab and Muslim countries talk about free trade between them but do little to make it a reality. The Arab League has been trying to promote an Arab common market for about half a century, with little success. The OIC preaches cooperation among Muslim countries, with few tangible effects on trade, economic development, or technology transfer between its members.

The differences between the Arab and Muslim countries and the US in economic, political, technological, and military achievements are vast. While respective perceptions of peace or the rule of law, democracy, and free trade may differ, the fact that the achievements are not equal may have been instrumental in generating what is regarded as American arrogance, condescension, and bias. These dynamics may be best explained by the American attitudes toward Israel and the Palestinians respectively. The Americans notice that Jews around the world support Israel morally, materially, and politically, while the Arabs and Muslims give only rhetorical and token aid to the Palestinians, which is less than sufficient for mere survival. The Arabs and Muslims have failed to unite or

create power groups. They have failed to control their own deviant or rogue members, and they have failed to extend sufficient aid to those members who need and deserve help to achieve viability. Because of these failures, the US has faced little Arab or Muslim countervailing power to take into consideration in its policy making.

The question may be raised again whether the apparent adversity between the US (and the West) on one side, and the Arabs and Muslims on the other is due to a clash of civilizations, ideologies, and beliefs, or to actual behaviors and inequality of achievement in their internal and external affairs. The adversity seems to be a reflection of the actual behaviors and achievements, rather than of ideologies and beliefs. The failure of Arabs and Muslims to achieve is not due to Arabism or Islam. Arabs and Muslims have made great achievements in the past. Rather, the failure has been due to the behavior of the regimes that rule the Arab and Muslim countries, and acquiescence of the people they rule. It is due to the rulers' exploitation of nationalism and religion to stay in power. It is due to their restriction of the basic freedoms. By doing so, the rulers condemn the creative abilities of their own people to conformity, sterility, and economic backwardness. As a result the Arab and Muslim countries have failed to impress or influence the policies of the US and other advanced countries, which they tend to interpret as adverse, biased, and imposed on them.

The Arabs and Muslims have it in their power to change their relations with the US. They can do so by reviewing their own interpretation of Arabism and Islam to enhance economic, political, and technological development. They can do so by promoting unity and collective power to advance their standing in world affairs. They can do so by proving themselves capable of achieving power and what their own people cherish most: freedom, prosperity, and equality with advanced countries, not through aid and dependence, but by their own diligence, creativity, and hard work.

## **PRESIDENT BUSH AND THE MOUNTING CHALLENGES**

### **November 2002**

President Bush says he is a patient man. Patience should be an asset when challenges mount and solutions are elusive. However, patience has to be fortified with resources, diplomacy, creativity, and action, as well awareness of the national and international environment for action.

The main challenges on the domestic scene are the faltering economy, a corrupt and demoralized corporate structure, and the burden of exploding military expenditures. Another challenge is the threat to civil rights and the discomfort it is causing many citizens and legal residents, for no fault of their own. The challenge of containing the union-employer conflict, as is currently occurring between the Longshoremen and the shipping companies on the West Coast cannot be overestimated. However, equally disturbing is Mr. Bush's attempt to exempt the new Department of Homeland Security from union rules and regulations. So far the President has made little headway in dealing with these issues, especially the weakening economy, the relatively high rate of unemployment, and the low consumer and investor confidence.

The challenges on the international scene are equally significant and alarming. The ongoing war on terrorism tops the list, followed by the Administration's obsession with Iraq and Saddam Hussein and the probability that a preemptive war against Iraq is in the making. The conflict with Iraq has recently been complicated by North Korea's admission that it has been working on a project that will produce nuclear weapons. The Administration seems to make little of this complication because it can resort to diplomacy in dealing with it. However, it will be difficult to explain its inconsistency in proposing war against Iraq and diplomacy with North Korea, given that both countries are members of Mr. Bush's axis of evil.

Another international challenge is the promotion of peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, given Israel's incorrigible behavior towards the Palestinians, its greed for their land, and illegal settlement building. However, probably the most trying challenge is to reconcile United States policies with the Islamic world in order to avoid further conflicts and maintain a secure and harmonious relationship with Muslims around the world. While the fundamentalists express their antagonism openly, mainly, discord between the Islamic countries and the West may be real and deeply rooted. Whether the dormant conflict is a function of the inequality of resources and power, or of a lack of mutual respect for each other's values and institutions, President Bush can hardly ignore the problem and its symptoms.

President Bush has a few advantages and disadvantages in dealing with these challenges. For example, lacking a majority in Congress denies him strong backing for most of his policies, issues of security are exceptions. On the other hand, a somewhat scared opposition seems to have given him a free hand in preparing for war against Iraq and terrorism. Another obvious advantage is the superior military power of the United States, although such power has limited effectiveness against the "phantom" perpetrators of terrorism.

The President sees as an advantage the role North Korea's neighbors can play to convince that country to abandon its nuclear weapons program. If so, the President should have a similar advantage in dealing with Iraq if he were to seek help from the

Arab countries and the Arab League, which are certainly opposed to war with Iraq. The way President Bush approaches North Korea and Iraq with regard to weapons of mass destruction should be significant in anticipating and preventing a similar conflict when Iran produces mass destructive weapons. Iran is a large country, capable of mobilizing a large army, openly antagonistic to the US and the West, and is friendly with fundamentalist Islam. A conflict scenario is not improbable and therefore a policy of anticipation and prevention is a real challenge.

The President has sought to form a coalition against Iraq so far unsuccessfully. Even the British government, which has stood by President Bush all the way is facing opposition within its own ranks. Other European countries have so far failed to endorse the US plan and some permanent members of the Security Council have openly opposed it. Such opposition cannot be comforting to Mr. Bush which means he has to try even harder to find solutions at minimum costs to all concerned.

The challenges President Bush faces are formidable. However, patience, shrewd diplomacy, and creativity can find reasonable and peaceful solutions. For example, President Bush can entrust most international conflicts to the United Nations in which the United States plays a critical role. The President can seek help from the Arab countries and the Arab League to tame Iraq and force it to respect UN resolutions. The President can appeal to the Islamic countries to play a more direct role than they have done in coping with Iraq and with terrorism. Asking the League and the Islamic countries to help may be advantageous in understanding the sources of conflict between Islam and the West, if such a conflict truly exists. So far the President has demanded cooperation, describing those who do not cooperate as being on the side of terrorism. A change of tactics would be quite useful in this situation.

The President can also play a more active role to resolve the Israeli Arab conflict. Israel must be content with the land area allocated to it by the United Nations. Israel must end its occupation of Palestinian and Syrian land, and it must end its “massive destruction” of the Palestinian economy and society. Israel must also stop its violation of human rights against the Palestinians. The US has enough leverage to make Israel listen and modify its policies and actions, which are being used as excuses for terrorism against its own people. A strong US stand in favor of an Arab Israeli peace within the framework of the UN resolutions will have a high pay off for US international diplomacy as well as for the security of Israel.

President Bush will still have to deal with the domestic issues, especially the weak economy. The Federal Reserve Board has reached its limits in affecting the economy. Waiting for the market to revive the economy is too costly in economic and human terms. The President can make a big difference by resorting to fiscal policy, especially government spending, directly or indirectly, in targeted areas where unemployment is high and productive investment is badly needed. The President can also play a major role to contain the costly conflict between employers and unions, especially by setting an example and respecting the role of unions in the pending Department of Homeland Security. Labor cooperation would be a great asset in trying to cure many of the ills of the economy and the country.

The President faces many challenges, but these challenges are not the worst this country has faced. However, much depends on the President and how he formulates policy, initiates action, and solves problems. Let us hope that Mr. Bush will rise to the

occasion, exercise his patience, avoid war, revive the economy, and bring about peace and security to this country and the world at large.

**LESSONS TO BE LEARNED: THE ISRAELI PALESTINIAN CONFLICT  
AND THE ROAD MAP TO PEACE  
December 2002**

The Palestinian Israeli conflict has lasted for more than a century. Violence has been recurring ever since 1929, but always ascending in severity and cruelty. Yet, neither side has managed to attain its objectives with peace and security. The Israelis have created a state, but they have not achieved security or peace. The Palestinians have lost territory, lives, property, and generations of human capital, which have been wasted. This is the first lesson to learn by both parties: violence has failed to produce an acceptable solution. On the contrary, violence, terrorism, and cruelty have been counterproductive. In the last two years alone, the Palestinians have lost 1934 lives and tens of thousands have been injured. The Israelis have lost 678 lives, including about 30 foreigners, and thousands have been injured. Both sides have lost children and young people who have not had a chance to reach the prime of their life, all for nothing to show in return. Mahmud Abbas, (Abu Mazen), has just admitted that the violence was a mistake—better late than never.

A second lesson derives from the history of the conflict. Neither side is likely to realize all its objectives. The dispute is over territory, sovereignty, and the right to live in peace and security. By now it is evident that meeting each other partway is the only way out of the stalemate. Neither the powerful Israeli army nor the terror of suicide bombers can alter that conclusion. Compromise is the only viable way to a solution since neither party is likely to vanquish the other.

A third lesson has become obvious, but it has yet to be comprehended and internalized: viable solutions cannot be imposed by force, whether by the parties themselves or by outsiders. The accepted solution has to be processed into the thinking and behavior of the parties concerned. Outsiders can mediate, facilitate, and help to bring the parties together, but the Palestinians and Israelis have to develop and nourish the solution to make it viable. By failing to reach a viable solution by compromise and on their own, the leaders of Israel and Palestine are failing their own people who crave for peace and, even if they have to compromise.

The Palestinian Israeli conflict is essentially a fight for land. It is not racial, ethnic, or religious. It is a struggle to accumulate real estate by one party, and an attempt to hold on to the land by the other. Transactions like these are worldly affairs that should be handled rationally and analytically. There is no room for religion to enter into the conflict over territory, or into the solution. Judaism and Islam are not in a wrestling match, since both people say they would respect the sanctity of the shrines of all religions. The match is between the people, Palestinians and Israelis. They would come much closer to a solution if they would leave religion out of the affairs of the state. By doing so they can neutralize the religious fanatics on both sides and thus have fewer problems to cope with in the search for a solution.

Both Israel and Palestine are suffering from a poverty of leadership, one that can approach the other side in a rational, secular manner. Ariel Sharon caters to religious parties and fanatics as Yasser Arafat does in trying to co-opt Islamic fundamentalists. Both leaders end up with misguided policies that lead away from peace rather than toward it. Maybe it is time to search for peace in a new way: without violence, but with

the expectation that compromise is unavoidable and that negotiations must be free of religious bias or influence.

These lessons may be helpful to take advantage of the Road Map to peace drawn by the Quartet—the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations a few months ago. The Quartet has just produced a revised version of the Road Map presumably to accommodate requests of the Palestinians and Israelis. The new Road Map, like the earlier version, reflects a vision of peace between the two peoples, as well as between Israel and its Syrian and Lebanese neighbors. The road to peace comes in three phases to be consummated in 2005 with the establishment of a State of Palestine roughly within the boundaries of pre-June 4, 1967. The settlement would be based on UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 1397 and the formula of Peace for Land. The Road Map leaves aside the issue of Palestinian refugees, the Jewish settlements, and how Jerusalem will be shared. It does indicate that Jerusalem will serve as the capital for both states. The pending issues are to be negotiated by the two parties, presumably with facilitation by the Quartet. Most probably Israel has been consulted by the United States in the process of preparing and revising the Road Map. Therefore, it is most likely that Israel will pretend to accept the Road Map at least initially in compliance with United States request, and because the Road Map demands little of Israel in return for the peace and security it promises to bring about.

In contrast, while it leaves many issues unresolved, the Road Map puts many demands on the Palestinians, from ending violence to adopting a comprehensive reform of the institutions of government and society. It is easy to view these demands a form of control over the Palestinians, and as an infringement on their assumed sovereignty. Will the Palestinians be able to accept these demands and cooperate with the Quartet to achieve peace and independence through the Road Map? The answer to this question is the focus of the rest of this discussion.

The PNA, led by Yasser Arafat, has already declared its acceptance of the Road Map, in principle. This is a good sign, but we need many more good signs before acceptance in principle becomes operational and binding. Since the Oslo Agreement of 1993 many proposals for peace have been accepted in principle, only to fail in the final analysis. The Palestinians often start with a NO, express ambivalence, fail to offer an alternative, and when it becomes too late they say yes and try to salvage the proposal. Whether the Israelis would have adopted the proposal or not, the blame usually falls on the Palestinians. This was the case with the Clinton-Barak proposal. The Palestinians might have had good reasons to reject Clinton's plan, but they were hesitant, ambivalent, neither saying yes nor saying no, and not offering any alternatives until it was too late. Maybe it will be different with the Road Map.

Now that Yasser Arafat has accepted the Road Map in principle, it would be appropriate for him to start preparing the Palestinian people for the sacrifices they may have to make in order to achieve independence, sovereignty, and peace. Mr. Arafat would do well to prepare the people for ending the violent Intifadah and replacing it with peaceful demonstrations until the occupation is ended, even as negotiations are underway. Mr. Arafat would also do well to prepare the people for the responsibilities they have to shoulder in rebuilding Palestine, rehabilitating their society, and reviving the economy. But most of all, Yasser Arafat must have a blueprint of what is acceptable and

what he offers in return for negotiations to succeed. The people, without compromising the ability to negotiate, should also know what is in such a blueprint.

The Quartet will help, but it will not resolve the conflict. The United States can help, but it will not impose a solution. The European Union will help, but it will not go beyond what the US says. Russia will also facilitate, but it will not take the side of the Palestinians in the same way the US takes the side of Israel. These are givens. Yasser Arafat needs to be alert to the misleading rhetorical endorsements he hears, the empty declarations and promises, and to the hopelessness of any solution not favored by the US. Diplomacy, rationality, and a recall of the lessons of history should help to smooth the way to a peaceful solution. The Road Map provides another chance. It is up to the Palestinians to make it workable, at least as far as they are concerned, in order to become independent, sovereign, and secure in their own state.

**GEORGE BUSH TO SADDAM HUSSEIN:  
DO AS WE SAY, NOT AS WE DO!  
January 2003**

That is the message of President Bush to President Saddam Hussein, for what is permissible for the United States may not be permissible for others. That same message tends to poison the relationship between the US and many countries around the world. Here the focus is on the relationship with Iraq. Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush have unreal expectations of each other, and thus are increasing the danger of war, though war IS avoidable. Both leaders are incurring much waste in their economies, and both seem to give welfare and civil rights of the people a low priority in their policy framework. Both also seem intoxicated enough with power not to rethink their approaches toward each other until forced to do so. Saddam Hussein rattles his sword and considers that good diplomacy. George Bush punishes Iraq with sanctions and missiles and declares that there is no room left for diplomacy. The people of both the US and Iraq suffer the consequences.

Mr. Bush is threatening to wage a war against Iraq in order to disarm it of WMD, and to dislodge its president Saddam Hussein and his regime, and replace them with a “democratic” government. That the UN has not approved dislodging Saddam Hussein, and that democracy cannot be imposed do not seem to make a difference. To give himself an excuse to go to war, Mr. Bush has demanded that Iraq “prove” that it has no WMD. How to prove the negative is unclear. To oblige, Saddam Hussein has submitted about 12,000 pages of denial that Iraq has any WMD. Mr. Bush charges that Iraq has not told the truth, but how else to prove it remains unclear. On his part, Saddam Hussein says: here is our list and it is up to the UN inspectors and the CIA agents to show otherwise. Saddam Hussein knows that it is virtually impossible to check every spot in the country, and George Bush knows that Iraq cannot prove the impossible. Hence, war remains highly probable.

Equally fanatic loyalists, who reinforce their leader’s faulty policies, back up the two leaders. George Bush has Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and John Ashcroft to reinforce his position. However, Mr. Bush has Colin Powell to make him rethink some of those policies. Saddam Hussein has Taha Hussein, Tareq Aziz, and Nagi Sabri to say YES to the leader. Whether he has a moderating voice is not clear, unless it is his son Addi. However, luckily for Iraq, Kofi Anan, the Secretary General of the UN has been a moderating force. Whether these moderating factors will succeed in avoiding war is still unclear.

In preparing for the war with Iraq, while also waging a war against terrorism, Mr. Bush has ignored the worsening economic conditions, the rising unemployment, and the increase in the number of poor and homeless. At the same time economic resources are being wasted, most conspicuously on the anti-missile program that has been judged ineffective, even by high-ranking officers in the armed forces. The war on terrorism has also been incurring waste by applying presumably preventive and protective measures that have hardly been effective. However, economic waste in the United States can hardly be compared to waste in the Iraqi economy. Saddam Hussein has dissipated the oil wealth of his country on two unnecessary wars, against Iran and Kuwait, and since then on building grand palaces and mosques to immortalize himself. In the meantime,

the economy is in depression and the quality of life for a majority of the people has fallen to the level of mere survival. Mr. Bush invokes the concept of security and defense to justify his budget. Saddam Hussein blames the hardship on the UN sanctions against his country, but fails to rethink his policies and the possibility that they have been wasteful.

Saddam Hussein has ignored international law by invading his neighbors, and has ignored the civil and human rights of his people. He has suppressed the basic freedoms, allowed the assassination of his opponents, and has reduced Iraq's system of government to one of fear, blind obedience, or self-inflicted exile by those who can afford to leave the country. Now fear of terrorism is gripping the United States. To fight terrorism, the US government has been treading on the basic freedoms and civil rights of its residents. Fear of the FBI, the CIA, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has permeated large segments of the population. Residents originating in the Middle East and other Muslim countries are constantly in fear of questioning, arrest, detention, or disappearance on the basis of new powers given to those agencies. While most of those subjected to arrest and detention are aliens, some citizens have been harassed and caused pain because their relatives have been persecuted in the name of the fight against terrorism. Not only has Mr. Bush approved these measures; he has authorized the assassination of presumably known terrorists whose names are engraved on a hit list. That the US Constitution guarantees the rule of law and due process does not seem to make a difference.

The US is now preparing for war with Iraq, but is such a war justified or can it be avoided without giving up on containing the power of Iraq to produce or use WMD? In view of Mr. Bush's conviction that Saddam Hussein is "evil," apparently that is enough justification. Presumably Iraq is a threat to its neighbors and to the US, which is about 10,000 miles away, even though Iraq's military is under-trained, under-equipped, and could in no way be a threat to the US. Nor is Mr. Bush asking whether war is avoidable, because were he to ask, the answer would not be to his liking. Yet, war with Iraq is avoidable, to the benefit of all parties. Going to war with Iraq without adequate justification would be similar to Saddam Hussein's attack on Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990. Saddam Hussein was intoxicated with power and made up self-satisfying justifications to go to war. One would think that Mr. Bush, the leader of the most powerful country, would be above power intoxication and so much hatred for another leader that he would go to war without strong justifications. The argument that Iraq may have WMD is not sufficient justification; many other countries have such weapons and are not being invaded. The argument that Saddam Hussein is a despotic dictator is insufficient. The world is full of his likes and the US is not deposing them. In fact some of them are political friends of the US.

Saddam Hussein will never be a great leader, all the palaces and mosques he has built notwithstanding. He has inflicted too much pain and suffering on his people and others to be remembered with kindness and respect. Nor will he be considered a good diplomat. To their disadvantage, he has isolated his country and his people from much of the world. Mr. Bush may still prove to be a good leader and a good diplomat. Good leadership and successful diplomacy require patience, persuasion, understanding of the opponent, and willingness to negotiate, give and take, and sometimes make compromises. Now that Saddam Hussein has virtually surrendered completely to the UN, Mr. Bush

would do well to rethink his approach and try other means of diplomacy to contain Iraq and avoid the pending war he is contemplating.

For example, the UN, with the help of the US and other countries, can still contain the power of Iraq, as it has done for the last ten years. The Arab League can sustain its pressure on Iraq to contain its power and belligerence. Reminding Iraq of its outdated technology and military equipment would help to make Iraq rethink its own stand. However, the most important deterrence against Iraq's potential aggression is fear of retribution by more powerful countries, especially the US, which has maintained a close watch on Iraqi military movements within the country. Even Saddam Hussein knows that his country cannot stand against the power of the United States.

However, if Mr. Bush is truly concerned for the Iraqi people, as he declares frequently, he might approach the problem in still another way. Instead of going to war and wasting hundreds of billions of dollars, he might use the carrot instead of the stick and give economic and humanitarian aid to the people of Iraq. Let them taste the fruits of development and peace. He might persuade the UN to remove all the sanctions except those on WMD material and equipment under a strict regime of inspection. Free trade of peace commodities will help to awaken the Iraqi people and alert them to the possibilities available to them. Expanding the means of electronic communication and information systems may enhance these steps. These measures would be more viable for propagating democracy at the grassroots and less costly than going to war. Economic and humanitarian aid and free contact with the outside would go a long way toward making the people of Iraq aware of their abused basic rights and freedoms. Only then will they fight for their rights, and only then will democracy be viable.

## THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION FOR A STATE OF PALESTINE<sup>23</sup> February 2003

A committee of the PLO has just issued a draft for a constitution of the state of Palestine. The text deals with most issues that relate to the founding and nurturing of the new state. The articles of the proposed constitution tend to be general and consistent with public declarations of state officials around the world, such as guarantees of basic freedoms, protections of civil rights, the environment, and human rights. Two of the articles, however, stand out as incongruent with constitutions of modern states or with the guarantee of basic freedoms and civil rights, or with declared Palestinian positions ever since 1937. These articles relate to religion. Article 32 relates to the refugees, though in an unrealistic and inoperative way, at least from the standpoint of achieving peace and allowing the creation of a state. I shall discuss articles 6 and 7, which relate to religion in this issue of AVP. In the next issue I shall deal with the refugee question.

Article 6 states: “Islam shall be the official religion of the state. The monotheistic religions shall be respected.”

Article 7 says: “The principles of the Islamic *Shari’a* are a primary source for legislation. The legislative branch shall determine personal status law under the authority of the monotheistic religions according to their denominations, in keeping with provisions of the constitution and the preservation of unity, stability, and advancement of the Palestinian people.”

These two articles represent a regressive, divisive, and harmful position toward the future of Palestine and its people. As far back as 1937 the Palestinian leaders have called for a “unified, democratic, secular” state in Palestine, for Arabs, Jews, Muslims, Christians, and any others living and residing in the state. The term secular has come up again and again since then in declarations by Palestinian leaders for the promised state-to-be independent democratic Palestine. The turn around in the proposed draft constitution and the declaration of Islam as the official religion of the state is a retreat from secularism, from modernity, and from rational decision-making. For one thing, as an institution the state cannot have a religion. The state does not go to the mosque or the church, it does not pray, seek forgiveness, or hope for an abode in heaven after it dies—if it does die. These behaviors and desires are those of individual believers, since religion is a relationship between the individual and the deity. By declaring Islam as the religion of the state, the Palestinian leaders would be co-opting and usurping religion to use it in making policy and controlling the behavior of the citizens. The proposed model is well illustrated in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Articles 6 and 7 of the draft constitution are divisive. They elevate one religion over another and thus give preference to certain citizens over others just because of their different religions. To respect the monotheistic religions is not a sufficient guarantee of unity, stability, or harmony within the society. Egypt also promises to respect all religions. Yet, Muslim Egyptians tend to periodically set Christian churches on fire and cause harm to their fellow (Christian) citizens. Sudan promises to respect the different religions in that country. Yet, it tries to impose Muslim law, the *Shari’a*, on all, including

---

<sup>23</sup> Prepared by the Palestine Constitution Committee headed by Dr Nabeel Ali Shaath, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Completed on 14/2/2001  
[http://www.mopic.gov.ps/key\\_documents/constitution.asp](http://www.mopic.gov.ps/key_documents/constitution.asp) [Official PNA website]

the Christians in the South, thus causing the on-going civil war for the last two decades. Violent religious conflicts in Indonesia and Nigeria have been equally destructive and divisive, in spite of the official declarations to respect and protect other religions.

The inherent divisiveness of Article 7 is almost guaranteed to undermine the unity and stability of the prospective state of Palestine by making the Islamic law, Shari'a, a primary source of legislation. For example, Christians in Saudi Arabia cannot hold a prayer meeting in public, let alone build churches. In fact, until about two decades ago, Christians and Jews could not officially set foot on Saudi Arabian soil. In Sudan, Nigeria, and Iran, Shari'a law has undermined the status of women, increased the number of lame people and amputees who had been physically punished instead of being helped to rehabilitate after crimes they had committed. Shari'a law has also imposed the cruel punishment of stoning women for sex crimes in the name of religion.

Articles 6 and 7 are harmful to the state and the people because they represent surrendering to the demands of Muslim fundamentalists who try to impose their will and belief on others, by violence and terror if necessary. Yet, they bring no benefit to any one in return. The fundamentalists, by invoking Shari'a law, cause harm and destruction, but they do not solve any problems, least of all the political and economic problems that plague their countries. Even a cursory look at the Muslim world and at the history of Arab-Israeli conflict will show the inability of the religious leaders to deal with affairs of the state efficiently and effectively, in contrast to secular governments in East and West.

On the economic side, Turkey and Tunisia are the most economically advanced Muslim countries in the Middle East, and they happen to be the most secular among them. This is especially true of Turkey, which is the most economically and technologically developed, and the least dependent on the developed countries. Islamic economies have achieved little success in Pakistan, Iran, or Saudi Arabia. If Palestine were to apply Islamic economic principles, there would be little hope that it will achieve better results in the economic and technological fields. If Palestine were to apply Islamic law there will be little hope that it will achieve better results in economic and technological development.

On the political side, the (religious) leadership of Palestine by Haj Amin el-Husayni brought only disaster. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has brought nothing but internal conflict and suffering. The Algerian fundamentalists have made a habit of torturing and massacring village families as a way of undermining government authority, with little to gain but bloodshed.

The Palestinian leaders should reconsider their draft constitution carefully before submitting it for a referendum, which simply asks voters to say Yes or No. They should remember that the West has been able to develop and prosper only after secularism and rationality replaced the power of the Church over the state. They should remember that the Muslim countries other than Turkey, all of which have failed to secularize their economies and polities, have also failed to develop economically and technologically. At the same time they have failed to devise a model of development that is consistent with Shari'a law as an alternative to the secular rational model of the West. They should observe the internal religious conflicts in Iran and Turkey, which cause wider dissent and instability, and obstruct economic and social development. Not only have the Muslim countries failed to develop and prosper, they also have hindered development by obstructing progressive analytical education in their schools and institutions of higher

education. Conformity, obedience, submission to authority, and rote learning have become predominant features of education in these countries. As a result, individual growth, rational decision-making, and freedom of inquiry have been stunted, and that is why many of the bright and creative citizens emigrate, in search of greener and more open pastures in other countries. The cost of these departures has been high to the home countries.

The Palestinian people should be able to enjoy the basic freedoms in the state they hope to establish. The freedoms of religion, expression, and communication should be guaranteed. The freedoms of thought, discovery, and innovation are basic to the creation of a stable, progressive, and prosperous economy and society. By adopting Islam as the state religion and the *Shari'a* as the primary source of legislation, as in the draft constitution, the Palestinian leaders will defeat all objectives of freedom, development, and progress. The Palestinian people have suffered enough because of the influence of religion. They do not need to suffer even more by making Islam the official religion of the state. Let us hope that wisdom will triumph, and freedom, democracy, and rationality will be the main features of the future state of Palestine.

## **THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION FOR A STATE OF PALESTINE II<sup>24</sup>**

### **March 2003**

In the last AVP I discussed the draft constitution's adoption of Islam as the official religion of the State of Palestine as a regressive and harmful provision of the constitution. Here I address the draft constitution's reference to the Palestinian refugees and its potentially detrimental effects on the people it is supposed to help. Article 32 reads as follows: "The right of the Palestinian refugee to return to his home and the original home of his ancestors is a natural right which cannot expire. Its exercise may not be delegated nor surrendered."

While the draft will certainly undergo changes before it is put to a vote, so far it does not seem to be favorable to the refugees. On the contrary, it tends to complicate their problem by seeming to allow their current conditions to continue for an indefinite future. That would be a great disadvantage, especially to the refugees who live in camps, those who depend on UNRWA for survival, and those who have little say in their own affairs or the affairs of the states in which they reside.

The problems facing the refugees relate to their numbers, the resources at their disposal, their political and civil rights, and their hopes for the future. Their numbers are large and increasing, their resources are meager and declining relative to their numbers, and their political and civil rights are virtually frozen at a sub-minimum level of acceptability. Accordingly, the future does not reflect a glimmer of hope nor a silver lining. The PNA's Central Bureau of Statistics estimates that at the end of 2002 there were 9.3 million Palestinians. Of these 3.6 millions are in the West Bank and Gaza, 2.7 millions are in Jordan, 403,000 are in Lebanon, 423,000 are in Syria, and 60,000 are in Egypt. Another 578,000 are scattered in other Arab countries. 232,000 are in the United States, and 295,000 are in other countries around the world. It is not clear how many of these are considered refugees, though for political and international relations purposes all those outside Israel/Palestine may be considered refugees. Furthermore, probably half of those within Israel/Palestine are considered refugees or dislocated.

The issue of numbers is significant both politically and economically. The larger the number of refugees, the more difficult it is to negotiate their repatriation to their homes, or to resettle them elsewhere. Furthermore, the larger their number, the more difficult it is to provide enough resources to sustain them at an acceptable level of living and development. Thus, while the Palestinians may find strength in numbers, their rate of population growth is actually one of their main political and economic problems.

The Palestinian refugees have already sacrificed two generations by waiting for a viable political-economic solution that has not been forthcoming. They have survived virtually on charity from other countries, either directly or through the institutions of the United Nations, mainly UNRWA. Regardless how hard UNRWA tries to render aid as free of stigma, such aid is charity just the same. The refugees are dependent on that aid and yet they cannot influence the resources allocated for that purpose. They have no vote in the United Nations or in the countries that provide the aid. The same applies to the educational, health, and other forms of aid they receive. As long as they sit waiting for a permanent viable solution, their conditions can hardly be expected to improve.

---

<sup>24</sup> For the text: [www.mopic.gov.ps/key\\_documents/constitution.asp](http://www.mopic.gov.ps/key_documents/constitution.asp). For current conditions of the refugees see: [www.rsc.ox.uk/lessonslearned.htm](http://www.rsc.ox.uk/lessonslearned.htm)

The refugees do find sympathy in certain circles that have little power to change their situation. The PNA issues statements on their behalf, but the PNA is helpless, with no political clout or economic resources to improve their conditions. The United Nations General Assembly passes resolutions that have no teeth and are unenforceable. The Al-Auda (Right of Return Coalition), is their major advocate at the present time. However, Al-Auda leaders are efficient in holding meetings, issuing statements, and adding to the rhetoric that has little influence on the life or future of the refugees, except probably in making them feel good for the moment. Al-Auda's statements have little prospect of being taken seriously. [For an illustration, see the final statement of the Third Annual Meeting held in Copenhagen of February 12-15, 2003; [www.badil.org](http://www.badil.org)]

The refugees have three options at the present time. 1) They can continue in their present way of living, be fed by international aid, and allow themselves to be misled by the sterile rhetoric of well-meaning but helpless agencies. 2) They can face reality and accept the best available political solution offered to them. Or, 3) they can forget the idea of a collective political solution of the problem, reject the status of refugees, and seek resettlement on individual bases, wherever an opportunity exists. These options must be weighed against certain criteria. First and foremost, the Palestinians, refugees or otherwise, need to rely on themselves to be able to influence their own life and future. They need to acquire knowledge as human capital. They need to accumulate resources as physical capital. And they need to acquire influence as political capital. Only then will they be able to pursue a viable solution for themselves and the Palestinian people at large.

It is obvious that the first option has failed. They have increased in numbers, but not in the human capital stock or capacity to get out of their unacceptable situation. While they may have achieved literacy for the majority, their levels of learning, skills, innovation, and creativity have been thwarted by the limited opportunities available to them. Similarly, they have had little opportunity to accumulate material resources or physical capital to invest in their future. These deprivations and their continued dependence on others have made it impossible for them to muster enough political influence to change their state of affairs. In fact their victim mentality, passed from one generation to another, must have been demoralizing and wasteful of any political influence they might have been able to acquire.

The second option has been difficult to pursue because of internal divisions and fears among the Palestinians. The PNA will not want to appear as compromising on the refugees' right of return, nor will any other Palestinian agency or group. These groups, as well as individual leaders, would be afraid of being tainted as traitors, were they to recognize reality and agree to any compromise solution, unless "forced" to do so. The lack of courage and the absence of unity among the Palestinians, and the almost complete marginalization of the refugees from decision-making, have been major obstacles in the way of a compromise solution as proposed in option number two. Yet, the reality is staring the Palestinians in the face. Under no foreseeable circumstances will Israel allow more than a token number of refugees to return to their pre-1948 villages or towns. The PNA can promise the right of return to all the Palestinians who choose to return to its jurisdiction, but in reality the future State of Palestine can absorb very few of them, especially during the early years of its existence. Absorption requires capital, skill, organization, and adequate infrastructures, all of which are lacking and are bound to be lacking for years to come after establishment of the state. The PNA will do itself and the

Palestinian people a great service by being honest regarding the future. It should assess the possibilities for absorption of refugees and others in a rational manner, given the potential resources and the demands of rebuilding the shattered economy, and let the people know what lies in the future. All the promises in the world will not change the gloomy prospects of a large-scale absorption of refugees in the yet to be established Palestinian state.

The most promising option, therefore, for the Palestinian refugees is to recognize the inability of the leadership to achieve a viable collective political settlement in the near future, and to individually act in their own self-interest. It is for them as individuals to seek homes wherever they can. In such homes they can become self-reliant productive citizens. They can acquire knowledge and skills for themselves and for the future generations. They can accumulate resources and invest in their own futures. They can also utilize their human and physical capital to acquire political influence, which they can use to improve their situation as well as enhance the cause of the Palestinians at large. They can do all that and still retain their loyalty and devotion to their homeland. Even a cursory look at achievements of the Palestinians in the Diaspora, where opportunities prevail, will show that this third option may be the most viable and therefore deserves serious consideration.

The draft constitution of a state of Palestine should be a living document that empowers the Palestinians. It should be a guiding light toward their freedom and growth. And it should promise only what is feasible and helpful to encourage creativity, independence, and achievement by the individual and the community. But above all else, it should help the constituents to recognize what is possible and what is not, face reality, and have the courage to deal with it.

**PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH GOES TO WAR:  
ARROGANCE OF POWER OR DEGRADED MORALITY?  
April 2003**

The invasion of Iraq by the United States and its “Coalition of the Willing” reflects the arrogance of power and the degraded morality of the Bush Administration. [Most of what follows also applies to Prime Minister Tony Blair and his government, except that Mr. Blair would not have gone to war without the US, but the US would have gone with or without Britain]. The BA has demonstrated its arrogance of power by usurping the prerogatives of the UN and by appropriating the role of plaintiff, policeman, judge and jury, and executioner, against Iraq. It ensnared the SC by declaring in advance its decision to proceed against Iraq, whether the SC agrees or not. It reinterpreted the SC resolutions to fit its own agenda and make its invasion of Iraq seem legitimate and internationally supported, regardless of the views of a majority of the members of the SC. The BA has continued to demonstrate its arrogance by using excessive force and its most sophisticated weaponry against a weak, poorly armed and equipped member of the UN. It appears that the law of the jungle is back in order, according to which the strong may vanquish the weak. As a result, the US’ claim to be supreme leader of a world in which the rule of law prevails becomes questionable.

The US invasion of Iraq is immoral. It is a war of choice, especially since Saddam Hussein and his regime had virtually surrendered and were complying with the UN resolutions, if only gradually and begrudgingly. The US foreign policy towards Iraq has demonstrated a low level of morality by associating Iraq with terrorism to justify the war against the latter, even though no link between Iraq and terrorism had been proven. This low morality has been evident in a number of ways. First, the US has demanded that Iraq disarm and destroy all WMD. When Iraq declared that it had none, the US asked Iraq, through the UN, to prove that it had none, but how to prove the negative seemed like a riddle. Iraq submitted thousands of pages recording the WMD weapons it had and how they had been disposed of. The US was not satisfied. Iraq, it turned out, could only prove it had no WMD by admitting it had some and producing them for destruction. Somehow that form of proof seems inherently contradictory. While the US insisted that it had evidence of existing WMD in Iraq, it would not provide the information to the UN Inspectors, probably because such evidence did not exist.

Second, the US brought the case against Iraq before the SC, but evidently with the expectation that its proposed resolution on the case would be adopted. However, when it became certain that the resolution would not gain a majority support, the US withdrew it and decided to take action on its own, declaring the UN as no longer relevant. The US, the great champion of democratic principles, thus fails to honor the most basic principles of democracy.

Third, the US claims that its war against Iraq is pre-emptive, in self-defense. Yet, the US has failed to convince a majority of the UN members, or of the people around the world, that Iraq constitutes an immediate or imminent threat to America or the rest of the world. The Secretary General of the UN, former President Carter and many congressional leaders have expressed their dissatisfaction with the unconvincing evidence presented by the US to enhance its case. The Pope questioned the justness and morality of the war planned by the US. While the “coalition of the willing” to support the US numbers about

35 nations, those opposed exceed 120. Furthermore, most members of the coalition of the willing were bribed into supporting the war by generous offers of economic and military aid, or were blackmailed into that position by withdrawing existing support—another violation of the principles of democracy and free will.

Fourth, the US claims that the war is mainly to liberate the Iraqi people, free them from the tyranny and cruelty of Saddam Hussein and his regime, and to establish a democratic, free society for the benefit of the people of Iraq. These lofty ideals, however, are being “promoted” by force and waste of human and material resources. Is it not ironic that the democracy is to be established by the champion of democracy by undemocratic means? Such a policy demonstrates utter disrespect for the right of the people to select their own system of government.

Fifth, the BA’s approach to Iraq has been replete with confusion, expanded objectives, and deception toward both the American people and the rest of the world. The BA first wanted to rid the world of Iraq’s WMD. Soon the objective was to rid Iraq of its tyrant and cruel leader Saddam Hussein. Then the objective expanded to include the establishment of democracy in Iraq, and eventually in the rest of the Middle East. Now all these objectives are on the table as high priority goals. What are the exact goals of the BA are we still do not know. Some people suggest that the main objective is to secure control of the oil reserves of Iraq. Maybe so, but that would be another violation of basic principles by the US. As a champion of free enterprise and the market economy, it would seem unbecoming of the US to resort to war to achieve that objective, when economic policies and tools can do the job peacefully and at less cost.

Sixth, the US claims that it wants to disarm Iraq of WMD, both in self-defense and in defense of the other countries in the Middle East. Yet, the US is the largest producer and possessor of WMD. It is also the most selective in determining who may or may not produce or stockpile WMD. This position smacks of both arrogance and immorality, which may be hurtful to US international relations in the future.

Seventh, the US charges, rightly so, that Saddam Hussein and his regime are totalitarian, cruel, and aggressive. Therefore, according to the US, Saddam Hussein and his regime should be dislodged from power and from the country. However, there are many similar regimes around the world, and some of them are friends and allies of the US. The BA charges that Iraq has failed to comply with UN resolutions, but many other countries have failed to do so, including friends and allies of the US. It seems that hypocrisy may be added to arrogance and immorality in describing the current policies of the BA.

If the US foreign policy toward other members of the UN reflects arrogance, hypocrisy, and immorality, how can the US set a good example for others as leader of the free world? The leader must be fair, just, and humane to be able to promote those values. On the contrary, by invading Iraq on the pretext that there is imminent danger of the use of WMD when there is none, and in disregard for the UN and the SC when those institutions were achieving positive results, the US has set a dangerous precedent for others to follow. Now any strong nation can invent a pretext and invade a weaker nation, and disregard the UN Charter, just as the US seems to be doing.

Sadly, the US has failed the test of good leadership by its biased and selective enforcement of UN resolutions, biased and selective condemnation of totalitarian and cruel regimes, and by biased and selective targeting of producers and stockpilers of

WMD. By its apparent failure to abide by the basic rules of morality, justness, and democracy, the US has destabilized its relations with many other countries. It has also created confusion in the minds of its own people, especially those of the younger generations who ask intelligent questions regarding foreign policy but fail to receive intelligent and convincing answers.

The US can still redress its evident violations of morality and democracy, at least in part, by relinquishing the stabilization and rebuilding of Iraq to an international force under command of the UN. The UN force would take charge of all areas in which the war had ceased, so that reconstruction can begin immediately to minimize human suffering and remove the burden of occupation from both occupier and occupied. Whether the UN will be in a position to assume those responsibilities would depend on the ability of the US to play its diplomatic role with modesty, strategic shrewdness, and wisdom.

**WINNERS AND LOSERS IN THE IRAQ WAR:  
IS THERE A SILVER LINING?**

**May 2003**

The war by the United States and its so-called coalition against Iraq is almost over. However, the battle for peace and stability has hardly begun, and the cost and benefits of the war are yet to be assessed. While the final effects are still in the making, certain winners and losers can be identified, and a silver lining can at least be imagined.

The losers are people and institutions. Obviously the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein is the main loser, together with the Iraqi Ba'th Party it represented. As people, Saddam and his collaborators who stood for the regime and the party are on the run and most probably will be hunted down and brought to some form of justice. The losers also include the fallen soldiers on all sides, even though they may have died for causes they cherished. Then there are the civilians who died, and their grieving families, who, in most cases, were innocent bystanders. Those civilians were swept away in the barrage of explosives rained on them by the blind instruments of war as if they did not count as human beings. These losses cannot be recovered or compensated, but they could have been avoided.

Another victim of the war are those who shall have to forego educational, health, and social benefits and services because of the costs of the war, both in Iraq and in the US.

The institutional losses are easy to enumerate but hard to evaluate. The Iraqi economy and society are now in shambles, materially and organizationally. The destruction inflicted on Iraq's museums and cultural artifacts is beyond reasonable estimation. Regardless of all good intentions of the occupiers, it will be years before Iraq's economy and society are restored to a reasonable degree of viability and stability. Another institution that has been seriously harmed is the rule of international law as represented by the United Nations Charter. The US has blundered by ignoring the Charter, and by setting a dangerous precedent by sidestepping the Security Council when it failed to secure a resolution endorsing its foregone decision to invade Iraq. An equally dangerous precedent has been the pre-emptive strike approach against weaker countries, even when they are too far away to form a real threat, as has been the case in this war.

Another institutional victim has been the concept of democracy. It is a contradiction in terms to impose democracy by force. Skepticism is already abounding on whether the violent approach to create a democracy can be justified or can actually succeed.

On the other side there are winners. Foremost among the winners are the Bush administration's architects of the policy to invade Iraq. These people must feel proud of the victory of the armed forces they have dispatched to conquer Iraq, even though the end result was never in doubt, given the wide gap in size, training, and equipment between the military forces of the two warring parties. The American super patriots are also winners. Now they see the American flag flying over Iraq, reflecting American power, nationalism, and patriotism. The American psychic gain is reflected in the sustained endorsement of the policy of war and violence, at least so long as it is far away from home.

On the Iraqi side, the winners include those inside and outside Iraq who feel liberated from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, and those who aspire to replace him and

his regime in the seats of power. These Iraqis may have triumphed, at least vicariously, and now they are competing for the spoils.

There are arguments that the oil companies, the construction companies, and the producers and traders of military equipment are winners. These, however, are business corporations that do not need a war to make profits. Peace can be as or more profitable and less risky than war, especially for the corporations that are well managed, technically advanced, and well connected.

On the institutional side, probably the main winner is the military approach of the strong against the weak, at the expense of peaceful negotiations, economic and trade sanctions, and slow and patient diplomacy. The fact that the US military coalition triumphed over Iraq so quickly does not justify the precedent or nullify the harm it inflicted on the diplomatic and negotiated approach to conflict resolution.

However, by far the biggest winner of the war against Iraq is the State of Israel, in at least two ways. On one hand, the US has virtually vindicated the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories by applying the same methods in Iraq. The US has used disproportionately excessive force. It has destroyed structures often without regard to who might be in those structures. It has incurred great losses among civilians, and it has occupied the country in the name of democracy and security, regardless of the wishes of the native people. On the other hand, without firing a shot, Israel has seen a major, though imaginary threat disabled and removed from the arena. By subduing Iraq, the US has thus taken another major step to guarantee the security of Israel. First, the US managed to neutralize the Gulf countries and most of the North African Arab countries by persuasion, economic and military aid, and by political and diplomatic pressure. Next it mediated a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt and thus rendered an Arab-Israeli war without Egypt most unlikely. Then came the Oslo Agreement and the peace agreement with Jordan, in both of which the US played a major direct or indirect role. Now that Iraq is no longer a threat, the US is focusing its pressure on Syria to tame it and neutralize it, on the pretext of fighting terrorism and moving weapons of mass destruction (WMD). There remains Lebanon on Israel's borders, but Lebanon has never been a threat. Hezbollah can be a nuisance, but never a threat.

The security prize for Israel may seem like a strike against the Arabs, but it need not be so. In fact therein may lay a double silver lining. First, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict may find a solution. Second, Israel may become free of WMD. The Bush administration and Israel have virtually changed the field in the Israel-Palestine conflict by demanding reform of the Palestinian government, reducing the power of Yasser Arafat, and appointing a sympathetic Palestinian Prime Minister. Now President Bush seems intent on mediating a solution in the form of the Road Plan formulated by the European Union, the US, Russia, and the UN. It is possible that with Israel's security fully guaranteed, an agreement can be reached under US guidance.

On the other hand, with all serious threats to Israel virtually eliminated, the US may act in a consistent manner and demand that Israel eliminate its WMD. Israel has so far refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty and has refused to allow international inspection. Yet, the US has failed to raise the issue with Israel or at the Security Council. The US may find it timely now to take action to free the Middle East entirely from WMD.

Will the US now make it its business to bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians? Will the US help solve the problem of the Palestinian refugees, the conflict over Jerusalem, and occupation of the Palestinian territories? And will the US apply an even-handed approach toward the elimination of WMD from the Middle East region as a whole, including Israel? The US has the chance to strike a big deal for peace, security, and humanity in the Middle East and elsewhere. Let us hope it will take it.

## **DOES ISRAEL REALLY WANT PEACE?**

**June 2003**

I have been trying to promote peace between the Palestinians and Israelis for over forty years, believing that Israel desires peace and security for its people and a fair agreement with its neighbors. All that time I tried to look at the issues dividing the two parties from the standpoint of each of them in order to reconcile the Palestinian rights and claims with Israel's legitimate right for secure and peaceful existence as a state in the Middle East. I still do, but I am not sure anymore that Israel wants peace on reasonable terms that would satisfy the minimum expectations of the Palestinians. Apparently it wants an agreement that would allow vanquishing the Palestinians' claims, appropriate more and more of their land and other resources, and render them devoid of political or economic viability. If Israel truly wants an honorable peace agreement with the Palestinians, it could accomplish it in no time, for the road is open, marked by United Nations (UN) resolutions that enjoy a preponderance of international support. UN Resolution 181 called for a two-state solution. Resolution 194 gave the Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes or receive compensation. After the 1967 war, Resolutions 242 and 338 provided a solution by calling on Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza and other territories it occupied in that war in return for a peace settlement. The UN resolutions provided a solution to the conflict over Jerusalem by making the city an international city, open to both Arabs and Israelis. Unfortunately Israel has sidestepped all these resolutions, taking advantage of its military power and advanced technology to destroy the Palestinian society and shatter hopes of the optimists who want peace and security for both people. To be fair, the Palestinians made it difficult for the Israelis to comply with those resolutions, and often they provided Israel with the excuse for violating them, by reciting their classic NO to every proposal put to them, only to regret it later.

Probably the most serious obstacle Israel has erected against peace is the promotion and creation of Jewish settlements on Arab land in the West Bank and Gaza, and in Jerusalem which Israel has annexed illegally and made it its own. Not only have various Israeli governments permitted and subsidized the settlements, but they have planted them in strategic positions, endowed them with abundant land, water, and power, and pampered them with over-bloated military budgets in order to protect them in their illegal incursions into Palestinian territories. The over 200,000 settlers seem to dictate policy for the majority of Israelis, create "facts on the ground" by changing the framework of the conflict, incur heavy costs on the Israeli economy, and sabotage all attempts to reach a peaceful solution.

The significance of the settlements as a formidable obstacle to peace is not a question of Jews or Israelis residing among Arabs in a Palestinian territory or state. Arabs live in Israel and Jews have lived in Arab countries throughout history, but they did so as citizens of the countries in which they lived. The Arabs in Israel are citizens of Israel. They participate in the governance of the state and share, though less equally, in

its democracy. In contrast, the Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza want to live in Palestine as Israeli citizens. They want extra-territorial rights and privileges. But by doing so, they infringe on the sovereignty of the Palestinian people and deprive them of their land and resources. The settlements, being scattered around the territories, with exclusive fortifications and protection mechanisms, tend to fragment the Palestinian territory and infringe on its geographical integrity, thus leading to the destruction of its economic development and viability. Probably the most obstructive feature of the settlements is that the settlers seem convinced that the whole of Palestine belongs to them. If so, it is most likely that they would never stop claiming more land and infringing on the Palestinians in their own “state” of Palestine. Such a state of affairs is bound to lead to perpetual instability, conflict, and destruction of any hope for peace.

The Palestinians have finally recognized the right of Israel to exist as a state on part of the land of Palestine. They have also accepted Resolutions 242 and 338 as bases for a peace agreement with Israel, upon withdrawal of Israel from the territories it occupied in June 1967. Why has Israel not taken the Palestinians at their word and made peace with them? Israel claims that it must guarantee security for its citizens in their own country, which is a legitimate right. But is it also a legitimate right to guarantee the security of its citizens when they penetrate into other peoples’ lands and homes illegally? Is it legitimate, especially in a democracy, to allow a tiny minority to endanger the lives of the majority? Is it legitimate or logical to demand or expect the Palestinians to end their resistance to the occupation of their land, while Israeli settlements increase in number and size? It is true that the resistance can and should be non-violent, but that seems like demanding the impossible when the settlers come heavily armed and never hesitate to use their weapons against the local people, while being protected by the Israeli army.

It is now over a hundred years of Arab-Israeli conflict, and more than half a century since Israel has come into being as a state. The gains for Israel have been bewildering, and so have been the losses to the Arabs. However, conflict, insecurity, and loss of life have persisted on both sides. Peace seems as far now as it has ever been, the half-hearted acceptance of the vague Road Map, (with 14 reservations), by the government of Israel notwithstanding. It is now evident that the Palestinians have finally become realistic enough to want to settle the conflict peacefully, but it is less evident that Israel is ready or willing to commit itself to a peace agreement that would be acceptable to the Palestinians. The Palestinians must secure at least a minimum of what they claim to be rightfully theirs, as defined by the UN resolutions. At a minimum, they must have a state of their own, be able to choose their leaders, and conclude agreements with other countries as a sovereign people. They must have a share in (not of) Jerusalem, and the Palestinian refugees must receive compensation and an opportunity to resettle in or outside the Middle East region. In this minimal scheme there is no place for Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory. This, however, does not mean that the settlers have to leave or be evicted. They should have the option to stay and live in peace and prosperity as citizens of Palestine, just as the Arabs in Israel are citizens of Israel. If the settlers do not wish to be citizens of Palestine, they have the option of returning to Israel or to the country from which they came. Permanent extra-territoriality has no place in this day and age.

If Israel truly wants peace and security, it must take a stand on the issue of the settlements now, not in the future. Israel must cease its subsidy to the settlements, cease its extraordinary protective measures, and cease military actions that facilitate the appropriation of Arab land and resources to the benefit of the settlers. In addition, while demanding an end to violence, Israel must declare its intention to fully withdraw from the Occupied Territories according to a set schedule. It must begin by withdrawing even before violence ends in order to give the Palestinians some confidence that the promise to withdraw is genuine and in step with the desire and option to make peace. At the same time, Israel must put an end to its excessive use of force and pre-emptive strikes especially against civilians and non-combatants. If Israel wants peace, it must put an end to the demolition of homes, the uprooting of trees, and the destruction of what is left of the already crippled infrastructure. Instead, Israel must find ways to build bridges toward the people who are destined to be its neighbors forever.

If Israel is to succeed in making peace, the Palestinians must carry their share of the responsibility. They should put an end to violence. They should be convinced by now that violence has brought them nothing but disaster, and they would be wise to cease their violent resistance to the occupation, even if they were to do so unilaterally. Israel must also be convinced that the cruel and violent attacks against the Palestinians have failed to ensure security or bring peace any closer. If both Israelis and Palestinians genuinely want peace with each other, why do they not give peace a chance by pursuing non-violent and cooperative means toward each other? The Palestinians can begin by declaring a unilateral cessation of violence against Israel. Israel can begin by ceasing to use excessive force against its neighbors. But above all, Israel can show its “good” will by revising its policy on settlements, and by putting an end to the idea of extra-territoriality for Israeli settlers in a Palestinian state.

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INDUSTRIALIZATION ARE THE KEYS TO ARAB INDEPENDENCE

July 2003

The Arab countries are in a state of bewilderment and confusion. On one hand, they are under pressure to “reform” their economies, advance free trade, and promote democracy in order to join the wave of globalization. On the other hand, they find themselves unable to compete and reap the benefits of the global market. In the process they find themselves more and more dependent on the developed countries that are pushing for democracy and globalization. Economic reform and democratization may be contributing factors to economic and political independence, but the key lies in the advancement of science, technology, and industrialization. As long as they are lagging in these fields, the Arab countries will remain relatively poor, underdeveloped, and dependent, or less sovereign than they would like to be. Even the well-endowed oil exporting Arab countries are still underdeveloped and dependent. They depend on the outside for the supply of most of the commodities they need for a decent living. They depend on the outside for the machinery, equipment, and expertise necessary to run the economy and service the society. And they depend on the outside for protection against internal as well as external threats they consider imminent. They secure the goods they need and the protection they think they need at a price, mostly in the form of perpetual dependence. To illustrate, Jordan has followed the recommendations of international agencies for more than two decades, yet Jordan is still poor, underdeveloped, and dependent on loans, grants, and outside military protection. Egypt is not in a better situation, even though it instituted its open door policy or *Infitah* in the mid-1970s. It also has a semblance of a democracy, yet it is still poor, underdeveloped, and dependent. The same goes for Morocco and the rest of the Arab countries. These forms of dependence are structural components of the relationship between the powerful developed countries and their dependencies. The importation of machinery and advanced technology and military equipment entail dependence on the supplier for expertise, maintenance, and spare parts. The loans and grants also come at a price in the form of interest payments, restricted use of the imports, and a degree of indebtedness for the good will of the supplier of capital.

The Arab countries, with the possible exception of Lebanon, have made some advance in the direction of economic and political independence, but not enough to reduce their poverty and dependence in a significant way. The reasons are multiple but not difficult to discern. First, the gap between them and the developed economies is daunting and discouraging for them even to try. Second, the Arab countries lack the necessary physical and human capital to revolutionize their scientific and technological infrastructure especially because they lose many of their experts to greener pastures. Third, the ruling regimes are apparently more concerned with political stability and

position perpetuation than with economic or scientific development. Fourth, the international agencies they depend on or consult with show no interest in helping them become economically or politically independent. Fifth, the Arab countries have been victims of traditionalism, religious dominance, and disunity. By maintaining these value systems they give up their options to implement radical changes in the economy and society, even when such changes are indispensable for development and democracy. This explains the sustained high rates of population growth relative to their resources. It also explains the relative conformity in the home, the school, and the market place. The ruling regimes add fuel to the fire by exploiting tradition and religion to perpetuate their own dominance. Sixth, the Arab countries remain dependent because of their disunity in both the economy and the polity. Political disunity translates into individual weakness and dependence on others for protection. Economic disunity means lacking a large enough market power to counterbalance the power of the developed countries on which they depend for their technological and industrial needs. This results in higher costs of production and marketing, and inability to compete on the international market.

The discussion so far has centered on basic principles. There is little doubt that the experts in the Arab countries are aware of them and of the need to introduce radical changes in order to achieve economic and political independence. There is doubt, however, that the political leaders and policy makers are aware of the indispensability of advanced science and technology, and industrialization for economic and political independence, and for a truly democratic system to function.

Commitment to science, technology, and industrialization will free the Arab countries from dependence on the developed countries and transform the relationship between them into interdependence in place of dependence. For example, were the Arab countries technically and scientifically developed, they would be able to bid for international projects around the world. At present the Arab countries invite bidders from the outside to construct their major projects, while local construction companies are rarely able to bid on the international market or even for their own major projects as in the oil industry and the production of heavy industrial products.

Commitment to science and technology would improve the productivity of all factors of production, raise incomes, and allow for more saving and investment. It would also enable the decision-makers, private and public, to improve efficiency and performance on all levels of society. And it would enhance logical and rational choices and free the people from conformity and the dominance of traditionalism, which obstruct change and development. Science and technology would also make it possible for Arab businesses to compete on the international market on equal terms with others.

This is not an argument for isolationism or self-sufficiency. It is a prescription for interdependence in the sense that the Arab countries would become capable of producing science and technology, as well as heavy industry, if they decide it is economically and politically rational to do so. Such capability will give them power and the ability to negotiate trade and international relations on relatively equal terms with others.

When the Arab countries acquire these capabilities, international agencies will be forced to change their outlook toward them. They will be forced to negotiate terms rather than impose them, whether in trade, capital movements, and political and diplomatic relations. Had Iraq been scientifically and technologically advanced, even the United States might have hesitated in going to war against it. Had the Arab countries been

scientifically and technologically advanced, they would have found it to their advantage to join the wave of globalization on their own. Even the case of Palestine and the Palestinian refugees would have taken a different course than it has, to the advantage of Palestine and its people. A little self examination and a review of their achievements in the last half century would go a long way in convincing the Arab leaders and policy makers that science, technology, and industrialization are the keys to their economic and political freedom, independence, and sovereignty.

## **THE PALESTINIAN ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS: WHY CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM IS WARRANTED!**

**August 2003**

The Arab Israeli conflict is over a century old, but the Palestinian Israeli peace process is only 15 years old. Yet, the Palestinians and Israelis have made fair strides in the direction of a peace agreement. The Arab Israeli relations were increasing in tension, conflict, and armed encounters since the late 19th century. By contrast, the peace process between the Arab states and Israel began soon after the 1973 war between them. Palestine was included by default as part of Jordan and Egypt in the negotiations for peace, if mentioned at all. Serious peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine began only in 1988. Therefore, the appropriate assessment of the success or failure of the peace effort must be based on the last fifteen years, in which case one finds many reasons to be at least cautiously optimistic.

Up to 1988, the Palestinians and Israelis made sure that peace negotiations between them will not take place, each party thinking that time was on its side, in order to achieve more of its declared or hidden objectives. Israel delayed the process by demanding full recognition of its legitimacy and cessation of violence before talking with the Palestinians. The Palestinians wanted Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories, recognize their right to self-determination and the right of return of the Palestinian refugees. Until then the Palestinians would not explicitly recognize Israel's right to exist. Thus, the two parties managed to build their own roadblocks in the way to peace. As a result, Israel certainly benefited politically and territorially. The Palestinians were on the losing side because Israel's gain was a Palestinian loss, in addition to the human and material losses both suffered in the meantime.

The peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis finally had some breakthroughs to help initiate it. In 1974 the Arab League and the UN recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. In 1978 Egypt and Israel concluded a peace agreement, which made the Palestinians feel abandoned and weakened, but forced to depend on them. However, the most important steps came in 1988 when the PLO finally accepted UN Resolution 242 and thus implicitly recognized the existence of Israel and the formula of land for peace. The PLO also declared the creation of a Palestinian state in that year. Shortly after, King Hussein of Jordan, having finally got the message, renounced all claims he might have had on Palestinian territories. Almost immediately the United States and Israel declared their willingness to talk directly with the PLO. The peace process was underway.

The outstanding issues and the outline of an "acceptable" peace agreement are more or less known, but the mechanism or implementation has been missing. The main issues dividing the Palestinians from the Israelis include the mutual recognition of each other's right to exist as independent sovereign states, demarcation of the permanent

boundaries between them, the fate of the Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem. Other complicating factors include the fate of the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories, and sharing the natural resources that overlap their respective jurisdictions.

The outline of the fairly accepted solution includes two independent states side by side with each other, within the pre-June 1967 boundaries, the repatriation to Israel of a symbolic small number of Palestinian refugees and compensation for lost property, and negotiations to resolve all other issues. Though the outline is generally accepted, the implementation has been difficult for a number of reasons. First, the two parties have gone through a long period of animosity, violent conflict, and suffering at each other's hands. Both have also failed to accept the UN resolutions to solve the conflict, both thinking they could do better than was offered to them. Each also suspected that the UN was favoring the other party. Thus, the lack of mutual trust and of the UN efforts formed a major obstacle in the way of peace. Another obstacle came from outside forces and the Cold War. For example, the United States' blind commitment to support Israel has discouraged the latter from making any compromises to reach peace. Similarly, intervention of the Arab countries and the Soviet Union tended to discourage the Palestinians from making the necessary compromises to reach a settlement. Still another obstacle has been the wide power gap between the two parties. Israel feels too powerful to have to make compromises. The Palestinians do not trust Israel and therefore feel that compromises will be wasted because they can never get a fair deal from the powerful Israel. Hence, the peace process was stunted.

The Madrid Conference of 1991 was the first official step to promote negotiations and the cause of peace. It came in the aftermath of the first Gulf war and the end of the first Palestinian *Intifada*, and at the initiative of President Bush (Senior). Even then, the Madrid Conference did not give the Palestinian delegation an independent status like all others. The Palestinians could participate only as members of the Jordanian delegation. However, before much could be done, the Oslo Agreement surprised the world, having been reached by direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, under Norway's auspices. That agreement resulted in the signing of the Declared Principles for a solution by Yitzhak Rabin and Gasser Arafat at the White House in 1993, hosted by former President Clinton. The Oslo Agreement called for the creation of an interim PNA, mutual recognition of each other's right to exist in peace and security, and the gradual withdrawal of Israel from the Occupied Territories, in accordance with UN Resolution 242. Permanent status negotiations were to begin within no more than three years after signing The Declaration of Principles.

The Oslo Agreement has been widely criticized and described as a failure on both sides, though unfairly. In fact the Oslo Agreement has been a major benchmark in the peace process. It removed some of the big roadblocks and helped to realize some of the objectives of both Palestinians and Israelis. For example, the Palestinian leaders were able to come home and sort of take charge of the Palestinian society. Since then, even Ariel Sharon, as leader of the Likud Party, has acknowledged the imminent creation of an independent Palestinian state. The PNA has been treated like a government, even by Israel. Israel has withdrawn from 40 percent of the Occupied territory. Furthermore, Palestinians and Israelis have been cooperating in trade, agriculture, industry, the environment, and health issues.

Israel has also benefited from the Oslo Agreement by gaining full Palestinian recognition of its right to exist, and shifting some of the responsibilities of governance to the PNIA. Though some of these achievements have been disputed in the meantime, the basic principles on which to build peace are holding well, and peaceful forces are marching slowly but steadily. The next effort came when former President Clinton and Ehud Barak of Israel stayed in direct contact with Yasser Arafat to revive the peace process in the year 2000. Unfortunately this attempt has failed, but its impact is virtually carved in stone. Though it failed and was followed by a very bloody *Intifadah*, it has left an important effect. It brought out into the open the limits of concessions that can be expected of each side. Any concession beyond those limits would have to be negotiated separately.

Now we have the Road Map to peace, sponsored by the Quartet: the UN, the European Union (EU) Russia, and the US, with President George W. Bush playing a direct role in the implementation. The Road Map did not offer any new ideas, but it has set a plan of three phases for completion of the negotiation and the creation of two states side by side, within boundaries based on UN Resolution 242. However, the Road Map is distinguished by its generality, its purposeful vagueness, and its capacity to delegate the knotty issues until later, when the two parties have been able to build adequate trust in each other's vision of peaceful coexistence. But the Road Map has reopened the negotiations, has seen to it that implementation has started, though slowly, and that security and economic conditions are improving for both parties. The Road Map is also important because its sponsors, the Quartet, represent four major sources of international power and diplomacy.

Within 15 years the Palestinians and Israelis have come a long way toward a peace agreement. They have come to recognize each other as national entities, and seem to have agreed to negotiate and bargain, instead of shooting at each other, to reach peace. If all this does not suffice to warrant at least cautious optimism, two more factors may: first, the role of the Quartet, especially the United States is a powerful force that neither party can ignore. Second, the Quartet, especially the US, has the material support that both the Israelis and the Palestinians need badly, and if they want that support they have to cooperate. But in the final analysis the Palestinians and the Israelis are the only parties that can make peace between them a reality. Let us hope they are able to see the light at the end of the tunnel and carefully and wisely be guided by it.

## **ISRAEL AND THE RIGHTS OF ITS CITIZENS**

### **September 2003**

In an unusual but overdue step the government of Israel has approved a plan to “narrow the gaps between [its] Jewish and Arab citizens.” Ariel Sharon himself heads a ministerial committee on Arab affairs to implement a “plan of affirmative action in the civil service,” appoint “at least one Arab board member to every government company, and to reconsider the idea of national service for Arab high school graduates.” For all practical purposes, the Arab citizens of Israel should be delighted at this initiative, with the hope that equality with the Jewish citizens will eventually become a reality. That the Arabs may be skeptical should not be surprising in view of the historical pattern of official rhetoric and continued discrimination, even though the law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity.

Arab skepticism might have been reinforced by a recent law passed by the Knesset (Parliament), which prohibits awarding citizenship or permanent residence to Palestinians from the occupied territories who marry Israeli citizens, Arab or Jew alike, as it had been until now. The argument for the law is to prevent possible terrorism by these Palestinian spouses directly or indirectly. This action is predicated upon the previous “involvement in the armed conflict between Israel and the Palestinians by a number of residents from the territories who carried identity papers as a result of family reunification. While this law may be aimed at the Palestinians from the territories, it infringes directly on the rights of the Israeli citizens, especially the Arabs because the Jewish citizens of Israel rarely marry Palestinians from the territories.

As an exception to the law, the minister of interior “retains the right to approve citizenship for Palestinians or their family members who ‘identify with Israel,’ or ‘have made economic or security contributions to the state.’” In other words citizenship would be granted to Palestinian spouses of Israeli citizens if the former had acted as brokers in the purchase of Arab land by Israeli Jews or if they had acted as informers. In either case, these people would be branded by the Palestinians as collaborators and targeted for humiliation or even assassination. Such exception to the law can hardly represent respect for the rights of the Arab citizens of Israel.

The new law has been widely criticized by Israelis and others. Probably the most prominent critic of the law has been the Jewish ADL, which can hardly be considered a friend of the Arabs. Even so, the ADL sees the law as discriminatory and in contradiction of its philosophy of non-discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity. The EU has also taken a stand against the law because it is in conflict with its rules against discrimination by countries that seek membership in the “Wider Europe” initiative. Interestingly enough, the United States State Department has voiced concern and decided to “examine whether the new legislation is consistent with the [US] administration's position on preventing discrimination.” The law has been opposed by

human rights groups in Israel as discriminatory against Israeli citizens who marry Palestinians from the territories, but not others.

Although many Middle East countries deny citizenship to foreigners who marry citizens, such action by Israel is inconsistent with its history of respecting the rights of its citizens to marry whomever they like and to reside together wherever they like. The new law is inconsistent with Israel's philosophy of the law, which considers every individual or group as innocent until proven guilty. According to this law, the whole population of Palestine is judged as guilty by association. Because a few Palestinian permanent residents of Israel have been involved in violence against Israel, all the Palestinians of the territories are now potential terrorists. What happened to individual rights and responsibilities in this democratic society?

The security argument for the new law is fallacious. The number of potential applicants for residence or citizenship on the basis of intermarriage is too small to form a security threat. Is it possible that the Israeli investigative authorities are admitting their incompetence and inability to screen out potential security risk candidates, even when the candidates are cooperating fully in the investigation?

The real reasons for the new law are primarily cultural and political/demographic. Apparently this law would discourage intermarriage between Palestinians and Israelis. If the spouses cannot live together and build a family, they are bound to reconsider their decision to marry. However, the political demographic implicit argument is to minimize the number of Palestinian Arabs in Israel. [It is not clear to me whether Palestinians not from the territories would be awarded permanent residence or citizenship like all other foreign spouses of Israeli citizens.] The demographic bias of the law can hardly be hidden. The law may be used to force Israeli Arabs marrying Palestinians from the territories to leave Israel in order to avoid having a broken family.

The law will no doubt have aggregate political and cultural fallout. The Palestinian Israeli relations are bound to suffer, at a time when every positive gesture ought to be welcome in order to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The law deprives Israel of potentially good and productive citizens who choose to come and be a part of this dynamic society, regardless of the ethnic differences that might prevail. In fact such marriages between Israelis and Palestinians could enhance building bridges and trust between the two communities and thus aid in promoting peaceful coexistence between them. Israel also loses on the international level because this law violates recognized family and human rights.

Will Israel realize any gains by passing this law? The only evident gain is to please extremists, fanatics, and bigots who would reject any attempt for reconciliation between Israel and Palestine, and this can hardly be considered a national achievement. Is it not time for Israel to reconsider its policies toward the Palestinians? Is it not time for Israel to reduce its dependence on force, exclusion, and prohibition, and concentrate on humane, dignified, and cooperative approaches toward its Palestinian neighbors? Is it not time to treat its Arab citizens as equals with all others, in fact as well as in declaration and committee formation? Let us hope that the Knesset will reconsider and abolish the new law before any of the Israeli citizens suffer the consequences.

**IT TAKES BOTH TO REACH AN AGREEMENT:  
THE LEADERS OF PALESTINE AND ISRAEL  
October 2003**

The Road Map to peace between Israel and Palestine is in trouble, but not dead. International leaders, especially the Quartet, (The European Union, Russia, the United States, and the United Nations) are still hopeful. However, it is not enough to be hopeful. There is need for action to help the parties meet half way. Yet, to do so, it is imperative to remember that it needs both parties for the success or failure of the Road Map. Former Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmud Abbas could not have reached an agreement with Israel without the latter's "substantive" cooperation, which was not forthcoming. Arafat could not and cannot do that either, nor will the new prime minister, Ahmed Qurei' be able to resolve the conflict unless Israel adopts a more understanding, cooperative, and concessionary and realistic approach than it has so far. This has been particularly true of the Netanyahu and Sharon administrations.

Some people argue that the Road Map has been obstructed because former Prime Minister Abbas failed to deliver what Israel and the United States had expected of him, namely dismantling the "terrorist" or "violent resistance" infrastructure against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. While this assessment may be correct, it is only half the truth, for it leaves out what Israel failed to deliver to help him implement his plans for ending the violence and what it did to hinder his efforts. This one-sided assessment is well illustrated in an article by the Associated Press dated September 6, 2003, which lists the violent attacks against Israel during Abbas' four-month tenure, a list that is daunting. But there is little in the article about the actions of Israel against the Palestinians during that same period. There is no hint of the missiles targeting individuals in their homes or cars on unverified charges of directing or planning attacks on Israel. There is no account of the Palestinian civilians killed or injured in that period. There is no mention of the homes destroyed or of the fields scraped or trees uprooted. Nor is there any notice of the actual or planned expansion of settlements, or of the so-called defense wall, which penetrates into Palestinian territory, bringing unnecessary harm and suffering, to the daily life of the people. The Associated Press writer might argue that the focus was on Abbas and his tenure and why he failed, and not on Israel and its actions. But Israel is the other relevant party to the peace negotiations and to the success or failure of the Road Map. In this case, Abbas' failure must be attributed to both his inability to stop violence and to Israel's failure to offer and deliver something in return, such as withdrawal from territory, removal of checkpoints, suspension of land grabbing and putting an end to assassination of Palestinian leaders. Abbas needed some positive results to show in return for what he was asking his people to do.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and President George W. Bush have put all the blame for this state of affairs on President Yasser Arafat, even though they had declared him “irrelevant.” But if he is irrelevant, how can he be blamed for the failure of the Road Map? And if he is relevant, how can the two parties reach an agreement without him? Israel tried to ignore Arafat and put him virtually under house arrest for almost two years, but both Sharon and Bush still charge him with the responsibility for failure. These contradictions expose the failure of both Israel and the United States and their misguided policies toward Arafat, the Palestinian National Authority, and the minimum expectations of the Palestinian people. Both Sharon and Bush have failed to recognize or acknowledge that Arafat cannot deliver what they want without getting something substantial in return to bring his people closer to their national objectives: freedom from occupation, self-rule, and independence.

It is true that Israelis on both sides of the so-called Green Line have suffered from violence by the Palestinians, but it is equally true that the Palestinians have suffered, even more, at the hands of the Israelis, one in the name of resistance to occupation, and the other in the name of security. To argue as to who should take the first step, end the violence, and initiate a chain of declining violence is in a way begging the question. The fact is that the Palestinians are being asked to put an end to their “violent resistance” to occupation, dismantle its infrastructure, reform the government, and ignore Arafat, all this while Israel continues to occupy their land, restrict their movements, and strangle their economy. Such a policy or expectation is devoid of logic and of historical precedence. It can only happen if one party vanquishes the other and imposes its will to resolve the conflict. Both Israelis and Palestinians should know by now that neither can vanquish the other in the present international environment.

Israel's misguided policy has been compounded by the recent decision of the Israeli Cabinet to “remove” Yasser Arafat from the scene, by whatever means it deems appropriate. The vice premier of Israel, Ehud Olmert, has declared killing Arafat as an option. But exiling Arafat or killing him would not void the rights and demands of the Palestinians for an independent state of their own, in their homeland, side by side with Israel. Unfortunately, Ehud Olmert is not alone in his “killing” sentiment. Thirty seven percent of Israelis polled on the subject said they would approve of killing Arafat, which is most unexpected in the “humane democratic society” Israel is supposed to be. Apparently Israel has not learned the lesson that force alone cannot guarantee security or a peace agreement, all their gunship helicopters, tanks, and laser-guided missiles notwithstanding. Unfortunately the Palestinians have been equally stubborn or unwilling to admit that violent resistance, even in its extreme form of suicide bombing, has failed to bring them any closer to their national objectives.

The United States has not helped to improve the prospects of peace by its blind support of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians. However, this one-sided approach by the media and by the United States government tends to characterize some international NGOs, such as Amnesty International. In its report on Israel, Amnesty International details the negative effects of Israel's policy of checkpoints, curfews, and fencing on the Palestinian people. These effects are real and horrible, and need to be exposed. But the report would have been more influential had it at least mentioned the suffering of Israelis because of Palestinian actions and inactions.

It seems essential to remind both Israel and Palestine of the elemental truth that they need each other if they want to resolve their conflict peacefully and conclude a lasting peace agreement. Ariel Sharon needs Gasser Arafat as much as Arafat needs Sharon. Arafat symbolizes the aspirations of the Palestinian people for freedom and independence. Resistance to occupation is inevitable as long as occupation persists with or without Arafat, although resistance can be non-violent. In fact non-violent resistance can be more effective and its results more lasting and less costly than violent resistance.

From this perspective, Israel and the United States would do well to take a step forward and recognize that any Palestinian leader who wants to cooperate with them to resolve the conflict must be able to deliver something in return to his people, both incrementally and in the ultimate solution, such as assured independence and sovereignty. For only then can the Palestinians see a light at the end of the tunnel, accept reality, and cooperate with their leaders to put an end to violence and the conflict with Israel. In the present situation Israel has the key to the riddle of who should take the first step to start the chain of declining violence. Israel can take tangible measures to end the occupation and invite cooperation and a march toward a viable peace agreement.

## **THE UNITED STATES SOWS SEEDS OF INSTABILITY IN IRAQ**

### **November 2003**

It seems to be the pattern of the United States (US) officials to identify leaders and groups in Iraq by their religious and ethnic origin. The media apply this pattern of reference to people in Iraq, even though neither the leaders nor the groups identify themselves in their public appearances by religion or ethnicity. Once in a while they identify the presumed political affiliation of the individual, but only if it is Ba'thism (Arabic for Revival), the party to which Saddam Hussein belonged. The impact of this misguided labeling can be politically and socially disastrous and the US would be responsible for it.

US public officials and most media representatives speak of Muslim Sunnis, Shi'a, Arabs, Kurds, but rarely of Iraqis as a nation or unified country, as they have been at least since the demise of the Ottoman Empire. And when they speak of Baathism as an ideology, they seem to imply that it is a bad thing, associated with terrorism, cruelty, or Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Apparently they choose to forget that Baathism preceded Saddam Hussein, and has little to do with his cruelty, dictatorship, or corruption. Ba'thism's general mission is simply to revive and unify the Arabs as a nation. That Saddam Hussein abused the concept and the party should not reflect on the ideology and its original concept or mission. The anti-Ba'th policy of the US demonstrates oversimplification, ignorance, or opposition to the idea of Arab revival and unity. On the other hand, identification of leaders and groups by religious and ethnic origin, and distribution of benefits and costs accordingly, can only lead to instability and chaos, as had happened in Yugoslavia and has been happening in Lebanon. Let me illustrate.

First, the US occupation administration has established a governing council whose members were selected on the basis of religion and ethnicity. The only exception among the 25 members is one identified as "judge," apparently selected because he was jailed by Saddam Hussein. It is ironic that a quota system of representation is illegal in the US, but evidently it is appropriate for US forces to apply it in Iraq. The divisiveness of this method has been already demonstrated by the inability of the members of the governing council to agree on one of them to be the chair or president of the council. Hence they had to resort to an inefficient system of monthly rotation of the presidency, thus rendering the position ineffective and wasted.

Second, the US administration seems to associate violent opposition to its occupation of Iraq with Sunnis, Baathists, loyalists to Saddam Hussein, or al-Qaeda organization. Though there is little information to be able to narrow this vague

conclusion to one or the other of these possible perpetrators of violence, the US administration does not seem concerned with finding the true reasons for opposition. The opposition may in fact be independent of religion and ethnic affiliation. Is it not possible that some members of all religions and ethnic groups are opposed to the occupation of their country? Is it not possible that Arab nationalists and Iraqi nationalists are opposed to the occupation, regardless of religion or ethnic origin? In fact there are Middle East experts who consider Arab/Iraqi nationalism as the major source of violent opposition. These experts suggest that by ignoring Arab nationalism and concentrating on religion and ethnicity, the US is trying to “de-Arabize” the country. The result, the argument goes, will be the fragmentation of the Iraqi polity and economy, and germination of the seeds of conflict between the various fragments of society.

Third, the US policy has been rewarding individuals and groups also on the basis of religious and ethnic affiliation. This is evident in jobs and business facilitation. However, the most glaring application of the policy has been the dissolution of the Iraqi army and police force on the assumption that both institutions were mostly Sunni Ba’thists loyal to Saddam Hussein. Little attempt was made to evaluate the validity of that assumption. As a result, chaos, insecurity, looting, and disorder have followed, and the US military has been burdened with extraordinary duties to maintain law and order. Furthermore, unemployment and poverty have ensued, causing hatred and opposition toward both the US administration and the beneficiaries of that policy.

Fourth, questions are being raised regarding the place of religion and ethnicity in the reformed system of education and the new textbooks and curricula to be adopted. Will there be separate textbooks for the Sunnis, the Shi’a, the Kurds, the Assyrians, the Christians, etc.? While the old textbooks are being purged of the name and history of Saddam's tenure, how will the new textbooks treat the war and occupation of Iraq, the appointment and composition of the governing council, and the quota system of representation imposed on the country? Whether unity and independence or separatism and dependence will be the theme in the new curricula remains to be seen.

Fifth, and most important, will be the impact of religion and ethnicity on the establishment of a constitution and a system of government. Ba’thism was for unity and Arab nationalism. There is suspicion that the new constitution will cater to the different religious and ethnic groups, instead of leading to a unified, democratic, and secular state, as in the US, France, and other advanced countries. Members of the governing council have already hinted at the difficulty of creating a constitution acceptable to all religious and ethnic groups. Such difficulty is compounded by the continued practice by the US of highlighting religion and ethnicity in the affairs of state. The experiences of Yugoslavia and Lebanon should serve as a warning against emphasis on religion and ethnicity because chaos and conflict may be the result.

The negative aspects of emphasizing religious differences in Iraq has come to the fore a few days ago when the US authorities warned the military personnel not to eat, drink, or smoke in public during the month of Ramadan, when practicing Muslims fast during the day and eat between sunset and sunrise. While respect of the other is commendable, it should be equally commendable to reciprocate such respect. However, mutual respect between religious and ethnic groups must be earned, not imposed by the authorities, domestic or foreign,

The US has a mission in Iraq. Its mission, presumably, is to create a democracy, and a free and peaceful society. If so, and if the US wants the new Iraq to be a model for the other Arab and Middle Eastern countries, then it should practice what it preaches. It should call for freedom of the individual, freedom of religion, unity, and democracy, and also separation between Church or Mosque and the state. It should promote the principle of one-person one-vote, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or gender. Anything short of this theme is bound to be a source of conflict, separatism, and instability. Hopefully the US and the new Iraqi policy makers will heed this call for a secular, democratic, and unified state in Iraq in order to avoid unwanted consequences, before it is too late.

**DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST;  
A VISION OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH  
December 2003**

President Bush seems to be on a new venture to democratize the Middle East countries, something that should have been started sixty years ago. He attributes the delay to be in part the responsibility of the Western countries, including the United States, which had been “propping up oppressive regimes.” Now is the time, according to his vision, to “insist on democratic reform.” The time is ripe because “the establishment of a free Iraq at the heart of the Middle East will be the watershed in the global democratic revolution.” It is also the time to promote democracy, because without it the “Middle East will persist as a threat to world security.”

Most probably President Bush has good intentions. He certainly wants to promote democracy, as he understands it. He may also have the welfare of the people of the Middle East at heart. Yet, good intentions and visions of an ideal do not by themselves guarantee or even pave the way to make the ideal a reality. President Bush will have to do much more than tell the Middle East people to adopt democracy or institute democratic reforms. The President’s vision has numerous basic problems, enough to strangle any process of democratization, unless new concepts and methods for promoting democracy are created. For instance, President Bush has said little about the meaning of democracy. Apparently it is enough to have elections and pro-Western policies to be anointed democratic. Whether the voters do understand the meaning of democracy or whether they are well informed and free to cast their votes as they wish do not seem to enter in his conception of democracy.

Another source of confusion in his conception is to suggest that democracy will eliminate terrorism and political instability though the facts do not support that conception. He apparently bases his concept on belief. How democracy has turned out to be “the plan of heaven for humanity and the best hope for progress on Earth” is totally bewildering. If it were so, then he should have no problem in implementing the heavenly plan. His visionary and politically motivated oversimplification of the concept and ideals of democracy are well illustrated by his declaration that democracy is fully consistent with Islam. To prove his point he refers to Turkey and Indonesia, among others, even though terror and instability have been common in both countries. Minorities in both countries have also been very badly treated in spite of their so-called democracy. The majority of voters in both countries is undereducated and poorly informed and can hardly

be described as practicing democracy. This shows how little importance President Bush attaches to the difficulty of separating state from mosque in Islam.

However, the main problem with the President's vision is the evident belief that democratization can be imposed from above, simply by creating "democratic" institutions or by occupying a country and ordering its people to become democratic. Furthermore, the behavior of the "democratic" countries, including the United States and Israel, toward other countries, is hardly conducive for others to imitate these countries as models of democracy.

President Bush has yet to explain how he plans to transplant his concept of democracy to the Middle East and other Islamic countries. Overturning governments and occupying countries have had little success, even in the "celebrated" success stories of Chile and Haiti. Nor has President Bush explained why he expects the Middle Eastern leaders and people to aspire to and adopt his concept of democracy, which they view as being in contradiction with their religious beliefs and traditions. Unless the people of the Middle East understand the meaning of democracy and aspire to live by its principles, they will see his approach as a threat to their way of life, and they will resist it. The incentives to adopt democracy in the Middle East are neither evident nor promising.

President Bush and his advisors seem convinced that their war on Iraq, its continuing occupation, and the imposition of a new form for government can be a watershed for democratization in the Middle East region. However, there are many indicators that the people of the Middle East and of Iraq see it differently. They see the United States and its coalition as outside occupiers. They see them as exploiters of their countries' natural resources and wealth. They see in them a Western value system crowding out their own by force. And they see the new approach as divisive, rather than as unifying. The distribution of power and authority according to ethnic and religious affiliation is contrary to the democratic principles of equality and freedom of the individual. In that sense, people of the Middle East tend to be suspicious of the Western push for democracy in the region. They remember how the Western powers supported the Algerian army when it interfered to prevent the transfer of power to the winning Islamic majority a decade ago.

In spite of these obstacles to the realization of President Bush's vision of democracy, the prospects may still be promising. The prospects depend on the policies of the United States and its allies, the time horizon for political transformation, and the alternative approaches available to the people of the Middle East. Probably the single most important reconsideration by the United States and the West would be to recognize that they can impose a "superficial" form of democracy, but they cannot create democracy by force. To create democracy they need to promote education for living by democratic principles. They need to promote education for democracy in the home, the school, and the market place so that all individuals become aware of the value of their freedom as a right and a social contract, rather than as a gift from a benevolent leader, or occupier. They need to think of democracy as their own value system, rather than as an inspiration from heaven by way of a minister, an imam, or the President of the United States.

Another policy reconsideration by the West would be to encourage the people of the Middle East to formulate their own concept of democracy. Scholars and policy makers in the West can make a contribution by providing guidance upon request so as to

help the people of the Middle East to adopt what fits their aspirations and graft them onto their own ideals of democracy. Whether Western democracy can be reconciled with Islam is doubtful. It is doubtful that any religion or system of beliefs can be reconciled with a rational democratic system. Only secularism can guarantee peaceful coexistence of state and church or mosque. However, secularism and reconciliation must be initiated and consummated by the people of each country on their own. Once the people are able to comprehend the alternative approaches open to them to live as both democrats and Muslims, or Christians or Jews, they will be able to create the framework to reconcile their political and religious behaviors in a stable, peaceful, and democratic way.

Still another policy reconsideration is to avoid strict limitations on the time horizon for change or adoption of democracy. The people must set their own pace according to their aspirations, facilities, and the costs and benefits deriving from the change. Western powers can help accelerate change by facilitating the process, and by demonstrating that the benefits of change exceed the costs for the majority of the people, not simply for the leaders or the regimes. The power of demonstration can best be illustrated by the dramatic transformation of the Arabs in Israel. As citizens they have observed the democratic process among the Jewish citizens and have participated in it as electors and elected. In both capacities they have become an impressive model of transformation into a democracy. I have personally observed the campaigns for office on the local and the national levels in Arab villages. Each election has been less imperfect than its predecessor, in contrast to the increasing imperfection of democracy among the Jewish citizens. All this means that the people of the Middle East should be aware of alternative approaches to political transformation. They should also know that the time horizon for change depends on them for they are the party to be affected most by the change. They should, therefore, be convinced that it is their responsibility and privilege to create the framework for democracy as they understand it and aspire for it.

The Middle East countries, leaders and followers, are aware that society is dynamic and change is inevitable. They are aware that change will benefit some more than others, and in different ways. But they are afraid of any change that is planned and imposed on them by outsiders. They are afraid of rapid change that may cause more dislocation than they can bear. Even so, change is bound to come, hopefully by their free will and action, as free people, responsible for their own political, economic, and social futures.

## **Unilateral Separation Between Israel and Palestine January 2004**

On Thursday, December 11, 2003, Mr. Ariel Sharon, delivered a speech in Herzelia in which he unveiled his “Unilateral Separation” Plan for the Palestinians, if the Palestinians, “still continue to disregard their part in implementing the ‘Road Map’ within a few months.” The Separation plan would include redeployment of Israel’s military forces along “new security line” that would minimize the number of Israelis in “the heart of the Palestinian population.” Mr. Sharon invited the Palestinians to “abandon the path of terror and ... move together toward peace.” Since then he has indicated that the Palestinians would end up with less territory under this plan than they would through a negotiated peace and the Road Map. At face value, Mr. Sharon’s statements may be considered conciliatory. However, no one would doubt that Mr. Sharon has his priorities well established. He would try to acquire as much Palestinian land as he could. He would try to maximize the security of Israelis and Jews wherever they may be. And he would try to realize these objectives at minimum cost, especially in life and limb of Israelis. By now Mr. Sharon seems to have recognized that military action against the Palestinians will not deliver those objectives. He also seems to be convinced that the Palestinians will not achieve their goals of statehood and independence within the internationally recognized borders by force, violence, or terror.

It is apparent that Mr. Sharon is ready to abandon the idea of peace with the Palestinians and settle for an end of violence and for more security by unilateral separation from them. The separation would be implemented by completing the Separation Fence on a unilaterally designated line inside Palestinian territory at various distances from the Green Line or the pre-June 1967 boundaries. The new separation boundary, as presently visualized, would net Israel another 15% of the Palestinian territory. Mr. Sharon is not offering the Palestinians any inducements to comply with the Road Map, not even an initiative of compliance by Israel as an example. He, instead, is giving them a warning that if they do not comply soon, they will once more be on the losing side, especially in territorial terms, as they have experienced in the past. The fact is that the Unilateral Separation plan offers Israel extra benefits, compared with the Road Map, but Mr. Sharon is ready to pay lip service to the Road Map to peace for international consumption, especially for the people and government of the United States.

Whether Mr. Sharon is serious about implementing his unilateral separation scheme remains uncertain. Even so, he has already won support for his plan by a majority of Israelis, on the basis of a sample of both Jews and Arabs. He has also won approval of his speech by the US administration. This dual support would no doubt enhance his bold strategy to maximize security and land gains by unilateral decisions, backed by military force, the dismal fate of the peace process notwithstanding.

Where do the Palestinians stand in all this? They must do something other than wait for the world to come to their rescue. The world has not rescued them from Israeli territorial incursions in the past and is not likely to do so now. They must act on their own behalf if they want to avoid another disaster in their relations with Israel. Here are some options:

1. The Palestinians can attack the Unilateral Separation plan as an act of aggression, as a way to grab more land, and as a mechanism to squeeze them out of their homes and country. They can do all this in a battle of words, but that will reap them nothing, except more losses and more despair than they have already suffered.
2. The Palestinians can invoke the Road Map as THE PLAN for peace and appeal to the Quartet (EU, Russia, UN and US), to insist on reviving it as the best solution. This approach will secure for them a lot of international moral support but not genuine gains or victory to prevent unilateral separation or fence building. On one hand, they themselves will be charged with non-complying with the Road Map by failing to dismantle the structure of “terrorism”, and put an end to violence against the Israelis. On the other hand, there is little hope that the Quartet would take any measures to pressure Israel into immediate compliance with the Road Map because the US is in full agreement with Israel’s tactics against the Palestinians. In fact, most Israeli actions against the Arabs are usually coordinated with the US government, regardless of the Party or the President in office.
3. The Palestinians can charge that the Unilateral Separation plan is an act of aggression and a violation of prior international agreements, and proceed to increase their violence against the Israelis within Israel as well as in the occupied territories. Such action will cost the Israelis life and material, but it will cost the Palestinians more of both, as suggested by the history of the conflict. Furthermore, violence and terror have failed to realize Palestinian objectives and have cost them dearly in the past. There is little reason to believe that violence and terror will be more successful in the future.
4. In contrast, the Palestinians may choose to change direction, take the bull by the horn, come by with new initiatives of their own, and put Mr. Sharon on the spot to move directly toward a peace agreement with them. They can do all that by coming up with a viable proposal of their own that would promote mutual recognition, promise mutual security, and facilitate cooperation for a peaceful agreement with Israel. There are different ways to reach that objective. The Palestinians can adopt the Road Map as their own, put an end to violence, and challenge Israel to do the same, thus precluding any excuses to pursue Unilateral Separation. They can co-opt all the resistance force and mobilize them into PNA security force and thus control their actions by

transforming them into a law and order army. Of course they would expect reciprocal acts of non-violence, cooperation, and progress toward a peace agreement from Israel. Israel would find it extremely difficult not to reciprocate.

The Palestinians may even be bolder, more determined, and more discrete in the pursuit of peace. They may adopt any one of many terminal peace plans that have been proposed in the past and offer it for a final, comprehensive solution. The Geneva Accord plan is the latest in a series of such proposals going back to the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Geneva Accord plan deals with issues the Road Map has avoided dealing with until a later and final stage in the process of peace making. It offers a final solution that covers the prospective boundaries between Israel and Palestine, the political and legal status of the two states, Jerusalem, and in some ways the status of the refugees. The Geneva Accord plan is comprehensive and can be implemented immediately if there is a will and a desire for peace by both sides. If the Palestinians take such an initiative, they can announce to the world that the end of the Israeli occupation, Israel's withdrawal to the internationally accepted borders as per UN Resolutions 242 and 338 will guarantee security and peace. Mr. Sharon will no doubt try to find fault with this challenge in order to increase Israel's benefits, but he will not be able to sabotage a serious initiative for peace by the Palestinians. The Israeli people will not let him do so. They are tired of war. Though a majority of Israelis have expressed support for Mr. Sharon's tactics, most probably they did so because they did not see any viable initiative on the table by the Palestinians. Therefore a viable Palestinian alternative way to peace and a challenge to Mr. Sharon to face reality and come to terms with them will make it difficult for him to decline or to establish his unilateral separation line inside the Palestinian territory. Such action by the Palestinians will also free them from the behavior patterns of the past and put them in a proactive lead position for a truly negotiated peace agreement. The PNA and the PLO will be able to prove that they do represent the Palestinian people and are able to negotiate and implement a fair and just peace with Israel on their behalf.

## **PEACE BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL: IS IT IMMINENT?**

### **February 2004**

Several recent maneuvers suggest that peace between Syria and Israel may be forthcoming relatively soon. A surge of activities from different directions seems promising, though nothing can be certain in this situation until it has happened. To begin with, Syrian President Bashar al-Asad has expressed interest in resuming negotiations with Israel, from the point at which they were interrupted in the year 2000. The argument for that restarting point is that any other starting point would be wasteful in time and energy, and could be used as a delaying tactic by interested parties. President al-Asad has reinforced his initiative by mobilizing support from President Mubarak of Egypt, who is convinced that Syria is seriously seeking negotiations for peace with Israel. Al-Assad has also accepted the offer of Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan to mediate between him and Israel. Prime Minister Erdogan has in the meantime expressed his conviction that al-Asad is serious about these negotiations, and has communicated his opinion to the United States. Another indication of Syria's serious interest in peace is its prior approval of an impending Arab initiative for a comprehensive Arab Israeli peace to be discussed at the Arab summit in March. This initiative is based on the idea of land for peace, but it also offers a resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem without demanding the return of refugees to Israel. Is President al-Asad really serious about peace with Israel? All Israel needs to do is put him on the spot by meeting him at the negotiation table to see what he has to offer.

It is possible to suggest that President Moshe Katsav of Israel has already put President al-Assad on the spot by inviting him to visit Israel and negotiate peace. Syria has in a quick move questioned the seriousness of the invitation, terming it a propaganda gimmick. Again to test whether President Katsav is serious or not, Syria can put him on the spot by accepting his invitation, or by offering a more viable or convenient venue for a summit meeting in search of peace.

While the presidents of Syria and Israel have been talking past each other through the media, or third parties, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel has made two comments. First, he expressed displeasure at President Katsav's invitation of President al-Asad, though he did not say so bluntly. Second, he acknowledged explicitly that peace with Syria would entail withdrawal from the Golan Heights. On the first point, it may be that Sharon has felt being undercut by his non-partisan president. Or it may be that he wanted to be dissociated with the invitation in case it proved to be a failure. However,

the second point is more significant. On one hand, it shows that Sharon is now convinced that without withdrawal from the Golan Heights, there can be no peace with Syria. On the other hand, he seems ambivalent whether he is willing to lead Israel into the path of withdrawal as the price of peace, by refraining from stating his position on that matter. Ariel Sharon is not known to hesitate in expressing his opinion explicitly, once he has decided on an issue.

Where to do all these maneuvers lead? Syria and Israel have good reasons to be suspicious of each other's public statements and past behaviors. Israel has occupied Syrian territory, has altered its terrain, physical structure, and appearance, and has practiced aggressive behavior against its Syrian neighbor. On the other hand, Israel may be suspicious because it believes that Syria harbors and aids terrorist activities against it, and is associated with WMD directly or indirectly. Finally, there are Israelis who believe that Syria is intent on destroying Israel as a Jewish state. In the case of war between countries, such suspicions are common and expected, and the only way to remove suspicion is for the concerned parties to embark on the road to peace. The question in this case is whether both Syria and Israel are truly interested in peace between them, on terms that are reasonable and internationally defensible. They both can show their intent by taking steps that reflect a positive attitude toward each other in the cause of peace. To illustrate:

President al-Asad would make a good move by exploring the invitation by President Katsav to visit Israel a little more deeply than he seems to have done. Even though he may have found it inappropriate at this stage to visit Israel, he could suggest another venue that may be acceptable to both. For example, they could meet on the border between Syria and Israel, in Amman, in Cairo, or at the United Nations. A meeting between them in any of these places would be dignified and would be capable of breaking the ice and starting viable direct communications between the two countries. President al-Assad could still honor the invitation if it were issued in a little more appropriate manner.

President Katsav would have done better had he issued the invitation directly or through a diplomatic third party, rather than through the public media. President Katsav could have approached his counterpart through Egypt's President Mubarak, Jordan's King Abdullah, or through the Secretary General of the United Nations. At the same time, President Katsav would have added some dignity to the invitation by refraining from questioning the sincerity of President al-Asad in wanting peace almost immediately after issuing the invitation. He could also have refrained from demanding of President al-Asad to prove his sincerity by proceeding to stop "terrorism," as if it were proven that he is in control of terrorism or is capable of stopping it at will, regardless of its causes. By acting in this way, President Katsav made it virtually impossible for President al-Assad to accept the invitation or to consider it other than a propaganda gimmick. If only these two presidents could place themselves in each other's shoes for ten minutes, they would see how they could increase trust between their two countries, instead of helping to perpetuate distrust between them.

Finally, by publicly recognizing the price of peace with Syria, Prime Minister Sharon has come face to face with reality and has placed himself in a position to decide whether he wants peace by paying the price (withdrawal) or not. Menachem Begin knew the price of peace with Egypt and was willing to pay it and thus peace has been achieved

between Egypt and Israel ever since. Ehud Barak almost did the same with Syria in year 2000, but he failed to go all the way and therefore the peace effort failed. Mr. Sharon is now in a position to make peace with Syria, and in that case by default with Lebanon. And by doing so, he will make it next to impossible for the Palestinians not to come to a peace agreement with Israel soon after, given that the general outlines of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement are well known. Will Mr. Sharon have the will and courage to proceed in the direction of peace with Syria, save Israeli and Arab lives, and put an end to the century old Arab-Israeli conflict?

It is never too late in politics and diplomacy to change direction, take new positions, or open new doors. Al-Asad, Katsav, and Sharon can still take a short cut to peace by giving each other the benefit of the doubt, assuming mutual sincerity, and proceeding to negotiate directly, or through the good offices of Mubarak, Erdogan, or Kofi Annan.

## **THE PALESTINIAN'S LONG WAIT FOR PEACE**

### **March 2004**

It may be shrewd and strategic to wait when there is a fairly good chance that the desired objective will be realized within a reasonable time horizon. But it is futile, wasteful, and self-defeating to wait for something to happen when all odds in the foreseeable future are against it. In that case it becomes necessary to devise new approaches that promise to be more viable than endless waiting. The Palestinians are in that predicament at this time. They have been waiting for a just and permanent peace with Israel for a long time, but it has not come and is unlikely to come any time soon, unless the Palestinians take matters into their own hands in a more creative way than has been the case. It is up to them to initiate and propose solutions that Israel cannot reject, even if such solutions entail serious compromises on their part.

The Palestinians have apparently been waiting on the assumption or the hope that other concerned parties will see the light, recognize their just cause, and come to their aid and salvation. Thus, they have been busy reminding themselves and others of their just cause, and also reinforcing their beliefs with violence against an opponent that is superior in training, equipment, unity, and discipline. Several decades have passed but the prospects of peace on their terms are not better today than they were then. That is why the Palestinians should take the initiative and come up with peace proposals that reconcile terms of their own with terms acceptable to Israel.

The Palestinians must be aware that the Arab countries, presumably their closest ally and benefactor, can or will help only in rhetoric, and with modest funds to help them survive, but not much more. The Arab countries will not again take up arms against Israel; they have little leverage to pressure the major supporters of Israel; and they have little clout to influence the United Nations Security Council to take a defining and enforceable stand on their behalf. The Arab countries are now planning another summit for next month to consider the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but if history tells anything, it is that the Palestinians should not expect much.

The Palestinians must know that the US is totally committed to the cause of Israel, as Israel defines it. The US, therefore, will not apply sufficient pressure on Israel on their behalf, nor will it help them become economically or militarily strong enough to fend for themselves against Israel. The US will help only within the context of Israel's guaranteed secure future, regardless of the infringement by Israel on their human rights, their increasing poverty, or the decline in the quality of life of the majority among them.

The Palestinians must know that the European countries, singly or collectively, are not any more dependable allies than the US in the conflict with Israel. The European Union makes declarations but takes no action. The individual European countries, such as Britain, France, Germany, or Russia, may criticize certain Israeli policies but stand by their commitment to the triumph of Israel. Hence, waiting for effective support from the US or Europe is like waiting for Manna from Heaven: it makes one feel good but the stomach remains empty.

The United Nations (UN) is probably the best candidate to appreciate the plight of the Palestinians, the elements of justice in their claims against Israel, and the magnitude of their suffering. Yet, the UN is handicapped. It is only a collection of the individual members and it can do only what its members decide. Its hands are tied especially by the distribution of veto power in the Security Council, which the US is always ready to cast on behalf of Israel. Thus, even the UN can influence the relations between the Palestinians and Israel only by persuasion, which has so far not been sufficiently effective.

The Palestinians must know that Israel will not come to their aid and surrender its claims to territory, which is the crux of the conflict, on its own. Israel acts in its own self-interest. It wants as much territory as it can secure. It wants as few returning Palestinians as absolutely possible. It also wants to maximize security for its people. So far Israel has succeeded in attaining most of these objectives at the expense of the Palestinians, by force, and by guaranteed outside support. Israel also has the power to maintain its upper hand for the foreseeable future. It has a well-trained, well-equipped army. It has some of the most advanced weapons, and the knowledge to produce and utilize these weapons. It has the human and physical capital it needs. It also has the knowledge and the organization to promote its cause worldwide. Given all these advantages, Israel finds itself under no compulsion to give the Palestinians what they want, especially when it finds “legitimate” excuses not to do so. The Palestinians tend always to oblige and provide the excuses, legitimate or not.

The Palestinians, in contrast, have little hope of winning by force: they have poorly trained militias, disorganized resistance groups, and defective or out of date equipment. Their economy is in shambles; unemployment is very high; poverty and malnutrition are rampant. They have no super power allies, and their apparently powerless government lacks credibility at home and abroad. Therefore, the Palestinians have little to utilize in pressuring Israel to make peace with them on their own terms. In the meantime violence and counter-violence have caused them heavy losses in life and limb and have hardened the Israeli and international stands against them. The strategy of violence against the occupation has failed. Therefore, the longer they “wait” on the basis of false hopes and expectations, the better it is for Israel and the worse for them. The waiting strategy gives Israel more opportunities to occupy more land, build more settlements and establish more facts on the ground, and become more entrenched than ever before. In fact Israel has been proficient in encouraging this waiting strategy by inventing ways to preoccupy the Palestinians and distract them from the basic issues in the conflict. The Palestinians are now preoccupied with the Wall Israel is building, even though the wall is not a basic issue. Fighting the wall helps to delay negotiations and gives Israel more time to pursue its own objectives.

The Palestinians' waiting is entailing heavy costs on them: loss of life, injury, destruction of infrastructure, crumbling economy, severe poverty and unemployment, and a high degree of dependence on aid (charity) from the outside for survival. Malnutrition, stunted growth, and distorted education are also high costs to bear while waiting for the improbable solution they desire.

The Palestinians must know that if they cannot get what they want, it is wise to get what they can. Israel does not hold all the cards. Therefore the Palestinians can and should take matters more into their hands. They can take a number of steps to improve the odds in their favor. First and foremost, they can and should stop the violence, without stopping their resistance to occupation. Non-violent resistance can be much more effective than violent resistance, especially in gaining international support, and in sparing their own people the tragic effects of "counter-violence." The Palestinians can declare formally what has been internally recognized and accepted, namely that the return of the Palestinian refugees to Israel is improbable and should not stand in the way of peace. The Palestinians can show that they are willing to live in peace side by side with Israel within borders negotiated by the two of them. Finally, the Palestinians can redirect their resources and energies to the development of their economy, improvement of the quality of their education, and the fight against poverty and deprivation by all the legitimate means at their disposal. Finally, they can formulate their own comprehensive solution in a way that will make it hard for Israel to reject it.

The Palestinian's long wait has been detrimental. It is time to end it and expedite the march toward a viable solution. The Palestinians are capable of taking the initiative, rather than always reacting to initiatives by others, in a realistic way that reconciles their claims with those of Israel. The Palestinians have had many opportunities to reach a solution, but they have usually said NO until it became too late to say YES, going back all the way to the 1920s and 1930s. Maybe now they will have the courage, the wisdom, and the compassion for their own people to make it possible for themselves and for the Israelis to say YES to a viable solution of their own making.

## **BRAVERY AND HEROISM OF THE ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS**

### **April 2004**

Two people are fighting for a piece of real estate. They have enthroned it as the center of their aspirations for a national home, statehood, sovereignty and independence, and for dedication to the religion and glory of their God, the One and only for both of them. For this purpose, the Israelis and Palestinians are willing to do everything that will bring victory to each over the other. They perform with an unknown degree of bravery and dedication.

The Israelis march undaunted against defenseless and unarmed villages, with no fear or trepidation. They play brave soldiers facing an imaginary enemy. They besiege the village, select a house, order the unarmed visible inhabitants to vacate, and blow up the house or smash it with bulldozers. They do all that in minutes and declare victory over the unseen frightening and most probably non-existent terrorist. If they heard shots in the area or saw the shadow of someone running away or in hiding, they would quickly engage their machine guns, laser directed missiles, and helicopter gun ships to overcome the dangerous image of a terrorist. They may kill three or four civilians in the operation, as if to prove that they have no fear of the enemy. That the civilians may be unarmed, old, young, handicapped, or children can only be a footnote in the history of the battle.

The bravery of the Israelis is more evident against the visible enemy: the hordes of young people armed with stones and slingshots, and cries of Allahu Akbar (God is Greater). The Israelis face this formidable enemy first with tear gas, then with rubber coated bullets, and then with real bullets, all fired from monstrous tanks and armored cars. After suffering a few casualties, the stone throwers retreat and the brave Israelis declare victory. Once in a while the Israelis claim that a stone did hit a tank, but no injuries were suffered. That is not all. The Israelis, fully dedicated to satisfy their hunger for real estate of the Palestinians, send some vigilantes to find strategic hilltops to build settlements on them. Those brave pioneers go with zeal in search of the right (Arab) hill that controls movement in neighboring towns or villages. Once they find it they come fully equipped to set up temporary lodging, fences, watch stations, and observation towers for their protection. If Arab owners of the land interfere or create obstacles, the Israeli army will soon be at hand to “protect Israeli citizens,” no questions asked as to why, where, and at what cost. Here the army’s bravery is never in dispute. Their

monstrous tanks, armored cars, sophisticated weapons and helicopter gun ships are ready to face the dangerous villages who have no weapons, military training, or organized militias to fight for them. The bravery of the Israeli army and vanguard settlers is demonstrated by the large number of illegal settlements they have sustained, the amount of land they have usurped, and the number of farmers who have been rendered landless and unable to support their families from farming as they did before.

The Israelis' bravery has no limits in facing the Palestinian enemy. The Israelis' most daunting form of bravery may be illustrated by those who target Arab leaders, traveling on public roads or sitting in their homes or offices, and attack them with laser guided missiles from helicopters flying overhead. Often they kill the targeted leader and two or three others around him. They also may cause injury, death, and destruction in the neighborhood in the process. The Israeli soldiers go back to their stations proud of their victory. The Israelis leaders lead the nation in acting bravely. After all they alone in the Middle East region have WMD, with no watchdog or institution to hold them accountable. Even so, the Israelis do not feel safer today than they felt years ago, in spite of all these victories and assumed brave ventures. However, in the meantime they do add more (Arab) real estate to their land bank and settlement program.

Bravery is not the sole domain of the Israelis. The Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular have their own "victories" in the fight against Israeli encroachments on the internationally recognized Palestinian rights. The Arab leaders, on behalf of at least some of their people, face Israel with great speeches, sermons, and declarations of unity with and support of the Palestinians. The Israelis hear their speeches and sermons and start "trembling," but their super power patron reassures them that there is little to fear. Those speeches and declarations are only for domestic consumption and have no military or economic backing or sustenance. They are no more than hot air from desert countries.

The Palestinian bravery is more pronounced by the behavior of their leaders. Those who preach for "fight until victory" are so brave that they indoctrinate young people into becoming suicide bombers on behalf of the Palestinian cause. They get killed and die, but the leaders go on living and claiming victories against Israeli bus riders, restaurant diners, and any one who happens to be an easy target. The young kill and get killed without knowing how futile the use of suicide bombs has been. The Palestinian leaders are very brave in making decisions that lead to nowhere except to poverty, hopelessness, and ghetto living. The leaders' bravery is evident: they suffer all those hardships by proxy. The stone throwers get killed or maimed while they themselves are safe in their homes or in the sanctity of diplomatic immunity. The leaders suffer isolation and restricted movements also by proxy. The people cannot travel from one village to another, but the leaders can go from town to town and from one country to another—on behalf of their people. Because of their decisions to use violence, the people lose jobs, lose crops, and lose incomes. They become dependent on charity to survive, while the leaders get paid salaries and collect profits from companies they had established, all in the service of Palestine.

The Palestinian leaders are bravest when they see the land of their people slipping away into the hands of Israel and still declare that victory is imminent, even though they have no weapons, no military training, no unity, organization, or resources. The Palestinian leaders are not idle or lazy or scared. They address letters, with great

courage, to world leaders and institutions complaining against Israeli encroachments and aggression, knowing that little will come of it. They even seek aid (charity) from those leaders and institutions to help their people survive. However, much of the aid goes unaccounted for.

The ultimate form of Palestinian bravery is to face the Israelis with the “fermenting demographic bomb.” The Palestinians seem to believe that as their numbers multiply their power against Israel also multiplies, the lack of training, capital, technology, resources or strategic planning notwithstanding.

The Israelis and Palestinians can and should be brave, and act accordingly. The Palestinians can show bravery by admitting that Israel is there to stay, with force if necessary and better without it. They would be brave to proceed to negotiate peace within that framework. The Israelis can show bravery by admitting that domination of others, (less equipped), and the occupation of their land will not bring peace and security. Peace can come only when the Israeli leaders show courage by bringing their soldiers home, putting their tanks, armored cars, and helicopters to rest, and ending the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

## **THE UNITED STATES SHOCKED AT THE UNEXPECTED IN IRAQ**

### **May 2004**

The United States administration seems shocked that the Iraqi people have not welcomed the Occupation forces with open arms or spread a red carpet for the top US administrator. Evidently they had expected a more welcoming attitude and more cooperation with the Occupation forces as “liberators,” even though uninvited. It is now obvious that those were false expectations, based on faulty intelligence and misleading advice from “experts” on Arab culture in general and Iraqi culture in particular. Several factors may help to explain how this could have happened.

First, it seems that the decision to invade Iraq was based on prejudicial and inaccurate information, without adequate study, verification, or analysis of the possible consequences. The misinformation seems to have come from biased and unreliable sources. Many of those who provided information had not been to Iraq for years. They had grudges against the “fallen” regime of Saddam Hussein, and had vested interests of their own. The US administration apparently was ready to accept any information that would reinforce its foregone decision to go to war. Another source of faulty information has been the so-called “experts” on the Middle East, the Arab world, and Islam. Most of these experts do not know the Arabic language or culture, especially the Arabic language and culture of the common people. Their contacts in the Arab world are mostly Western educated officials who have little in common with the majority of the people. For example, those experts should have warned the US administration that Arab people tend to remember the good deeds and the bad deeds rendered unto them, and by whom. Therefore they should have warned the US decision makers that the Iraqi people would be most unlikely to have forgotten the suffering and humiliation they had experienced at the hands of the US (and British) forces during the past 12 years. The Iraqi people saw their forces evicted from Kuwait but also cruelly pursued, causing a great loss of life and material. They saw their bridges blown up and their roads and waterways destroyed. And to add to their defeat and humiliation, the Iraqi people were subjected to sanctions causing them to live in poverty, austerity, and humiliation for over a decade. And they saw their country fragmented into separate zones, two of which were declared no-fly zones for Iraqi aircraft, while making them open space for US and British planes and bombs. The US put the blame for all these tragic consequences on Saddam Hussein and

his regime. But the Iraqi people had been told over the whole decade that the US and Britain were to blame and they apparently believed it.

Second, since the invasion of Iraq in April 2003 the behavior of the US forces has often been cruel, punishing, and arbitrary enough to cause great harm to civilians and non-combatants. In fact such behavior has tended to reinforce the negative attitude Iraqis had toward those forces even before they attacked. The Occupation forces destroyed much of the infrastructure, allowed looting of major institutions, and used excessive force against the resistance to occupation. Civilians are arbitrarily detained, homes searched, and restrictions imposed on the guilty and the innocent. The US administration came preaching democracy and proceeded to apply non-democratic procedures. They appointed a governing council on the basis of ethnic and religious affiliation, rather than on the basis of merit or people's choice. The Iraqis call for elections and the US administration says no, with little prior study or adequate explanation. And even after a governing council had been appointed, the US administrator retained virtually absolute power over the council and the country. In the meantime unemployment, poverty, and crime have been rampant. The Occupation forces have failed to guarantee security, employment, or a rapid pace of reconstruction. They blame these problems on loyalists to Saddam Hussein, al-Maida connections, Islamic fundamentalists, and outsiders. Yet, all these potential resistance groups would not be able to operate without support of the local people. The people shield them, feed them, and offer recruits to help them. Even those who have enlisted in the police force and militia have been unwilling to fight against their own people, as the US commanders had expected them to do. Evidently, these commanders have forgotten that the Iraqis are nationalists, and can hardly be expected to help in securing the occupation.

Third, the Occupation forces took no time before they dismantled the army and police force of the demised regime. Overnight they created a huge army of unemployed without providing an alternative source of income for these individuals and their families, regardless of whether those individuals were guilty or innocent of whatever they were accused of. The US administrator issued a ban on former members of the Ba'th party in civil service, academic institutions, and other public positions, again with little regard to the guilt or innocence of the individual concerned. Yet, not all those who were members had abused the principles of their party, joined in the corruption, or shared the spoils with Saddam Hussein. And now that the reconstruction has been underway, Iraqis are still largely unemployed, and those who are see foreigners scoop the benefits while they receive crumbs as compensation, regardless of their skill or proficiency.

Fourth, and most important, the Iraqi people do not know why the US is occupying their county. Saddam Hussein has been toppled and his regime has been decimated. Why cannot the Iraqi people now take care of their own affairs? They do not believe that the US forces are there to relieve their suffering or to create a democracy, which they themselves may or may not want. On one hand, they suspect that the occupation is to secure the oil reserves of Iraq and the Middle East region for the benefit of the industrial world. On the other, they are convinced that the US Occupation is to guarantee the security of Israel. As if to confirm this connection with Israeli interests, some American companies have unwittingly employed Israelis in Iraq's reconstruction, even though Iraq and Israel are still formally at war. Some observers have noted the great similarity between US treatment of Iraqis and Israel's treatment of the Palestinians

in the West Bank and Gaza, with the implication that the two countries are in concert regarding occupation tactics.

Whether the Iraqi perceptions of the Occupation are justified or not is not important. It is important that the Iraqis believe those perceptions to be true and behave accordingly, to the surprise and shock of the poorly advised US administration. Even so, all is not lost. The US can still make amends and try to win cooperation of the people, albeit slowly and gradually. First and foremost, it is essential that the end of occupation be in sight, including the deployment of all foreign troops out of Iraq. Whether a month, a year, or longer, a deadline for the end of all occupation must be sighted. Another step would be to consult the Iraqi people regarding the reconstruction projects they consider of high priority. So far it seems that outsiders have been telling the Iraqis what they need, instead of listening to their grievances and desires. Still another very important step would be to shift the responsibility of reconstruction of both the economy and the administration of Iraq to the United Nations, including matters of security. In that case, some of the Arab countries may be able and willing to contribute personnel to help in the process of pacification and rebuilding. Finally, on the level of daily life, it is most important to provide employment and dignified sources of income to all who want a job. To depend on aid and meager food rations is too humiliating, inadequate, and unsatisfactory. Until major attempts are made to know the Iraqi people and community, and until their grievances are taken into consideration seriously, the US administration will continue to be shocked at what seems unexpected, though it may be normal and predictable behavior.

**THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARAB WORLD**  
**ONE STEP FORWARD AND SEVERAL BACKWARD**  
**June 2004**

The Arab world is shocked and angry at the United States for the abuse of prisoners in Iraq, and for the blind endorsement of Israeli actions in the West Bank and Gaza. The abuse of prisoners is not new or strange in much of the world, including the Arab world. However, prisoner abuse by the US personnel may be shocking because it is not expected from a country that preaches democracy and human rights. On the other hand, anger at the US for endorsement of Israeli policies and actions is by now an old story and no longer surprising or unexpected. What is shocking is that the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular have yet to learn to take the US position into consideration in their strategies and tactics in world affairs. The Arabs still expect abstract justice, fairness, objectivity, and honesty to guide foreign policy of the US and others, though these values have rarely determined foreign policy in the US or elsewhere, including the Arab world. False expectations lead to anger, shock, and disappointment, which explain the apparent worsening relations between the US and the Arabs in the last few years. The fact is that the US, like most Western countries, has little respect for the leaders and people of the Arab world. This attitude has been evident since the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the advent of Western colonialism into the Middle East. Even though Wilsonian democracy was the US motto after WWI, the US did little to expedite independence or promote democracy in the Arab World. Even then, the US seemed to follow the dogma of “those who are not with us are against us.” John Foster Dulles cancelled the US commitment to help Egypt build the Aswan Dam and thus pushed that country toward the Soviet Bloc in the Cold War. Even though President Nasser of Egypt, together with Nehru of India and Tito of Yugoslavia, tried to create the neutral “nonaligned” third world, the US would not change its negative attitude toward Nasser or Egypt. The change came only after President Sadat of Egypt visited Jerusalem and concluded a peace agreement with Israel, and after he had initiated the “Infitah” or open door trade policy, as dictated by the US. Even then, the US/Egyptian or Arab relations did not evolve into a strong alliance, mutual respect, or trust. As an illustration, the US kept firm control over US aid funds to Egypt, sometimes blocking badly needed projects because these projects did not comply with US demands. The US has continued to

interfere in Egypt's internal and external affairs, such as criticizing its law courts and judgments, with little objective support for such criticism. The US has used or threatened to use its Veto power in the UN Security Council to prevent the re-election of Egyptian\ Butrus Butrus Ghali as Secretary General of the UN, while the 14 other members of the Security Council favored his re-election. The US considered King Hussein of Jordan as a friend but behind his back he was often described as the "little King" in State Department circles.

The Arab people have been disappointed with the US administrations that preach democracy, individual freedom, and human rights, yet they proceed to support autocratic, dictatorial, and backward regimes that govern in the Middle East. The US supplies those regimes with arms they use against their own citizens to keep themselves in power. However, disregard for Arab leaders and Arab people is best illustrated by recent events and actions of the US in the Middle East. For example, the US has been floating a plan for the Greater Middle East Reform without any known consultation with people of the Middle East. Apparently what the Arab and Middle East people want or not want is of little significance: the US knows what is best for them! There is little evidence that the Iraqi people have had a chance to review the political and economic reconstruction plans for their country. It is being imposed on them. The new Iraq, according to US officials, will be a model for the Greater Middle East, whether the people of the Middle East like it or not. Apparently US policy makers and corporation executives can propose, design, and implement (or fail to implement) as they see fit, all in the name of liberation and reform. Now the pressure is on Syria, in the name of fighting terrorism, to comply and reform, as dictated by the US. Whether the Syrians want democracy or free trade is apparently beside the point.

Finally, probably the greatest disregard and insult to the Arab governments and people is reflected in what the US is allowing to happen to the Palestinian people. Without US support, continued occupation by Israel and its effects including death, destruction, humiliation, and poverty of the Palestinian people would be inconceivable. Evidently the US wants the Palestinians to surrender completely to Israeli demands before any of their own grievances can be resolved. Strangely enough, the US policy makers are not alone in their low respect for the Arab states. Some US scholars describe the Arab states as quasi states, immature, dependencies, and client states, thus confirming the West's attitude toward the Middle East as described in Edward Said's ORIENTALISM.

Many in the US ask, "Why do they hate us," but the Arab people do not hate the American people. They resent US policies and disregard for their own concerns and just claims in international affairs. The Arabs know that terrorism by Arabs is hurting the US but it has been hurting the Arab countries as well. The Arab leaders and people can hardly be responsible for the terrorists who spare no one in order to create instability and disorder. There is one difference, however, between what the US and the Arabs call terrorism. Evidently the US does not differentiate between a violent struggle for independence from occupation and violence to terrorize people in the name of religion, ethnicity, or race.

While differences in outlook and policy may underlie the worsening relations between the US and the Arab world, the gap between them goes a little deeper. It emanates from the fact that the contemporary Arab world has been an underachiever in

science and technology, economic development and growth, and in raising the quality of life for the majority of the Arab people. The US culture has little room for underachievers. They are tolerated and patronized, but not respected, be they individuals or countries. The underachievers make weak allies, and are always in need of help. The US may extend help to them, but not respect or equal treatment as sovereign nations.

This state of affairs is not inevitable. Both the Arab world and the US need to take a look at themselves and at each other to see how they can improve their relations with each other, assuming they desire better relations. First, the Arabs need to stop blaming the US for all their problems. They need to ask themselves what they could do to join the modern world without sacrificing what is basic to their culture and aspirations. At the same time the US needs to review its own policies and remove the ingrained biases against Arabs. The US can help the Arab world to advance in science and technology, in rational decision-making and analysis, and in promoting secularism and reform, as desired, not imposed values.

**INSECURITY, PARANOIA, OR HARRASSMENT?  
AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT AND PEOPLE OF ISRAEL  
July 2004**

I have been to Israel many times and almost always I have had to suffer the unpleasant experience of engaging the “security agents,” going in or going out of the country. However, this last time has been by far the most unpleasant, aggravating, and unwarranted grilling by the authorities that I have faced. Security measures are necessary and they should be most welcome if applied fairly, politely, and equally to all passengers, or to all who are suspected for good reason. While it may be impractical to apply thorough measures to all people, a careful system of random searches may be fair and acceptable. But it is not fair, polite, or justified to let the so-called security agents pick and choose whom and how they subject the unfortunate target to their horrible treatment. Israel prides itself on its technological and scientific advances and yet it seems unable or unwilling to devise a system of profiling that spares the innocent and catches the real suspect.

To be fair, all the agents my wife and I encountered were polite, but none seemed to display any sense of humanness, compassion, or understanding and sensitivity to the agony they were inflicting on us. Whether it is their internal insecurity, paranoia, or pleasure of harassing Arabs is difficult to say. Most probably all these emotions drove the unwarranted behavior we faced on our way to and from Israel, and also when crossing from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and back. Our experience may not even be typical because we travel on American passports, our companions to Bethlehem were all Israeli citizens, and all of us are relatively advanced in age. One can imagine how much worse would be the treatment of younger Arabs from the Occupied Territories who may be traveling legally through Israel!

Our unpleasant saga started when our United Airline plane was found to have a mechanical problem shortly before we were to leave San Francisco. The passengers had to transfer to another plane and that caused us to miss our British Airway connection in London. The next BA plane to Israel was scheduled at more than six hours later. Since our relatives were waiting for us at Tel Aviv airport, we sought help from UA agents. They suggested going with EL AL, the Israeli airline, thus saving a few hours. We agreed and they authorized the ticket transfer. We proceeded to the EL AL desk across the aisle from the BA desk. A non-smiling El AL agent told us to wait, though he

seemed to be doing nothing. We waited as he chose his time to process our ticket transfer and seat selection. In the meantime a young lady agent came over and started chatting with us: who we are, why we were going to Israel, where we would stay, etc. We told her that we were going home to visit our family, that we have been back and forth to Israel in the past, and that we were happy to answer her questions, which she described as a matter of security, "you know." Eventually we went down the stairs to the gate to board the plane, and that is when the horror started. First one agent and then another come to share in the drama, all asking virtually the same questions, wanting us to step aside for more questioning, while others were being asked only a few questions, searched, and allowed to proceed in two or three minutes. I asked why the delay for us, and all we were told was to wait; it is a matter of security "you know." I requested to talk to the supervisor. Another agent, probably not more than three years older than the others, came simply to say: This is our policy and if you do not like it, do not fly with us. That did not seem to be a good option, just half an hour before the plane was to take off! Then we were led into a separate room, subjected to body search, while our handbags were taken to a still lower level for more thorough examination. And then a young lady came back with our handbags, but without four items that had to be subjected to an extra special X-RAY examination. However, the machine was out of order and therefore those items had to be kept until the machine became available later that evening. The young lady promised that those items will be on the next plane to Tel Aviv by morning and will be on their way to our home in the village in Israel soon after. She also wanted us to surrender one of our handbags to house those items during their forthcoming ordeal. Those items were a small radio I always carried with me on my travel, my wife's camera, and three bottles of port wine manufactured and sealed in our town in California, and a box of lollipops we bought at the duty free shop at the San Francisco international airport. Given no other option, we accepted those promises and proceeded to the plane without the port and the lollipops. It took eleven days and more than twenty long distance phone calls from our village to Tel Aviv, and the voluntary intervention of a friend before those items were returned to us, but without the film which was in the camera and which contained family pictures.

The experience of our departure from Israel was equally harassing, and obviously based on arbitrary selection of who shall be the next victim. We alone of all those standing in line with us were subjected to body searches. Our luggage was the target of a massive invasion by at least five agents, who spent about two hours checking every single item in the suitcases, in our handbags, and in our pockets. They checked a twenty-dollar bill for what might be hidden in it, though without the use of a special machine. People in line were glaring at us to see what would come next. Our neatly folded clothes and nicely packed suitcases were turned into a model of disorder, and chaos, left for us to close them virtually by brutal force.

This time we were traveling by Altai, not by El AL. Nevertheless, we still seemed an attractive prey for these young, non-smiling, seemingly arrogant, insensitive security agents. At one point we felt sorry for them because they seemed to have been dehumanized by the Israeli system and policies. They have been turned into robotic machines of ethnic hatred and harassment, at such a young age. When we finally boarded the Alitalia plane, we felt like breathing in and out a sigh of relief that the immoral attempt to humiliate us was finally over.

Our impressions of the dehumanization of the security agents and our feelings of compassion for them were reinforced by our experience at the checkpoint between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Our taxi driver and our two sisters who accompanied us are Israeli citizens. Our sisters, 80 and 73, both have difficulty walking. The 80-year old is handicapped, uses a cane and the arm of whoever happens to be around to assist her to take her 3-4 inch steps, at most. Yet this old lady was expected to walk about 100 yards from the Israeli taxi to the checkpoint for clearance, and another 200 yards to a Bethlehem taxi waiting on the other side. After pleas from the taxi driver, who happens to know the soldiers at the checkpoint, they allowed him to cross with her to the Bethlehem taxi. The rest of us, all in our mid seventies, had to walk. On the way back, the Bethlehem taxi had to park 200 yards before reaching the checkpoint. Since no one could plead with the soldiers, and the soldiers could not see her from their watch cubicle, she and all of us had to walk. The Israeli taxi was waiting on the other side but the soldiers would not allow him to come to the checkpoint to pick us up. Finally our 80-year old sister gave them a lecture on human decency, feelings, compassion, and the rights of citizens. She spoke loudly enough for the commanding officer to hear her from his office. He came out to inquire and with some assumed gallantry ordered the soldier to allow the Israeli taxi to come closer. Time was wasted, feelings were hurt, and nobody gained anything, other than a reinforced sense of insecurity, paranoia, and dehumanization.

Our sisters were both exhausted, in tears, and possibly wondering whether that experience was the price to pay for visiting the Church of the Nativity, or to attend the opening of an art show by our daughter, who had come from the United States to exhibit her art work in Bethlehem. Was the taxi driver a suspect? Were we older people the real suspects? I cannot answer these questions for the Israeli government and military. I am sure they have a file on me and on my activities for the promotion of peace by peaceful means. I am also sure that the treatment we have experienced on this trip does not help the peace process, does not add to the security of the Israeli people, and does not reflect positively on Israel and its people. On the contrary, these arbitrary measures, forced on the young soldiers and security agents as their duty to perform, tend to turn them into robots, devoid of sensitivity to the human condition that is independent of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender, and that is certainly not what Israel claims to stand for.

**WHY ISRAEL SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM  
THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, COMPLETELY**  
**August 2004**

There has been a lot of talk, official and unofficial, about Israel's intention to retain parts of the West Bank, as defined by the pre-June 4, 1967 ceasefire boundaries, even in the case of a comprehensive peace agreement with the Palestinians. Several arguments are made to justify such a position, including Israel's security needs, the hardships that total withdrawal would inflict on the Jewish Settlers (facts on the ground), the sanctity of certain areas, as in Jerusalem and Hebron, and the "impracticality" of return to the 1967 borders as suggested by President George W. Bush. None of these arguments would stand critical scrutiny and objective analysis. As far as security of Israel is concerned, none of the areas intended for retention is strategic enough to support such a claim, given the technology of arms and war available for offense as well as defense. Similarly, the negative effects of total withdrawal on the 200,000 plus settlers who might be evacuated can hardly compare with the effects on several times that number of Palestinians of retaining parts of their territory. Finally, the least impressive argument is the "impracticality" of total withdrawal. If the leaders of Israel decide to withdraw, then withdrawal becomes practical. In other words, whether total withdrawal is practical or not is a political decision, not an economic, social, or logistical one. Most probably the majority of the settlers in the Occupied Territories would welcome generous compensation and suitable relocation offers. The only effective argument for retention of parts of the Occupied Territories seems to be reluctance to use force and state power. Unfortunately such an argument has within it the seeds of self-destruction and much suffering in the process. The Palestinian people will continue to hope and push for the day when they will be powerful enough to overturn any decision about land loss imposed on them by Israel or any other power.

Looking more deeply at the question of total Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza suggests several arguments in favor of withdrawal. First, a large number of Israelis and Jews elsewhere are in favor of withdrawal because they do not want to be occupiers, and also because they consider withdrawal a major step toward peaceful coexistence with their neighbors. Though these people may not be highly vocal, their voice would be loud and clear once the issue is put to debate or to a vote. However, the issue of total withdrawal from the Occupied Territories cannot be left only to Israel and

its supporters, which leads to the second argument for withdrawal. Such a question lies at the heart of international law and international peaceful relations. Up to now, no international agency has supported Israel's claims to parts of the Occupied Territories. On the contrary, several have called for withdrawal. The United Nations (Resolutions 242 and 338), the Oslo Agreement of 1993, the Road Map by the Quartet (the US, the EU, Russia, and the UN), and more recently the International Court of Justice, at least by implication, all have determined Israel's obligation to go back to the 1967 boundaries. If so, Israel has no legal leg to stand on to justify retaining parts of the Occupied Territories.

Another international argument for withdrawal is that retaining land occupied by force sets a precedent that violates international law and the UN Charter, and opens the door for other powerful countries to occupy and retain lands of weaker ones. When Saddam Hussein occupied Kuwait, an international coalition approved by the UN and led by the US summarily evicted him. Israel has no more legitimate claim to the West Bank and Gaza than Iraq had to Kuwait. Both claims are wrong and both equally deserve rejection.

A fourth argument for total withdrawal is that while total withdrawal may inflict hardships on the settlers, if they were to relocate to Israel, they do not have to relocate. They should be able to continue to live in Palestine as citizens, or as legal residents, fully protected by the Palestinian constitution and state power, just the way Arabs live in Israel as citizens, although they do so with less equality with Jewish citizens than desired and justified. Israelis keep their citizenship and live in the US and in Europe as legal residents; they can do the same in Palestine. In other words, total withdrawal means surrender of power and sovereignty over the whole Occupied Territories, not evacuation of people, if they desire to continue to live there as legal residents. The idea of retaining parts of the Occupied Territories for the sake of the settlers, as facts on the ground, means that Israel wants to establish a status of extraterritoriality for the parts it intends to retain, as well as its right and responsibility to guarantee security of those settlers. However, extraterritoriality is certainly a fertile soil for seeds of instability, conflict, and violence, and therefore it is self-defeating. Extraterritoriality can also entail more harm than comfort, and more cost than economy, compared with the alternative of surrendering sovereignty and power to the State of Palestine over the whole Occupied Territories.

Still another argument for total withdrawal is historical in nature. Israel has once before retained territorial war gains and made them a part of Israel, as happened in the Galilee and the Triangle following the 1948/49 wars with the Arabs. Israel acquired and retained by force about a third more territory than the UN allocated to it in the 1947 Partition Plan. The world looked on, the Arabs made faint noises, and the Palestinians screamed helplessly until 1967. The swift victory of Israel in the 1967 or Six-Day War evidently baffled the international community and made it oblivious to the Israeli violation of the UN Partition Plan and the UN Charter. To repeat that drama and retain areas occupied by force in 1967, with international silent approval, will be nothing less than institutionalizing the rule of force, or the jungle, against the rule of law and the preconditions for peaceful coexistence.

The last and probably most important argument for total withdrawal is that without it there will be no peace with the Palestinians. There may be an imposed absence of war, but not peace. Furthermore, the economic and human costs to Israel of sustaining its rule over any retained territory will continue to be high. At the same time the

Palestinians will never give up the hope of recovering that territory, even if they “agree” to a settlement they cannot avoid. The Jewish settlers will always feel insecure as long as their existence is protected only by force. Their garrison will always be in conflict with the local authorities and any little incidence of violence is bound to lead to more violent incidents. Yet all these potential conflicts can be avoided and peace will have a chance if and when Israel withdraws completely from the Occupied Territories, leaving it up to the settlers to choose between staying under Palestinian sovereignty as citizens or as legal residents, and relocation. The choice Israel has to make is whether to withdraw and give peace a chance, or to retain occupied territories by force and thus sow the seeds of instability, conflict, and bloodshed. Let us hope that wisdom will prevail and Israel will show its respect for international law, good neighborly relations, and dedication to peace and human values.

### **MULTIPLICITY AND CONFUSION IN PALESTINE** **September 2004**

The multiplicity of possible associations, objectives, and approaches is usually a positive social feature because it offers a choice among organizations, objectives, and approaches in order to minimize the costs and maximize the benefits in the process of realizing the selected objectives. This would be true if there is freedom of choice, if the various groups or organizations cooperate in making the choices, and once the choice is made, all will act as a unified front to achieve the objective. However, failure to abide by the choices made can only result in confusion, internal conflict, waste of energy, and failure to achieve the designated goals. Furthermore, it would weaken the group in relation to the external forces that may have an interest in the group’s affairs. Unfortunately such is the state of affairs in the West Bank and Gaza or occupied Palestine. Both multiplicity and confusion are predominant features of the PNA, which acts as a state government. While the PNA has the usual three branches of government, legislative, judiciary, and executive, it rarely acts as a unified front. The leaders of the three branches rarely act in unison after any serious debate of relevant issues. They rarely enjoy mutual respect among themselves or act in accordance with the laws they have voted on and adopted to run the PNA. This chaos is best illustrated by the numerous groups and organizations that act on behalf of the national objectives, on they’re own or apparently so. For example, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is supposed to be an umbrella organization for the various liberation groups, but it acts as an alternative power structure rather than as an integrated part of the national power structure, the PNA. Its various member organizations, Fatah, Hamas, Jihad, Al Aqsa Brigade, and others all seem to act independently of each other and of the PNA, especially in choosing the approach to fight Israeli occupation. Nor are the chosen approaches always consistent with the laws of the country, or the political declarations of the leaders. For instance, is it consistent with the PNA’s responsibility to protect its citizens, especially the minors, to let children go out and throw stones at Israeli soldiers and suffer the terrible consequences that are predictably forthcoming? Is it consistent with the laws and welfare of the citizens to allow suicide bombers explode themselves and cause harm to both Arabs and Jews and invite disasters to the whole community in return, with no assured benefits whatsoever? And is it consistent with the laws and welfare of Palestine for its

citizens to attack their own police stations, kidnap other citizens, or execute alleged collaborators with Israel without a trial and chance for the accused to put up a defense? Whether the PNA approves these approaches or is complicit with their perpetrators is uncertain, but it seems most likely that the PNA leaders are unwilling or unable to control them. It may be that the state of anarchy and confusion in Palestine is a tactic to mislead the occupation forces, but that is most unlikely since neither the occupation forces seem to be misled, nor are the results of those actions positive and beneficial to the Palestinian community.

The confusion and chaos may also be due to the lack of agreement on and clarity of the national objectives and the approaches to be used to pursue those objectives. While the national objectives may be unclear or unified, it is not clear which declared objectives are symbolic and which are real. For example, the main objective of the Palestinians is to create an independent sovereign state of Palestine, but where: In 100 percent of the West Bank and Gaza (the occupied territories), in no less than 90 percent, 60 percent, or in the whole of pre-May 1948 Palestine? This is what the friends of Israel in the United States and many citizens of Israel claim. It is obvious that the Palestinians would want to recover as much of Palestine as possible, but what is possible must be defined as a range with a minimum part of Palestine. However, that range is not well defined or known by most Palestinians, if indeed it exists. That may have been the cause of failure of the Arafat-Barak negotiations mediated by former US President Clinton in the year 2000.

An equally confused objective is the solution of the Palestinian refugee problem. Palestinians speak of Al Awada, or return to the places they came from in Palestine, as a Right. However, it is unclear whether the authorities consider the Right of Return as a symbolic or as a real objective to be seriously pursued. The differentiation is significant because a symbolic right of return may be possible to satisfy and enhance chances for peace between the Palestinians and Israelis. But if the right of return is real and meant to be implemented, it will act as an obstacle to a peace agreement, and any use of resources on its behalf may be a waste.

The PNA is at present in a state of poverty, internal and external insecurity, confusion, and hopelessness. Internal and external forces are calling for reform, but here too there is confusion regarding the needed reform and the ways of implementation. So far there is no internal study of the needed reforms. The only reform agenda is that promoted by the World Bank as a proxy for the US Department of State. However, the PNA and its various organs seem to be reluctant to comply with the World Bank's demands, yet they have not come up with an alternative agenda to end the chaos and create a system of law and order. The failure to come up with an alternative reform proposal and method of implementation has not only encouraged the continuation of disorder and confusion, but it also has given Israel false excuses to build a separation wall, grab more Palestinian land, and subject thousands of Palestinians to hardship.

The Palestinians are faced with a dilemma, internally and externally. The internal problem is that the PNA must act like an authority of law and order. It must guarantee the safety of its citizens against domestic lawbreakers, corruption, and deprivation, as well as against external harm. The PNA must set an example by abiding by the laws it has adopted, by creating mutual respect between its three branches, and by sharing power among them in accordance with its Charter, not symbolically but effectively. To do so, it

must also create an enforcement mechanism against those who break the law. To blame internal confusion and disorder on the occupation is to abandon responsibility, allow the disorder to grow, and lose any respect or credibility it may still have within and without the Palestinian territory.

The PNA and the Palestinian people can do better than they have done so far. They can explore the needed reforms, put them into practice, and take the challenge to build a society on the basis of law and order and care for the citizens, especially the children who have to face an uncertain future not of their own making. The external problems then fall into focus and become more manageable than they seem at present. Let us hope that the PNA and the Palestinian people will make the right choices of objectives, approaches, and leadership, and prove their ability to create a sovereign state that will guarantee law and order and security for all within its jurisdiction.

**UNITED STATES POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
STABILIZER OR DESTABILIZER?  
October 2004**

It is evident that the US administration is bent on getting more and more involved in ME affairs, whether the ME people like it or not. Its “illegal” war in Iraq may be a part of its Greater ME Reform Agenda to create a US tailored democracy in all countries of the region. The effects of the war in Iraq are still in the making. Even so, the US seems to be already setting the stage for action in other parts of the ME. The most recent maneuver is the charge (which happens to be true) that Saudi Arabia restricts the freedom of worship within its boundaries. Saudi Arabia’s behavior toward freedom of worship has not changed, but the US administration seems to consider the time ripe for confronting Saudi policies in the name of religious freedom as a human right. A more provocative recent action has been the United Nations Security Council’s resolution sponsored by the US and France, calling on Lebanon to refrain from amending its constitution to allow President Emile Lahoud to stay in office an extra three years without direct election. Though the Security Council resolution is not binding, it definitely expresses the antagonistic position of the US toward the Lebanese government. The resolution also calls on Lebanon to disarm and disband the unauthorized militias, and make the Lebanese army and police the sole armed legal force in the country. By the same token, the resolution calls on Syria to withdraw its troops from Lebanon and end its “occupation” of that country. Even as these declarations and warnings to Syria and Lebanon were being made, a message went to Iran threatening it with some sort of sanction if it does not abandon its nuclear program under UN inspection. This has been followed by a vote by the International Atomic Energy Agency to censure Iran for not halting the uranium enrichment program. There are at least three problems with US/UN declarations and policies. The first relates to the US manipulation of the concept of democracy. The second concerns outside interference in the internal affairs of another country. The third is the biased and un-evenhanded US/UN approach to ME issues.

The argument against Lebanon’s amendment of the constitution to extend the term of office of its current president is apparently based on various assumptions, such as: the constitution must be obeyed and sustained as is, no matter what; the initiative to extend the president’s term comes from Syria; and the amendment of the constitution to extend the term of the president is undemocratic. While respect of the constitution is vital, the Lebanese authorities did not violate their constitution by amending it. The constitution provides for its amendment by the Parliament when deemed necessary. With more than two thirds of the representatives voting for the amendment, it is hard to argue that their action is a violation of the constitution, or that it is undemocratic given that

members of the Parliament were elected in a democratic manner. It is obvious that the US considers the popular vote for a president to be the single most important symbol of democracy, even when more than half of the voting population is illiterate and uninformed, and all the voters are under grave pressure to vote one way or another, with little choice of their own. It would have been more beneficial for democracy and the US standing in the ME had the US/UN applauded Lebanon's compliance with its own constitution and for going about amending it in the constitutional way provided for that purpose, instead of meddling in its internal affairs, or trying to create a schism between Lebanon and its Syrian neighbor.

Interfering in the affairs of other countries is not new to the US. However, by interfering with Lebanon's constitutional action, the US/UN are essentially undermining Lebanon's sovereignty. The problem is that by interfering and undermining the country's sovereignty, the US/UN would be reducing the moral and political credibility of the Lebanese leaders, were they to acquiesce and follow the urging of the outside forces. Silent diplomacy to persuade against amending the constitution of Lebanon or extending the term of office for its president would have been more promising of success and more protective of democracy than passing resolutions, especially non-binding ones. This dilemma became evident when the foreign ministers of the other Arab countries found it difficult to endorse the US/UN resolution because it interferes with Lebanon's internal affairs, even though some of them were in agreement with the spirit of the resolution. The UN resolution is in a way threatening to the Arab countries in general because there is no guarantee that similar interference in their own internal affairs would not be forthcoming.

The un-even-handed policy of the US in the ME is legend. The US tolerates autocracy and dictatorship in one country but not in another. It allies itself with one violator of human rights but not with another. And it respects the sovereignty of one country but not of another. Yet the US wonders why certain countries in the region do not cooperate with its policies, especially in matters that affect them directly, such as imposing democratic reform, whether the people of the given country like it or not. One case in point is the call on Syria to withdraw from Lebanon and end its "occupation" of that country, without saying a word to Israel about withdrawing from the Syrian Golan Heights and from the occupied Palestinian territories, as demanded by the UN. It should be noted that Syria came into Lebanon at the request of the Arab League to help stabilize conditions and put an end to its civil war, and it did. Subsequently, Lebanon and Syria agreed (1989) that Syria would withdraw its troops upon negotiation with Lebanon on that matter. So far there is little evidence that either the Arab League or Lebanon has requested Syria to withdraw. That Syria has influence on Lebanese politics, or society does not mean that it stays in Lebanon against the will of the Lebanese people or authorities. Even in this matter, silent diplomacy, patience, cooperation, and even-handedness would be more effective than accusations, threats, and non-binding resolutions.

The same applies to the US/UN position toward Iran's nuclear program. The threat of nuclear weapons and other WMD is not new. Charges were made against Iraq and now they have been shown to be false or at least overly exaggerated. Syria has been accused of working on the manufacture of nuclear weapons but no evidence has been presented. Now Iran is the target of US/UN pressure to dismantle and abandon its

nuclear program, yet no voice has been raised to pressure Israel to abandon its nuclear program, that many believe to be advanced enough to manufacture nuclear weapons. Israel does not even hide the fact that it has a nuclear program. Why, otherwise, would it be distributing radiation sickness pills to people in the neighborhood of its two nuclear generators? Evidently there is a myth that Israel can be trusted with WMD, but no other country in the ME can be trusted. In fact no country in East or West can be trusted with WMD. When pressured, the US hit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many observers believe that when Israel felt threatened with defeat in the first stages of the Yom Kippur war, it too contemplated use of WMD. Luckily the support of the US and a change in the tide of the war precluded the need to resort to those weapons. And now Israel is issuing warnings that it will not allow nuclear developments in Iran, thus playing the role of self appointed policeman in the ME. The US watches and evidently approves of Israel's unilateral action, as if it were acting on its own behalf.

Syria ought to withdraw from Lebanon, if the Lebanese want it to withdraw. By the same token, Israel should withdraw from the Golan Heights and from the occupied Palestinian territories because the people in those areas want to be free of occupation. Similarly, Iran should not pursue a program of nuclear weapons, but nor should Israel or any other country in the region. The US would find it much more productive to pursue a policy of silent diplomacy, cooperation and understanding, and even-handedness in promoting democracy, and prevention of nuclear proliferation than resorting to force, threats of force, or biased policies and non-binding resolutions. Whether the US has been trying to provoke confrontation to justify sanctions or military actions against Syria and Iran, as some ME observers believe it has, is uncertain, such a policy certainly would be destabilizing and in the long run destructive and counterproductive.

**THE UNITED STATES ELECTIONS  
AND THE ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT  
November 2004**

Soon the US people will elect a president, either the incumbent George W. Bush, or his challenger John Kerry. The world is watching with great interest. Some hope that Bush stays on for a second term, while others want a change of policy and hope that Kerry will win and bring about the change they wish for. The exceptions to these hopefuls are the parties to the Arab Israeli conflict. They can expect little change in policy regardless who wins the presidency of the US. This is a lesson the Israelis have learned a long time ago, but the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, have been unable to learn or remember. The US policy is set in support of Israel on all basic issues of the conflict: the boundaries, security, the Palestinian refugees, and the character of the pending Palestinian state when it comes into being. The US would support the Arabs on secondary issues as long as their expectations are consistent with the pro-Israel policy on basics. Now that the elections are approaching, it would be useful to reconsider the Arab and Israeli positions toward a resolution of the conflict and how to plan for the future.

Israel still claims to be willing to cooperate with the Quartet (the UN, the European Union [EU], Russia, and the US) on the implementation of their Road Map for peace, which leads to a non-militarized Palestinian state within the framework of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. Israel wants security, adjusted boundaries with little or no loss of territory by either party, and a resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem outside its territory. The US, regardless of who is president, will, as always, stand by Israel to make sure these conditions are satisfied before a peace agreement is signed. The Palestinians have accepted the Road Map, but, like the Israelis, they have not complied with its preliminary terms, especially with regard to security. As long as the two parties hold to their current position, there is little hope for a breakthrough in the peace process. A new initiative by a new third party seems indispensable to break the stalemate. I suggest that the best candidate to be the new third party is the AL. The AL can proceed with a new initiative, not on behalf of the Palestinians but as a regional institution interested in peace and stability in the region.

It is well known that most of the member countries of the AL have contact with Israel, even if they have no formal peace agreements or diplomatic representations with each other. Israelis are able to visit North African Arab countries and a few of the Gulf countries, in addition to Egypt and Jordan, with whom they have peace agreements. This means that most Arab countries have directly or indirectly accepted Israel as a sovereign state in the Middle East. Even Syria and Lebanon, which are formally at war with Israel and do not have visitation between them, do recognize Israel's existence and only want back their occupied territory before signing peace agreements. Given these facts, the AL

should be in a good position to break the stalemate and initiate negotiations for peace. Only this time the negotiations will be direct between Arabs and Israelis alone. This is the way this process can be started:

- 1) The AL will issue a declaration assuring the security of Israel as far as the Arabs are concerned, within negotiated borders, in accordance with UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and the Land for Peace formula applied to the Israeli Egyptian peace agreement. In this case, however, the AL will transform the formula to read Land for Peace and Security.
- 2) The AL will declare its condemnation of all violence against civilians by any party to the conflict.
- 3) The AL will declare its commitment to a resolution of the Arab Israeli conflict only by peaceful means, and urges all parties to the conflict to comply with that declaration.
- 4) The AL will urge Israel to reciprocate by easing the pressure on the Palestinians, and by putting an end to the assassination of Palestinian leaders and the demolition of Palestinian homes and businesses.
- 5) The AL will call for a ceasefire period to give the initiative a chance within a calm and sober environment.
- 6) In order to arrive at a resolution, the AL will invite Israel to participate in forming a joint Arab Israeli committee to negotiate the major issues and prepare a blueprint for a peace agreement, within the framework of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and the Road Map.
- 7) The AL will urge all its members to support the initiative by containing violence related to the Arab Israeli conflict originating in their countries.
- 8) The AL will keep the UN and the Quartet informed of the progress of the negotiations, and invite their help as resources when needed.

One might wonder whether Israel would agree to cooperate with the AL in advancing its initiative, and whether the Palestinians will comply with the AL's proposal. Israel is too smart to reject a potential plan for peace just because it comes from the AL. On the contrary, it is more likely that Israel will welcome this initiative as a major step toward its acceptance by the Arabs at large as a sovereign state and a neighbor in the Middle East. Furthermore, Israel will be an equal partner in the negotiations and in the formulation of the blueprint and therefore can veto any article it does not accept. The same is true of the Palestinians as far as agreeing or not agreeing to any final resolution, with one difference: the Palestinians do not have many other options. The AL is their most important moral supporter and they would have to think twice before risking the loss of that moral support. At the same time the Palestinian situation is in bad need of rescuing and the AL initiative would offer them some hope of a reasonable and realistic solution to the conflict.

This initiative proposal is based on three premises, which have been more or less accepted by both parties. Premise one is that peace between the Arabs and Israel is possible, desired, and beneficial to all concerned. Premise two is that peace must come from within and cannot be imported from or imposed by the outside. Premise three is that violence and the continuation of the conflict have been detrimental to both Arabs and Israelis.

The Palestinians have tried violence for many years, but their situation has been progressively deteriorating. The Israelis have also used violence to curb violence and to silence the Palestinians' resistance with little or no success. In the meantime both parties have suffered horribly in life and material. Finally, both parties have so far depended on the outside to guide the peace process and they have faced one stalemate after another. It is unlikely that the conflict will melt away on its own, nor is it likely that peace will be imposed or negotiated by the outside. Therefore, it is worth trying this venue of the AL, whose recognition is desired by Israel, and whose moral support is indispensable to the Palestinians. The AL has no army of its own and cannot be a military threat to either party. On the other hand, it can mobilize resources to enhance the implementation of any resolution coming from the joint Arab Israeli committee.

A joint Arab Israeli committee can be the most viable medium to sort out what is acceptable and what is not to each party, away from the public eye and from the pressure of third parties. Suppose the committee fails, neither party will have lost much. On the contrary, they will have had a period of calm, self-assessment, and introspection into what might come next. But if the committee succeeds and the Arabs and Israelis themselves sow the seeds of peace, the benefits will be immense. Not only will they have peace, but they will also begin to respect each other as potential good and cooperative neighbors. Goodness will become a common feature of their relationship. All details and small conflicts will then be handled by negotiation and peaceful means.

Let us hope that the AL will take the initiative, that Israel will respond with gestures of good will, and that an Arab Israeli committee will come into existence in the near future.

## **ARAFAT'S LEGACY AND THE PEACE PROCESS**

### **December 2004**

Yasser Arafat has been eulogized as founder of Palestinian nationalism, unifier of the various liberation and resistance movements, trouble maker in neighboring Arab countries, compromiser with Israel for peace, and the obstacle to peace during the last five years of his life. Arafat was a complex man, a consensus seeker, and an autocrat in the Arab rulers' fashion. Above all he was a symbol of the Palestinian struggle for statehood and independence of Palestine. Now that he is gone there is a chorus heralding new opportunities for peace, especially in the American media and in Israel. President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon were first among those who saw new opportunities for peace in the absence of Arafat, even though they had pursued the misguided policy of deeming him irrelevant and confined him to his largely demolished headquarters. Both leaders have urged the Palestinians to replace Arafat with leaders with whom they could negotiate. The transition of power after Arafat, to the surprise of many, has been smooth and in accordance with the Palestine National Council's Charter. Members of the old guard are still in charge and they will most likely be elected when the Palestinian people cast their votes in January. Does this mean that the peace process will resume with renewed hopes for an Arab-Israeli peace agreement? The answer is, "Yes and no," depending on what the Israeli and American governments expect from the new Palestinian government and what they offer in return. The fact that Arafat, the symbol of Palestinian nationalism, has died does not change the political objectives of the Palestinian people. They still want an independent state within the internationally recognized borders of pre-June 1967, as per UN Resolutions 242 and 338; a shared if not divided Jerusalem; compensation if not the return of the Palestinian refugees; and control of their natural resources. Whoever the leaders are, it would be difficult for them to compromise on these objectives. If the Israelis, supported by the Americans, respect those Palestinian objectives and work with the new leaders toward realizing them, the new opportunities for peace will be real and peace may be realized in a relatively short order.

On the other hand, if the Israelis and Americans focus only on their own objectives, the new opportunities for peace may prove to be figments of their own imagination. For example, President Bush has made it his doctrine to transform the Middle East, including Palestine, into democracies of the American style, on the assumption that democracies do not allow terrorism and do not fight their "democratic" neighbors. Prime Minister Sharon wants security for Israel and large parts of the Palestinian territory, and peace. Unfortunately these Bush/Sharon objectives are not easy to reconcile with the basic Palestinian goals. First, the institution of an electoral democracy in Palestine does not mean that the Palestinians will become more flexible

with regard to their objectives than they were under Arafat. On the contrary, an elected government may feel more confident in safeguarding the basic objectives than an autocratic revolutionary government in transition. Second, a democracy “imposed” by the outside, through blackmail or ensnaring, is unlikely to gain popular support for compromise on the main objectives. The pending “electoral democracy” in Palestine is bound to be too superficial to count on for mobilizing popular support and consensus if major compromises are demanded. Thus, the death of Arafat and his replacement by elected leaders do not guarantee that peace negotiations will be more successful than they have been so far. In fact, counting on Palestinian (and Arab) democracy to open the gates to a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict may be a big miscalculation. The Arabs, including the Palestinians, at this time have great disdain for the Bush and Sharon democracies because of the destruction and cruelty they have inflicted on the Iraqi and Palestinian people respectively.

Mr. Sharon wanted Arafat out because he considered him a terrorist and an obstacle to peace, by which he means peace on his own (Sharon’s) terms. If that is still his concept of an acceptable peace, there is little reason to expect a new elected, reformed, and fully accountable Palestinian government to be more conciliatory and cooperative with Sharon than was Arafat. Actually such a government may be less capable than Arafat of compromising on basic issues because it is unlikely to have as much clout in facing Israel or the Palestinian opponents of peace with Israel. In that case, the opportunities for peace perceived by Bush, Sharon, and the Western media would be no more than daydreams and wishful thinking, unless, of course, both Sharon and Bush are ready to look at the Palestinian objectives and capabilities in more realistic ways.

George W. Bush has led the Quartet (the UN, Russia, the EU and the US) into creating the Road Map to peace on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and two sovereign states side by side. The least Mr. Bush needs to do to make the new opportunities for peace a reality is to reaffirm his commitment to the Road Map, the 1967 boundaries, and the two-state solution. He would enhance the new opportunities for peace by refraining from offering blind support to Sharon’s policies regarding the Palestinian people and territory. By doing so he would gain confidence of a large majority of the Palestinians as a sincere and even-handed promoter of peace in the Middle East.

However, the crux of the peace opportunities that may have been generated by Arafat’s absence lies in the court of Ariel Sharon and his government. George Bush can influence but cannot decide for Israel. The New Palestinian leaders can cooperate with Sharon but they cannot decide for him either. First and foremost, Sharon and his government must express their respect for the legitimate Palestinian objectives, including their own independent state within the pre-June 1967 borders; their rights to a shared if not divided Jerusalem; and the rights of the Palestinian refugees to compensation if not to return to Israel. While Israel may not agree to offer these Palestinian goals on a silver platter, the least it can and must do is to promise that these objectives are reachable.

If Israel promises to cooperate toward realizing these objectives without infringing on its own rights, the new Palestinian leaders will acquire leverage and credibility to negotiate not only with Israel, but also with various radical and violence-oriented Palestinian factions. For example, the new leaders must be able to show prospective benefits if they were to control Palestinian violence. They must be able to

foresee Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territories, cessation of targeted assassination, destruction of homes, uprooting of trees, and grabbing of Palestinian land. The new leadership must show its independence from Israel's authority within its own jurisdiction. Its security forces must be able to carry arms to be able to guarantee law and order. How else can the new leaders control violence and secure law and order when a decision to end the Intifada has been made?

The opportunities for peace have always been there. The death of Arafat may have opened the eyes and minds of some leaders to see those opportunities. But those opportunities must be highlighted and activated by the parties to the conflict, and by their mediating supporters, the US on the side of Israel and Egypt on the side of Palestine. The Israelis and the Palestinians have suffered much, though in different degrees, and both are longing for peace and tranquility. It is within the capabilities of their leaders to transform the environment, take some preliminary confidence building steps, reopen the negotiations, and sail ahead, even in the face of a stormy sea, to make peace and security a reality. They cannot blame failure on Arafat any more. Let us hope that they act now and succeed.

## **IF AND WHEN TURKEY JOINS THE EUROPEAN UNION**

### **January 2005**

The European Union (EU) has promised to begin negotiations with Turkey sometime in 2005 for admitting Turkey in the Union. By doing so the EU acknowledges that Turkey has taken important steps to qualify for membership. Turkey has reaffirmed its official position as a secular state, has abolished the death penalty, and has improved the status of women. Turkey has also been cognizant of the need to take steps to comply with the economic requirements of the EU, especially regarding budget deficit, current account, and trade regulations. The negotiations will presumably assess the degree of compliance with the EU terms that have been realized, and make recommendations for remaining steps to fully qualify. The negotiations will thus be a part of the process of admittance to the EU membership, which may take up to ten years, according to some observers. Even so, if and when Turkey gains admission, it will have achieved a breakthrough by elevating its status from a traditional developing country to a modern fairly developed country. It will also have undergone a revolutionary transformation in its state philosophy, institutions, and system of administration, all of which contribute to its new status.

When Turkey joins the EU it will gain many benefits. Some benefits are diplomatic, psychological, and nationalistic, and others are economic, technological, and qualitative. Not only will Turkey enjoy the open market of the EU, but also its labor force will be able to compete for opportunities within that larger market. However, to enjoy the benefits of the larger market, Turkey will have to raise the level of scientific and technical training of its labor force. It will also have to apply advanced technology in its production system to lower costs, increase efficiency, and improve the quality of the products and services it offers. In other words, it will have achieved the objective that has eluded its leaders for decades, namely being recognized as a developed country. The breakthrough will come with the commitment of Turkey's political and business leaders to a philosophy of development as the means to gain access to the EU membership. The commitment to such a philosophy will almost automatically lead to the building of institutions that facilitate development, including emphasis on science and technology, and rational decision-making in the economy and the administration. This revolutionary transformation will be reflected in the daily life of the people.

Probably one of the most significant changes will be the higher cognition of the value of time. It will become important not to "waste" or use more time than necessary to perform any given function. Turkey and most of the Islamic and developing countries are often described as the "*Inshallah* (God Willing), *Bukra* (Tomorrow), *Ma'alesh* (Never mind)" or IBM societies whose motto is the following: You do things if God wills; you do them tomorrow rather than today; and if you do not do them at all, it does

not matter. As a result, responsibility is put on God rather than on the doer; actions are postponed for convenience; and the failure to act goes unaccounted for. To join the EU Turkey will have to divorce itself from the IBM attitude and adopt the philosophy that time is scarce and therefore has value and must not be wasted. It will also become essential that the individual or the group is accountable for the use of time and the improvement of factor productivity.

Achieving membership in the EU will give Turkey another benefit that relates directly to productivity, namely a feeling of equality with advanced countries instead of the feeling of inferiority, which has permeated most Islamic and developing countries. That feeling of inferiority, while vehemently denied, is reflected in the preference given to foreign products and foreign experts, and in hesitation to bid for projects that require advanced science and technology. This feeling of inferiority is often described as the “Khawaga Complex,” or the foreign superiority complex. Kemal Ataturk initiated the movement to achieve Turkish equality with the European countries in the mid-1920s. Much has been achieved in the meantime, but the Khawaga Complex tends to persist, as reflected in government policies, educational institutions, and in the market place. Now Turkey can rid itself of that stigma, adopt the technology it needs, and improve its scientific and technological standards as needed.

While Turkey describes itself as a secular state, it now will have the opportunity and the responsibility to separate the state from religion, not only in rhetoric, but also in action. Religion becomes a matter of personal conscience, belief, and behavior, rather than an affair of the state, educational institutions, or business management. The reaffirmation of secularism should lead to changes in the status of women towards equality with men. The liberation of women from the religious and traditional constraints imposed on them will release an immense stock of human capital, which would be a great asset to the economy and the family.

Probably the most important international effect of Turkey’s membership in the EU is that Turkey will become a model for other Islamic and developing countries by showing the way out of underdevelopment. By joining the EU Turkey will show that Islam can be reconciled with modernity, with secular government, and with rational economic and administrative decision-making. Turkey will also show that advanced science and technology are not an exclusive property of the developed countries, but are accessible and achievable by the countries that are lagging behind.

However, the benefits of Turkey’s membership in the EU will also accrue to other members of the Union. They will have an enlarged market. They will have smoother relations with their own Muslim minorities, and they will free themselves of the charge of discrimination against Muslim countries in their public and international policies. Furthermore, admitting Turkey to the EU may be another way of combating fanatic Islam that calls for war against the “Christian West.”

Another benefit the EU members will gain is access to the Turkish labor market. Now it will no longer be necessary to accommodate illegal migrant workers. Turkish workers, at all levels, will be able to compete for jobs within the EU market, but without legal residence or citizenship. When they finish the job they go home.

The benefits to either side will not be free of costs. Turkey will have to abandon old traditions, customs, and behavior patterns that relate to economic and international relations. It will have to transform its institutions in ways that may have negative effects

on certain vested interests. Turkey will also have to face much stronger economies in the competitive market of the EU, which may cause short-run dislocations to realize long-term gains. On the other hand, the EU will have to compromise by admitting a country long considered an outsider in culture, religion, level of development, and ideology. Though Turkey will have made the required changes in all these areas, for the EU to make such a compromise will still be a radical move.

Yet, compromise is basic to building international relations, trading in as large a market as possible and maximizing benefits to the largest number of citizens in the interacting societies. Turkey's membership in the EU should be a boon to both parties, but only if they both work together to make the larger union a reality.

**THE LONG WAIT FOR PEACE AND STABILITY:  
PALESTINE AND IRAQ!  
February 2005**

There is a mood of optimism, hope, and exuberance in the United States (US) and in parts of the Middle East, suggesting that peace and stability in Palestine and Iraq may eventually prevail. Unfortunately that eventuality is not close at hand, nor is it apparent on the horizon, in spite of the elections hailed as a success in both countries, Iraq and Palestine. There is enough reason for skepticism because the political, military, and diplomatic actions underway in both situations have focused on processes (elections), and on controlling effects (violence against foreign occupation), rather than on causes of the conflict and ways to resolve it. Furthermore, it is far from clear that the intentions of the US in Iraq and Israel in Palestine are truly in favor of a quick and reasonable solution to the respective conflicts. It is more apparent that the occupying powers in Palestine and Iraq are intent on breaking the back of the Palestinian and Iraqi resistance to occupation before they will discuss causes of the conflict or negotiate contents of any reasonable solutions. The result has been an unavoidable delay in the peace and stabilization process in both cases. The similarity in approach between the two situations is worth noting.

Both Israel and the US have used excessive force against poorly trained and equipped enemies, thus causing disproportionately heavy casualties among the Palestinian and Iraqi people, especially among civilians. Both Israel and the US have been acting like imperial powers, heavy on occupying, destroying, dislocating, and killing their resisters, with little sensitivity to the suffering of the non-combatant people. The massive destruction in Gaza, Hebron, and Ramallah in Palestine, and in Baghdad, Fallujah, and Mosul in Iraq is hard to imagine as the work of regimes truly in search of peace and stability in the region. Such actions, on the contrary, have generated hatred and perpetual distrust on the part of the occupied and suffering people. At the same time, those actions have provoked and emboldened the individuals and groups that are fighting against occupation; Israel calls them terrorists and the US calls them insurgents.

Israel and the US have both insisted that little can be done until all violent resistance has been ended. To achieve that result they have co-opted the new Palestinian Authority and the “appointed” government in Iraq to fight terrorism and insurgency and silence them on the occupiers’ behalf. Both have also insisted that a new leadership is needed as well as a new democratic system of government, regardless whether the Palestinians and Iraqis wanted such a system or not, or whether they are ready for the proposed Western-type democracy. To make this happen, they prescribed popular elections, which virtually guaranteed that leaders willing to be co-opted by the occupation forces would be elected. This has already been accomplished in Palestine, and there is little doubt that it will happen in Iraq.

Democracy and general elections are great institutions, but only in a favorable environment. They can be viable and effective when the people are knowledgeable about democracy, its benefits, and its responsibilities. A viable democracy means that the people are free to discuss, argue, and choose between known (or knowable) candidates and platforms. But democracy and elections can hardly be viable ways to peace and stability when occupation forces restrict the candidates and the electors, or when they have little knowledge of democratic institutions, or when large segments of the potential electors are excluded from voting for one reason or another. Most of the Palestinians and large segments of the Iraqis have been excluded.

It would be great if forced elections and imposed democracies lead to peace and stability under all circumstances. Unfortunately history tells a different story. The imposed democracy in Haiti has been an abject failure. The showcase democracy of Afghanistan is a forgery: it tells little about political life outside the capital city, Kabul, and even less about the quality of life in the country in the aftermath of the elections. The elections in Pakistan and Iran, and their elected governments are good illustrations of what a false democracy entails: oppression, corruption, gender discrimination, and little improvement in the quality of life for the people.

The problems facing Palestine and Iraq are similar in some ways and different in others. One similarity is that the occupation forces in both tend to seek peace and stability in a reverse order of logic. They ignore the causes and seek to contain the effects. "Terrorism" and "Insurgency" are effects, not causes. Remove the causes and the effects will vanish. The cause for both is foreign occupation. If Israel ends the occupation, or at least sets a reasonable timetable for ending the occupation, removing the settlements, and acknowledging the pre-June 1967 boundaries as legitimate boundaries between it and Palestine, there would be no reason or excuse for the Palestinians to fight the Israelis. If the US withdraws its forces or sets a reasonable timetable for total withdrawal, it would remove the causes for insurgency.

However, there are significant differences between the two situations. The Israelis are greedy for Palestinian land and will use any excuse to grab all they can before ending the occupation, and time has been on their side. Therefore, they have made security of the occupier a prerequisite for even discussing peace and resolution of the conflict. That, of course, has slowed down the pace toward a negotiated settlement, in contradiction to the declarations in favor of peace stability. The US and its allies may also be greedy for the cheap oil of Iraq, even though they know that regardless of the regime in power, Iraq has to sell its oil on the international market. Apparently the US wants to make sure that Iraq remains weak and disunited and thus unable to be a strong and independent country in the Middle East region. The US policy has led to religious and ethnic divisiveness within the country. The Shi'a-Sunni division is largely an invention of the foreign powers, Britain and the US. Iraq had a secular government for a long time, and it was on the road to economic and social development, even under Saddam Hussein. The situation changed when Saddam Hussein, with implicit and explicit help from the US waged his war against the Shi'a regime of Khomeini in 1980. And that is when Iraq's downhill course started. The present US administration has aggravated the schism between ethnic and secular groups by applying a sort of quota to appointments in government based on ethnic and religious affiliation, instead of promoting merit and secularism as bases of governance and political and social

cooperation. Since then the media have made it almost a rule to report on every event as if it related to religious division and ethnic separatism. The delaying tactic has been working!

The road to peace and stability is easy to recognize. Remove the cause of the conflict (occupation) and the conflict and its effects (violence) will evaporate. Well-specified and reasonable steps can do this so that the perpetrators of violent resistance to occupation will have enough hope that the end of violence will lead to freedom, independence, and sovereignty. Failing to take such steps, the occupiers of Palestine and Iraq will be only delaying their inevitable withdrawal. They will be continuing to inflict suffering on the occupied people, and to pay a heavy price with the blood of their own citizens. Let us hope that Israel and the US will face the facts and take the right steps to end the occupation and its related suffering.

## **DOES IRAN NEED NUCLEAR WEAPONS?**

**March 2005**

Can Iran afford to have nuclear weapons, and can it afford not to have nuclear weapons? The answer to both questions is YES. Iran can afford both. The Iranian authorities and people have the luxury of choosing to go nuclear or not. Iran has the capital to invest in nuclear arms production; it has the knowhow, whether domestic or imported; and it can stand external pressures against producing nuclear weapons. Iran is large in area and population. It occupies a strategic position in world affairs, especially in the Islamic world. And it can withstand international sanctions if imposed on it, although such measures are most unlikely. It is also unlikely that force will be used to prevent Iran from continuing with its nuclear program, which it claims to be for peaceful uses only. To attack Iran's nuclear facilities will not only provoke war, but it could also unleash clouds of radiation far beyond the targets and the borders of Iran. No responsible government would opt to initiate such a horrible action. If Iran's nuclear installations were to be destroyed by outside forces, there is nothing to prevent retaliation with biological and chemical weapons, which most countries have and are easy to deliver. Even though biological and chemical weapons may not be as destructive as nuclear weapons, they can cause massive destruction. They can also get out of control, especially in the Middle East region, where preventive and reactive preparations are relatively scarce and inadequate. It is, therefore, within Iran's economic, political, and international capabilities to consummate the production of nuclear weapons, even in the face of external pressures to refrain from doing so.

On the other hand, Iran can afford not to have nuclear weapons. It does not need such weapons, first for it is not being threatened. Second, the international watch offers a certain degree of security against the use of such weapons by any country against another. Furthermore, Iran is unlikely to use such weapons even if it has them, because of both international safeguards and the risk of its own annihilation in response. Finally, because of its limited scientific and technical production capabilities, it is unlikely that Iran will become a major producer and exporter of nuclear material and weapons. Hence, there is little economic incentive for it to take the risk and bear the costs of nuclear arms programs.

Iran can choose to produce or not to produce nuclear weapons. Its decision may be based on ideological or doctrinal grounds, or on rational analytical bases. Iran may decide to go forward with a nuclear arms program in order to join the nuclear club for prestige and power purposes, even though such achievements are hollow, given that no country can use such weapons against others and be safe. There is always the risk of a nuclear response or the use of other weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Or Iran may also decide to have an "Islamic" nuclear bomb, but that honor has already been acquired

by Pakistan, with no evident benefits to it or to the Islamic world, but with major costs to its economy and the welfare of its peoples.

Iran, however, may refrain from continuing its nuclear program on the basis of ideology and doctrine. It may do so to comply with its own commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Or it may do so to promote the idea of a nuclear free Middle East. Iran may also be sincere in claiming that its nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes and open its nuclear projects to international inspection to prove its honesty and commitment to non-proliferation.

Most probably Iran will base its decision on rational analysis of the costs and benefits of having or not having a nuclear program. For example, it may proceed with the nuclear program on the assumption that it is possible to produce cheaper energy than by other means. That, however, is unlikely. Iran has a relatively large reservoir of oil. It also has fairly abundant hydro and wind power to produce energy. Therefore, it would be economically irrational to resort to nuclear energy before it has exploited the less expensive sources of energy at its disposal. The costs of a nuclear program would be even higher if it is intended to produce weapons. For example, the opportunity cost of investing in nuclear weapons is bound to be relatively high, in view of the scarcity of capital and the high priority accorded to investment in education, health, and economic development in Iran. Nuclear projects are capital intensive and will generate little demand for labor, at a time when Iran is suffering from high rates of unemployment. Another cost of developing and producing nuclear weapons will be the relatively high expense of maintaining and securing the nuclear material and the weapons that are stockpiled. Finally, Iran may face additional high costs if it proceeds with its nuclear program because of the lost economic and business opportunities if sanctions were to be imposed on it. No doubt it will lose trade, tourism, access to technology, and possibly curtailment of its oil export market.

By contrast, if Iran were to refrain from the production of nuclear weapons, many of the potential costs would be turned into benefits. Investment of the freed capital in education, health, and economic development will be much more rewarding in productivity, employment, and equality of income distribution. Savings will also accrue by not having to spend on the maintenance and security of the nuclear facilities and material. Furthermore, by respecting the international treaty against proliferation, it would enhance its international standing, promote its trade and development, and encourage technology transfer. It may also gain security through the international watch against the production and use of such weapons.

Which way will Iran go? That will depend in part on whether ideology or rational analysis will guide the decision. If Iran wants to develop its economy, advance its technology, and raise the standard of living of its people, it has no choice but to apply rational analysis. In that case, it would certainly refrain from wasting physical and human capital on the non-viable nuclear weapons projects. It would cooperate with the international community to advance non-proliferation compliance, and thus limit the risks inherent in the enlargement of the number of nuclear countries around the world. Hopefully Iran will make the basic needs and interests of its people the focus of its decision to have or not to have nuclear weapons.

**WINDS OF CHANGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
WHICH WAY DO THEY BLOW?  
April 2005**

Many observers seem convinced that the seeds of democracy in the Middle East (ME) are germinating, maybe slowly, but steadily. They point to the elections in Iraq and the West Bank and Gaza as models of democracy under abnormal circumstances. They relate stories of the marches in Lebanon, which forced a prime minister to resign, with evident instability as the harvest. Syria has submitted to the UN Resolution 1559 and to United States (US) and European pressures and decided to withdraw from Lebanon, probably by the end of this month. President Mubarak of Egypt has directed the Parliament to amend the laws of the country to allow for multiple nominations for the presidency. Saudi Arabia has started the process to elect half of the members of the local councils. The other half would still be appointed. The electors and the elected will all be men. The election process is in three phases, according to region. For Saudi Arabia and in spite of their limitations, these elections may be considered a radical move toward democracy. One may be bold enough to describe these dynamics in the ME as a new political economy. That, however, would be premature and misleading. The elections in Iraq and in Palestine were conducted under the watchful eyes of foreign occupiers and armies of international monitors. Some voters were proud to display their purple colored forefingers to show that they had voted, forgetting that the finger dip in indelible ink was a sign of distrust of the voters and their leaders, who might be tempted to cast multiple votes illegally. So far the elected assembly in Iraq is struggling to form a government. Chairman Mahmoud Abbas of Palestine has had to replace his first proposed cabinet because it could not muster a vote of confidence, even though a large majority of the voters voted for him. Arab leaders in most Arab countries have been making statements regarding economic and political reform in the direction of democracy, though little concrete action has taken place. While such changes should be welcome if they occur, their viability and significance at this time can be easily overestimated. The so-called democratic elections and the governments created as a result are still based largely on tribal, clannish, religious, or ethnic affiliations. The voters are told whom and what to vote for by the sheik of the tribe, the elder of the clan, or the religious and traditional leaders. Therefore, the democracy thus created tends to be built on sand and could crumble easily if the wind blows in a different direction.

The reasons for the fragility of these new democracies are easy to identify. First, the leaders in the seats of power, except in Israel, are reluctant to allow for democratic institutions that could cost them their power positions. Second, and equally important, no country in the region, except Israel, provides for any education for democracy in its curricula, let alone any encouragement for training and the practice of democracy in the

home or the school. Third, religion is still the most important socio-political force that dominates the daily life of the people in the region. Thus the individual does not have the freedom to vote or express his/her views according to the merits or logical analysis of the situation. Fourth, the majority of the people in the ME are little qualified and hardly ready to adopt and follow democratic institutions as commonly understood by the national and international promoters of democracy. This is mainly because illiteracy is still widespread and the flow of information regarding nominees and issues is quite limited. Even where literacy and the flow of information are no longer a handicap, as among the Arabs of Israel, tradition is still a major determinant of political behavior. Voters cast their votes in favor of family (or clan) members, religious affiliation, or the highest material benefit they expect, rather than in favor of community or country.

If the ME countries are not yet ready for political reform and democracy, why do the leaders make gestures in that direction? Why are civic groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) clamoring for reform and democracy? The answers are simple. The leaders are under intense pressure by the United States and its allies to move toward democracy. Since the US and allies invaded Iraq, fear has been widespread in the ME countries of what might happen if they do not do something positive in response to the pressure. Given their predicament, ME leaders will probably move as slowly as possible, or just enough to reduce the internal and external pressures they face. This strategy may work in their favor for a long time, or as long as they can offer the US and its allies special benefits or interests in the region. For example, countries with abundant oil and natural gas will face less pressure than others, even as they continue to suppress individual freedom and freedom of expression. Leaders who are friends of the US will probably fare as well, even as they act in a most authoritarian way. Similarly, leaders who are critical for the stability of the region will face symbolic pressure, even though they may be ruling by military force and martial laws. However, all these leaders will sooner or later have their turn of facing intense pressure for reform, so long as the US continues to pursue its doctrine of spreading democracy to save the world by one means or another.

The ME countries do not have to be in this disturbing predicament. They can avoid instability and unwanted pressures by pre-empting the need for change, taking the initiative to bring about change, and planning the change as befits the needs and capabilities of each individual country. They can do all this by acting in different areas at the same time. For example, it is imperative to prepare for political reform and democracy by implementing universal education to obliterate illiteracy within a generation or less. It is also imperative for them to promote education for democracy, individual freedom, and freedom of expression, first in the home, and in the schools, beginning with elementary education.

The governments and leaders of the ME should be able to anticipate the political and economic need for reform and act on it before they face unwanted pressures. They can begin by formulating plans for the proposed changes, with details and a timetable for their execution. To be preventive of instability, such plans should be published, with clear understanding of the pace and phases of the expected changes, the way Saudi Arabia has done with its local council elections. Finally, the authorities would save themselves and their countries a lot of trouble by allowing and encouraging groups and

organizations to help in the process of change by experimenting with the suggested changes, and by setting an example of peaceful adaptation to the new institutions.

So far the ME leaders have tended to be slow in taking action on strategic and international issues that may affect the status quo, often to their own disadvantage. They have also tended to react to proposals for change, rather than initiate action on their own. Their reactions have tended to vary according to the degree of pressure or threat they face. Yet, the ME leaders could transform the field to their advantage by taking the initiative for change, by preparing and publishing a plan of action, and by co-opting groups and associations to experiment with the proposed changes. By taking these steps, rather than waiting for and submitting to unwanted pressures, the leaders can also define the changes and institutions they plan for, rather than adopt definitions established by the pressure groups and countries. Their own concepts of reform, democracy, and individual freedom will then be their guide for the future.

**ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT '04**  
**A CALL FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY**  
**May 2005**

The Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) '04 is significant in a number of ways. The authors and advisors are all Arabs under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The AHDR '04 is particularly important because it calls for freedom in the Arab world, popular participation in governance, and government by representation, all of which would be radical departures from the prevalent conditions. This call for freedom comes at a time, not coincidentally, when the United States (US) has been putting pressure on the Middle East countries to introduce political and economic reform toward Western-type democracy. It is also not coincidental that the authors of the report and their advisors tend to be active for or sympathetic toward human rights and democracy in their homeland.

The report is blunt in detailing violations of human rights in the Arab countries, but it also points out the few improvements that have taken place in recent years. It explores the factors that may have allowed or promoted such violations, at a time when most Arab people apparently have a suppressed thirst for freedom and democracy. The authors urge the Arab governments to amend their constitutions and revise their laws that may have encouraged violation or obstructed reform and freedom. The report concludes by warning that failing to introduce reform would lead to “disastrous consequences.”

According to the AHDR '04 freedom means “civil and political freedom of the individual, including from oppression [as well as] the liberation of the individual from all factors that are inconsistent with human rights, such as hunger, disease, ignorance, poverty, and fear.” These freedoms require good governments, which do not exist in the Arab world. On the contrary, those governments tend to be authoritarian, always ready to invoke emergency laws and restrict freedom of expression, especially freedom of the media. The individual is denied basic rights to freedom. Some individuals are excluded from citizenship by administrative decisions. Women and minorities are denied equal rights.

These violations of human rights and restrictions on freedom are due in part to social, legal and cultural structures built into the Arab society. For example, political parties and institutions tend to place human rights and freedoms at a low place on their priority lists. In some cases politicians argue that freedom and democracy could lead to undesirable regimes. Religion is used as an instrument of “perpetrate tyranny.” The constitutions of the Arab countries fail to protect human rights adequately, and when they

can, on paper, the authorities circumscribe them by laws and decrees that dilute their power to protect the individual and the group.

These anti-freedom factors are bolstered by social and cultural structures that prepare the individual for perpetual limited human rights. “Starting with the child’s upbringing within the family, passing through educational institutions, the world of work and societal formation, and ending with politics, both internal and external—each link in the chain takes its portion of freedom from the individual and delivers her or him to the next, which in turn, steals a further share.” The tribe or clan culture limits the child’s freedom at home. The schools limit freedom by relying on dictation and subservience or blind obedience and conformity. The same applies in the work environment, especially in the hierarchical civil service. And when the individual faces the political arena, he/she is already programmed to accept limitations on his/her freedom and submit to the authoritarian regime that exists. Finally the external calls for reform and globalization, which tend to threaten the power of the regime and therefore discourage that regime from taking steps to reduce its sovereignty and authority.

All this leads to the conclusion that reform toward freedom and democracy in the Arab world is not only desired by the people, but also indispensable to avoid disaster. The AHDR visualizes three possible scenarios for the future. First, the Arab governments may choose to do nothing and hang on to the status quo, in which case they may face “disastrous consequences.” Second, the Arab governments may introduce full reform, in which case they will promote “*Izdihar*” or a blossoming of freedom, democracy, and human rights, and presumably prosperity. However, this scenario is regarded as too ideal to be realistic at this time. The third and recommended scenario is for the Arab governments to adopt a “half-way house” approach or piecemeal reform, as suggested by “external forces,” thus winning support of those external forces to initiate and implement internal reform.

The AHDR is timely in bringing to the fore explicitly and in detail the issue of human rights and individual freedom in the Arab world. The treatment of this issue, however, tends to be normative, with little to say about how to realize the goals that are recommended, other than to warn the Arab governments against a presumably impending disaster. Nor is there any evidence that a full reform would create *Izdihar*; it has not happened anywhere else so far. Finally, the halfway house scenario implies accepting and “imposing” a foreign program, something the Arab governments and people have been resisting.

The authors of the AHDR are asking the Arab governments, which are responsible for the violations of human rights, to take the initiative, grant freedom, and declare democracy from above, with hardly any preparation for the new relations between the governing and the governed. They expect those governments to do so to avoid undesirable consequences, although such consequences are neither imminent nor likely, given the way people have been programmed to obey, conform, and avoid trouble. The AHDR says little on how to break the acculturation “chain” that deprives the individual of his/her freedom. Will the Arab student, the worker, and the politician become free and democratic just by the stroke of the President’s pen? Will the AHDR be made available to schools and civic institutions, and will the students and the people at large be encouraged or allowed to experiment with democracy and freedom in their daily life? Will they be familiar with the citizen’s rights and obligations in a free and

democratic society? It would be a great service to the cause of freedom and human rights if the AHDR would be made available to all students, free of charge. It would be great if teachers and students were encouraged to study and experiment with democratic debates, sharing governance, and free expression of their thoughts and ideas. Most important of all, it would be great to call for the implementation of universal education, in quantity and quality, in order to eradicate illiteracy, which still plagues most Arab countries. Finally, it would be great if the Arab experts responsible for the report would recommend steps and measures of reform that fit the Arab society and culture, in order to allow freedom and democracy to grow and evolve from below, as indigenous values and patterns of behavior of the people and the nation.

### **WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM IN JORDAN! June 2005**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) was assembled by the Dead Sea in Jordan to explore the state of the regional economies, within a worldwide perspective. The participants, from around the world, included political leaders, business executives, foundation presidents, academicians, artists, and, of course, journalists. For three days, May 20-22, they hammered an agenda in preparation for a year. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) were the general focus of the meetings and workshops. The discussions addressed various topics, such as culture and reform, Arab countries' competitiveness, corruption, and modernization without Westernization. They touched on peace and prosperity in the region. They also heard update reports on Iraq, infrastructures, and other topics that had been addressed in previous meetings. The MENA representatives were showered with advice on what would be good for them if they were to live in peace and improve the quality of life in their countries. The MENA leaders did not shy away from offering their own advice on progress and stability. Before the delegates went home, many visited the famous shrines, as gestures of their ecumenical tendencies; others stopped over in neighboring countries to reinforce their ties with them, or to deliver their good will advice in person.

The people of Jordan must have been excited to host the WEF, or at least the leaders were. MENA participants in particular must have felt proud and honored to tell their own stories to the grand audience of the Forum, who had come from near and far to hear them, in exchange for their own views and suggestions. A major question now is what did the economies and people of the MENA region gain or lose from the WEF? What stayed with them after all the presentations and discussions were over?

The political and business leaders probably managed to revive and strengthen old relationships and cement new ones with international counterparts. Some may have concluded business deals or clarified viewpoints to promote international trade and understanding. And some may have succeeded in drawing attention to the basic problems plaguing MENA countries, as they themselves see them. This is all clear and helpful from a good will and international relations standpoint, but there is little evidence that any tangible benefits have been realized, or are likely to be realized as a result. There is little evidence either that the Forum discovered new problems or offered new ideas for dealing with the known economic problems, such as unemployment, underdevelopment, backward technology, or labor productivity and income. In fact there

was little economics at the Economic Forum, unless one considers the campaign to promote globalization, free trade, and competition as main topics of economics. Even in those areas, there was little that has not been covered in the literature already stacked on the shelves of libraries, or on the new Internet medium: the WEB.

To illustrate, there was a discussion of microfinance as a way of dealing with poverty, but this is hardly new, nor is it a viable way to lift the region out of poverty. Microfinance may have solved problems in a few villages in Asia and Africa for individual families, but it has not been and cannot be an engine of growth and development, or the mechanism to lift the region out of poverty. There was talk of foreign investment, but only to emphasize the apparent risks inherent in the intra-regional conflicts that discourage foreign investment. Even the discussion of corruption offered little in the way of a cure. Probably the closest to an economic topic was the discussion of trade and tourism and their potential role in sustainable economic growth. Yet, it is not certain that trade and tourism can be engines of growth when raw material is the main export commodity and imports are mostly consumer items to meet the demand by the rich and the tourists.

This is not to undermine the significance of gatherings such as the WEF. In fact the WEF and similar gatherings can be major vehicles to promote economic development and growth, overcome poverty, raise labor productivity, bring in new technologies, and guide development policy implementation. Those are the main areas in which the developed countries can help the MENA countries. Yet, there was little discussion or focus on any of these topics. Pressure for political reform and globalization can hardly improve the quality of human capital, nor can it raise labor productivity and income. Normative statements of what ought to be in business, trade, or governance sound good when they are broadcasted, but they are of little help when they fail to show how to realize what ought to be realized. Nor can they be helpful when they fail to show how the necessary conditions and resources for realizing the desired objectives can be secured. Probably the most promising topic of the Forum was the feasibility study of connecting the Red Sea with the Dead Sea, both to save the Dead Sea and to secure usable water, which is badly need in the area.

There is little doubt that the WEF would be more influential were it to focus more on economics and less on politics, given its ECONOMIC title. And it would be more helpful if it were to concentrate a little more on implementation of economic policies that have been tested, instead of reiterating the virtues of economic and political reforms. For instance: how to overcome the risks and attract direct foreign investment to the MENA region; how to guarantee that free trade and globalization will advance technology transfer and bring the countries lagging behind in competitiveness closer to the level of their international competitors; and how to make economic reform a vehicle to change the underdeveloped economic structure of the MENA countries into a developed industrial region able to absorb its increasing population, provide employment, and raise the quality of life for the people through increasing the gross domestic product in each and every country in the region. It is ironic that the MENA representatives at the Forum, who are capable of advancing economic development in their countries, seem to prefer talking about change rather than enacting it.

It is possible that the organizers of the WEF in Jordan will learn from congregating in the region what the MENA countries need most to get out of the pit of

poverty and underdevelopment, and make that topic the focus of the next meeting. However, one lesson to be learned from the WEF is clear: economic and political advances can at best be only enhanced from the outside. Real changes in the economic structure and significant progress in development and growth can be initiated and sustained only by domestic forces and the people who know what ails the region and how to free themselves from those ailments.

## **AN ARC FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE**

### **July 2005**

A team of researchers at the RAND Corporation has come up with an ingenious way to integrate the two parts of Palestine, the West Bank and Gaza, and maximize the probability of success of a State of Palestine. The authors have addressed the issue of success in a three-volume set, full of data, analysis, and recommendations for economic and political viability of an Independent sovereign State of Palestine, side by side with Israel. The outlined preconditions for success are considered necessary, even though they may be insufficient.

The main volume, *BUILDING FOR A SUCCESSFUL PALESTINIAN STATE*, deals with major dimensions of the state, economic, political, social, and international. In 407 pages we learn what it takes to create a legitimate government, a sound system of education, an adequate health network, and a viable economy, capable of absorbing the expected large increase in population. The analysis takes into consideration the predictable rise in population, the expected pressure for housing, utilities, and other infrastructures, and the demand for jobs to cope with the growing labor force. The study is based on the best available data. Even so, the conclusions are tentative and the study serves more as a model for success rather than as a plan. Eventually the assumptions may have to be revised, the data updated, and the Palestinians will have their say in what works for them.

Volume two, *THE ARC. A FORMAL STRUCTURE FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE*, proposes and displays the ARC concept of building an urban integrated Palestine, capable of attaining and sustaining economic and political viability. The proposed urban community will evolve in the shape of an arc from north to south, taking into consideration the ability to sustain a fairly high population density and the need to create an efficient network of transportation. The ARC structure includes a railway line from Jenin all the way to Hebron and on to Gaza, an anticipated airport, and a seaport. Along the way the railway line connects by road transportation with all the other cities: Tubas, Tulkarm, Nablus, Qalqilya, Salfit, Ramallah, Jericho, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem. The ARC includes a corridor through Israel to connect the West Bank with Gaza. In addition to the railway line, the ARC will house a national water carrier, energy generation and transmission, telecommunication lines, and a national linear green park. The rail station in each city will be outside the historic urban center, thus allowing for the development of new urban communities, housing, shopping, and industry, all connected

by road transportation with the historic centers. The proposed rail system may eventually be extended to Tell Aviv, Haifa, Beirut, and Damascus in the north, and to Cairo in the south. The cost estimates of the ARC are about \$8.4 billion. This pays for the rails and rail station, transit boulevards, station boulevards, 100,000 housing units, and toll roads beside the rail line. However, the estimated costs for all the economic and political infrastructures proposed by the study come to about \$33 billion during the first decade, and another \$17 billion in the next four years. Projected International contributions, comparable to the level of assistance for Bosnia, come to \$31.1 billion with the rest to be invested domestically.

The third volume, *HELPING A PALESTINIAN STATE SUCCEED. KEY FINDINGS*, is a concise, clear summary of the other two volumes. The summary is a good eye opener and a strong invitation for the reader to visit the other two volumes.

This RAND complex study is comprehensive, timely, and realistic. It should serve as a model for planning the development of the State of Palestine, even if most of the details will have to be continually revised and updated. The ARC proposal, however, has a few complications of its own. First, there is little evidence that the Palestinians had much input in the formulation of the assumptions or the expectations. The references cited for the ARC are few and outdated, and do not reflect the economic, political, and social realities on the ground. To illustrate, the proposed ARC is like a piece of art, with colored charts, and green gardens. The New York Times devoted more than two pages to it in its Art and Leisure section. Would such an ultra modern, sophisticated complex structure be appropriate for the impoverished returning Palestinians?

Second, the ARC proposal concentrates on the existing urban and new urban centers, but what about all the villages and rural communities of Palestine, and how do they fit in this development process? An important question relates to land tenure and the appropriation of the space for the ARC. Will a budding state be in a position to appropriate such land without endangering its own legitimacy?

Third, the study assumes continued dependence of the Palestinians on employment in Israel. To what degree will such dependence undermine the independence and sovereignty of the state?

Fourth, while the study is said to be non-political, it does suggest that Jewish settlements in the West Bank will eventually have to be integrated in the ARC, contrary to the declared position of the Palestinians on the status of settlements.

Fifth, the study tends to put much emphasis on guaranteed security to assure success of the state. Yet, one would expect that in the framework of a peace agreement there would be less, not more, emphasis on security needs. As to internal law and order, that is a matter of respect for the law and social contract, which can be promoted only by education and practice, rather than by armed forces and control.

Finally, the fact that five major infrastructures are housed together within the linear ARC is bound to make the ARC a high risk target. Any act of sabotage could cripple all state operations. It is possible that an alarm system and preventive measures would be built in the structure. However, it is not evident that enough attention is directed to this problem.

These comments should not undermine the significance of the analysis and the ARC proposal. Adaptation and implementation are dynamic processes and it is up to the Palestinians to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge they are presented with.

However, the major contribution of the study, from my standpoint, is to remind the Palestinians of the need for contingency plans for the development of a viable state of their own. As far as can be ascertained, there has been little work in that area, not since Haim Darin-Drabkin and I published our book: *THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR PALESTINE*, in 1978. It may be that the Palestinian experts are wary of making assumptions on boundaries of the state, the return of refugees, and other sensitive issues and, therefore, they hesitate in preparing comprehensive plans for the state. Or they may believe that the market will guide the development of the state, even though the conditions surrounding the creation of a state of Palestine are not normal enough for the market to be dependable. Tentative contingency plans, based on different scenarios, are imperative to avoid surprises, guide development, and maximize the probability of success. The RAND study is a great reminder of the importance of being prepared to act when the time comes for the Palestinians to declare the creation of their state.

**THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES CAN AND SHOULD WITHDRAW  
FROM IRAQ: SOONER RATHER THAN LATER**

**August 2005**

There are several reasons why the US can and should withdraw from Iraq in the immediate, not the distant, nor the near future. This does not mean that the US should give up on its unfulfilled “legitimate” objectives of reconstructing and rehabilitating the country it damaged in the war. There are other and more acceptable ways than military occupation to achieve those objectives. Probably the most important argument for immediate withdrawal is that the two major objectives of the war and occupation have been fulfilled: Saddam Hussein is out, and the weapons of mass destruction (WMD), (falsely) assumed to exist in Iraq, have been proven otherwise. However, the US has expanded its objectives to include political stabilization, defeating the insurgents, fighting terrorism, reconstructing the economy, empowering the Iraqi forces to defend the country, and establishing democracy in Iraq and the Middle East. While these may sound like noble objectives, they are not Iraqi objectives, but those of an occupier. Furthermore, some of those objectives cannot be achieved by force or occupation. They have to be adopted and promoted from within, especially political stability and democracy. Some objectives can be fulfilled only by withdrawal of the foreign forces, thereby removing the motives for insurgency. The insurgents are fighting against occupation. End the occupation and the insurgents will have no reason to fight. Other objectives are an invention of the US such as empowering the Iraqis to defend themselves, but against whom? Or is it to empower one segment of the population to dominate the others? Finally, some objectives are best fulfilled by the Iraqi people themselves, including economic and social reconstruction. The Iraqis have the human capital, they need jobs, and they can do the work at lower costs than those exorbitant wages paid to foreigners.

The war and the occupation of Iraq have incurred enormous costs in life and material, both to Iraqis and to the American people and economy. The US forces have suffered about 1,800 deaths and 14,000 injuries. The US has allocated and presumably spent about \$200 billion and the end is not yet in view. The Iraqis have suffered much more. Though no reliable data are available, estimates of the dead in Iraq range from 25,000 to 100,000. The injured are many times that number. Millions have been dislocated. Towns and villages have been destroyed, and the infrastructure has been turned into rubble. Finally, democracy in Iraq, the dream of the US administration, has assumed a peculiar interpretation: it has led to acknowledging and perpetuating religious

and ethnic schism, and apparently empowering Shiite religious leaders to create a theocracy in the country.

The US often lumps insurgency in Iraq with terrorism by Islamic extremists, ignoring the different causes and motives of the two groups. The insurgents are fighting to end occupation and secure Iraq's freedom. The terrorists, al Qaeda and other extremists, are rebelling against Western culture and penetration in Islamic countries, and against Islamic regimes friendly to the West. Therefore, continuing the occupation of Iraq will have little impact in fighting terrorism. On the other hand, withdrawal from Iraq may mean the end of insurgency by removing its causes.

There are important historical arguments for withdrawal from Iraq. The French in Indo-China (Vietnam) and in Algeria, and the Israelis in Lebanon and now in Gaza, have found that occupation does not pay and cannot last. Its prolongation leads to mounting costs, deeper hatreds, and complications in restoring peace and stability in the future. Pierre Mendes-France discovered that fact and ended the occupation of Indo-China. And so did Charles De Gaulle in Algeria. Ehud Barak was also quick to leave South Lebanon, and now Ariel Sharon is committed to withdraw Israeli forces from Gaza and end the occupation there. Though the French and the Israelis suffered from occupation, they still managed to control the timing and the pace of withdrawal from the occupied territories. By contrast, the US waited too long in Vietnam. When its human losses became unbearable, it recognized that it could not win and must withdraw. But now the US can determine the time and pace of withdrawal from Iraq. It can also make sure that its legitimate objectives will not be abandoned. It can pursue those objectives by transferring the responsibility to the United Nations and to the Arab League, but only as peacekeepers, not as peacemakers. The United Nations and the Arab League can help to ensure law and order but will not pursue insurgents, demolish villages, or take sides in favor of one faction against another.

Withdrawing of the US forces and ending the occupation of Iraq would have an enormous effect on the economy of Iraq, and of the US. The military costs will be reduced to a minimum, and the savings may be redirected to productive investment. Attention will also be redirected toward economic and social reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq. The US can channel aid to Iraq through the United Nations. The Iraqis will then have a chance to reconstruct and develop their economy at a pace commensurate with their capacities and expectations, rather than have the agents of globalization force themselves on Iraq to remake it in the Western image, whether the Iraqis want it so or not.

The US will not win against the insurgents because occupation cannot win. But the US can remove the cause of insurgency by withdrawing and thus demolish the rationale for insurgency. Withdrawal will allow the Iraqi people to manage their own affairs, put an end to the falsified image of democracy, and let the Iraqis face the future as independent and free people regardless of the hardships that may stand in the way.

The Iraqi people have been abused, first by their own leaders, and then by foreign forces driven by imperial and economic ambitions. The Iraqis deserve better. They deserve to rebuild their own home and country in their own way. The US can help, probably more by transferring the responsibility to the United Nations and the Arab League than by continuing the occupation, wasting resources, and suffering and incurring losses on itself and on Iraq in the process. By withdrawing now, the US will gain respect

and cooperation by the Iraqis and other Middle East people, and will cut costs and save lives of all parties concerned. Only then will the US be a winner, and only then will security, stability, and genuine democracy have a chance in the new Iraq and around it.

**ISRAEL'S EVACUATION OF SETTLEMENTS:  
HISTORIC AND ILLUSTRATIVE  
September 2005**

The evacuation of the settlements in Gaza and of some in the West Bank by the Israeli government has been described as historic, which it is, being the first time Israel returns occupied land to the Palestinians. The evacuation, however, has been significant and illustrative of Israeli and Palestinian behaviors.

On the Israeli side, first, the evacuation has shown that the government can enforce its democratically reached decisions on the Jewish population without resorting to deadly force. Patience, explanation, and generous benefits go a long way toward enforcing painful decisions, except against the ideologues and the disrespectful of the democratic decisions.

Second, the evacuation by lawful means shows that the "facts on the ground" are removable: the construction of settlements on occupied land does not perpetuate the occupation. In this sense, even the "security wall" Israel has been erecting does not necessarily establish permanent borders with Palestine, or perpetuate its own existence.

Third, the evacuation has demonstrated the high level of discipline, patience, gentleness, and humane behavior the Israeli military and police are capable of pursuing while implementing government policies. They took time to explain, cajole, suffer insults, and be targets of raw eggs, oil, and even acid and still refrain from using harmful means against their Jewish abusers. This illustrates clearly that Israeli military and police cruelty against non-Jews is a policy decision by the government.

Fourth, the evacuation of settlements in Gaza indicates that the government of Israel has recognized that the policy of occupation is wrong, costly, and unsustainable. The government of Israel, nevertheless, by its unilateral action, has been able to choose the time, the pace, and the extent and terms of its withdrawal from Gaza.

Finally, the government of Israel, having made its decision to evacuate, was fully prepared and ready to minimize the harm done to the evacuated settlers. It made sure that alternative accommodations are available, generous compensation will be provided, and continued community relations among the evacuated settlers will be facilitated. In a way the decision for and the process of evacuation have shown Israeli democracy (among the Jews) at its best and can be a model for others to emulate.

Yet, by contrast, the same admirable behavior of the Israeli government and the military and police highlights the cruelty of those authorities in dealing with non-Jewish

citizens of Israel and with non-combatant Palestinians in the occupied territories. The eviction of Palestinians and the demolition of their homes, the uprooting of their trees, and the appropriation of their land are always done in haste, most frequently by military orders, with no explanations, generous compensation, or any expression of sympathy for the pain and suffering of the innocent victims of these policies. To illustrate, Israel has just announced that it will appropriate more Arab land around Jerusalem to make room for the security wall. It is estimated that by the time the security wall is finished, it will have appropriated 8% of the West Bank. Will Israel assure contiguity and continuity between the Arabs of East Jerusalem and the West Bank or the future State of Palestine? Will it be generous or at least reasonable in offering compensation to the victims of land expropriation? Will it offer equal territory to the Palestinians in exchange for the loss they are bound to suffer?

There is an irony in all this: even the international media, especially in the United States, have overplayed the role of sympathizer and admirer of the firmness but humane behavior of the military and police enforcing the evacuation. They also have commended the government for its courageous act of evacuation, though from lands it had illegally settled. In contrast, the media say little when Arabs are forcefully evicted, cruelly beaten, and heartlessly displaced with no alternative accommodations made available to them. Interestingly, the Israeli media report and comment more on these negative behaviors of the government of Israel than do the international media. Now, thanks to the evacuation of Gaza settlements, the disparity in reporting and commenting by the international media may have become too obvious to ignore.

The evacuation of Gaza settlements has also been illustrative of the behavior of the Palestinians. First, the Palestine National Authority (PA) has seen what could happen when action is unilateral, especially when taken by the strong, leaving the weak even weaker. The PA could not plan for the day after because it did not have enough information regarding the time, pace, or extent of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.

Second, because of the lack of information or having no role in the evacuation process, the PA could not tell its constituents what to expect and how to plan for it. In a way, this may be a good lesson for them to learn: to make sure that they play a role in any action by Israel affecting the Palestinian people, regardless of any compromise they may have to make to remain involved.

Third, the evacuation of settlements seems to have aroused strong jubilant emotions among the Palestinians, but also false claims of victory over the occupiers. Unfortunately because of their miserable life under occupation, any glimpse of hope appears like a flood of light in a dark tunnel. After the celebrations, they find themselves still strapped by continuing Israeli control, fighting among themselves to see who will fill the power vacuum created by Israel's withdrawal, and not as free as they had expected. The Palestinians, however, are right in hoping and expecting that the withdrawal from Gaza may be the first step toward full withdrawal from all the occupied territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state, side by side with Israel in peace and harmony.

The evacuation of settlements has also demonstrated a behavior common to both Arabs and Jews. Both have been willing, at least the extremists among them, to use their children against their opponent. The settlers exposed their children to implicit risk, and encouraged them to insult and abuse the soldiers, apparently confident that the soldiers will not harm Jewish children. By contrast, the Arabs had probably hoped that the

soldiers would not harm their children either. Yet, even when their children suffered harm at the hands of the soldiers they continued to expose them.

Finally, the Palestinians must have noted the civility and humaneness demonstrated by the military and police and the majority of the evacuees in dealing with each other. The military and police came unarmed. The evacuees surrendered their weapons upon leaving the settlements. And “six days of forced evacuation” ended with no casualties to speak of. It is that kind of behavior that has fascinated the world and gained sympathy for both the soldiers and the evacuees. While the Palestinians may learn something from the example of Israelis facing other Israelis in a crisis situation, Israel may also learn that civility and humaneness in treating the Arabs in Israel and the Palestinians in the occupied territories can be highly influential in changing the character of the conflict, enhancing security, and paving the way for peace and stability in the region.

## **NATURAL HURRICANES AND PEOPLE-MADE HURRICANES**

### **October 2005**

Hurricane Katrina has brought havoc to the Gulf Coast in Louisiana and Mississippi, far beyond what the people had imagined the effects to be. The effects of Hurricane Rita are yet to be assessed. Hence I shall focus on Katrina as a natural hurricane, in contrast to people-made hurricanes. The city of New Orleans has been flooded, blown over, and swept away. All the inhabitants have been dislocated. Hundreds of thousands of homes are beyond repair. Power, water, and other utilities have been put out of commission. All transportation has been made virtually impossible because of the high level of floodwater. Over one thousand people have been confirmed dead. Families have been separated, and the evacuated have been dispersed across the country. The tragedy has been colossal, by any standard of measurement, all in the course of a few days. Yet, no one can be blamed for it, except possibly those who decide to build below sea level.

While the tragedy has been horrendous, the response of the American people has been equally but positively monumental. Aid was on the way immediately, in physical and human capital, from private and public sources. Municipal, county, state, and federal agencies reacted with zeal and dedication, although, by American standards, the federal reaction has been less than adequate in quality and quantity. Even with all the resources mobilized, material and technical, New Orleans was still uninhabitable three weeks later. The desolation of the city has now been extended by the Rita hurricane.

Reflecting on hurricane Katrina and its overwhelming effects, a few questions loom large: 1) If one big hurricane overwhelmed our readiness to respond, how much more difficult it would be if more than one large city or coast line were hit at the same time, whether by nature or by trouble makers? 2) How would we fare if we did not have the wealth of resources ready at hand, that we actually do? 3) What if we did not have the stocks of food, water, blankets, medicine, generators, pumps, and trained people to take charge and activate these resources? 4) What if we did not have helicopters, a well-organized National Guard, or well trained police and military forces to come to the rescue?

Unfortunately it did not take long to imagine the consequences if a similar catastrophe were to hit us. In fact we do not need to imagine such situations at all, because we see the effect of the people-made hurricane we created in Iraq, which illustrates the problems faced when the above questions become a statement of reality.

This people-made Iraq hurricane may be identified as the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld (BCR) hurricane.

The BCR hurricane has been far more destructive than Katrina. Over one hundred thousand Iraqis have been killed, though the official estimate is closer to thirty thousand. Hundreds of thousands have been injured or maimed. Over two million people have been dislocated, most of them innocent people like the victims of Katrina. Several towns and cities have been demolished and are still largely in disrepair, over two years later. And, unlike the natural hurricanes, which subside after a short time, the BCR hurricane has continued in the form of foreign occupation, destruction, dislocation, disorganization, and social conflict.

While Katrina has inspired unity, sympathy, and cooperation in society, BCR has caused social degeneration and schism along political, ethnic, and religious lines. It has caused a retreat from secularism into confessionalism, or rule by religious leaders, in this case by proxy. It has eroded the freedoms women had realized and now it threatens to take them back to pre-medievalism. It has promoted international antagonism, in contrast to the international sympathy and offers of aid that Katrina inspired. Finally, BCR has led to insurgency against occupation and is threatening the country with civil war, or what might be described as ongoing after-hurricanes.

In contrast to the United States, Iraq does not have the resources to cope with the BCR effects, even if it were free to do so. In addition to poverty and technological backwardness, rehabilitation efforts are strangled by occupation and the counterforce it created: insurgency. Iraq does not have the stock of food, water, blankets, generators, water purifying equipment, or the means to deliver these essentials to where they are needed. Iraq has had to depend on the "kindness and generosity" of the occupiers, or the hurricane makers, to redeem its social viability and political stability. Yet both kindness and generosity are scarce and come only with humiliating, unsavory conditions, which the Iraqis can hardly accept or refuse.

The natural hurricane is virtually impossible to prevent, and it is difficult to predict its path, severity, or time of arrival. The only precaution the people can take is to stay out of its path and keep some of the essentials for survival in reserve. It is not so with people-made hurricanes. The United States did not have to invade Iraq; it did not have to remove Saddam Hussein, having already contained him and emasculated his power. It did not have to displace two million other people or send to their death tens of thousands of innocent bystanders. It did not have to cause havoc on the basis of pre-fabricated allegations, most of which have turned out to be false. One can only wonder how policy makers allow themselves to impose such calamities on others, especially when they themselves and their countries are not in any imminent danger. How can policy makers send their own young men and women to face death in the course of a hurricane of their own making?

The BCR hurricane will have a permanent legacy of terror and irrationality. It will be remembered as an attack on human and civil rights of innocent people, and as a generator of hatred and enmity for false excuses. It will also serve as a reminder of the tragic suffering and consequences of the Vietnam War, both to self and others. It will highlight a legacy of forgetfulness, refusal to learn from experience, and intellectual laziness, all of which preclude seeing anything other than what the policy makers want us to see. The cities of Falluja, Tikrit, Mosul, Tel Afar, Basra, and Baghdad will carry

the symbols of the BCR hurricane for decades to come. Even so, the policy makers will most likely continue to exercise their short and unattentive memory and proceed to plan the next hurricane they intend to generate. Let us hope that they wise up and learn that nature is harsh enough without their help. People-made hurricanes can and should be prevented.

**PRESIDENT BUSH AND DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST:  
CONTRADICTIONS AND CHAOS!  
November 2005**

The Bush administration has been worried: Hamas and Islamic Jihad might gain a foothold in the Palestinian legislature. To avoid such a “calamity,” the administration has been urging President Mahmoud Abbas to apply a litmus test to ensure that candidates for the coming election must have renounced “unlawful and non-democratic” methods. Such urging seems to have been an echo of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s threat that Israel would not help to facilitate elections if Hamas and Jihad were to participate. At first it seems benign or even healthy to bar from electing and being elected individuals who use unlawful and undemocratic methods to achieve their objectives. However, deeper contemplation of such action would uncover serious flaws in a policy that bars citizens from exercising their right to elect and be elected. Such a policy, at the behest of external influences, would mean acceptance and encouragement of foreign interference, disregard for the principles of democracy, hindrance of the process of peace and stability, and an incitement to civil war in Palestine.

First, it is a mistake for a foreign country to pressure the Palestinians to reform their political system, adopt democracy, and establish a government elected by the people, and then turn around and interfere in their attempts to do so. If the Palestinians need guidance in building democracy, expert help may be in order if requested. But it is of little help and may even be destructive to impose conditions on the electorate by outsiders and infringe on their rights. The Palestinians are familiar with the principles and practice of democracy, in part through education and the preaching of Western politicians and experts, and in part by observing how the Israelis practice their democracy. Israel does not set up a litmus test for its voters and candidates for office, nor does the US. Israeli extremists from left and right sit in the Knesset (Parliament), and so do ultra conservatives and liberals in the US Congress, and neither of both of these extremist groups has been asked to disarm as a pre-condition for electing and being elected. It is true that members of these groups rarely commit terror or violence against civilians, but that is because they are the occupiers and the IDF, (Israel Defense Forces), carry out the terror acts on their behalf.

Second, interfering in the Palestinian elections by urging the PNA to bar anybody from the elections itself is unlawful, and can lead to instability, given the large number of

Hamas and Jihad members who may be subject to exclusion. Excluding such large numbers would make a farce of the elections. It is ironic that the US is urging to bar Hamas from the elections just when Sharon has retreated and withdrawn his objections to the participation of Hamas. It is also ironic and hypocritical for the US to urge Sunni Muslims in Iraq, who are behind the violent insurgency, to participate fully in the elections, but object to the participation of Hamas and Jihad. The US knows that all these resistance groups direct their violence against the occupation, and use similar methods.

Third, probably to make its requests seem logical, the US bases the urging to bar Hamas and Jihad on a 1996 Palestinian law, which requires candidates to the parliament not to “commit or advocate racism” or “pursue the implementation of their aims by unlawful and non-democratic means.” But that law says nothing about resistance to foreign occupation. It is a national law that relates to behavior towards others and respect for the laws of the country, as would be expressed in the oath of office all elected officials and political appointees are expected to take. Nothing in the oath of office protects foreign occupation. On the contrary, the laws of the country call for freedom and liberty, not submission to occupation and oppression. This interpretation of the 1996 law is especially relevant in view of the fact that the PNA and the sitting government in Iraq are not recognized as sovereign powers, nor do they enjoy reciprocity agreements with the occupying countries in the treatment of their own citizens by those other countries.

Fourth, the US urging to bar Hamas and Jihad from the elections, unless they abandon violent resistance to occupation, is itself undemocratic. On one hand, democracy does not allow barring citizens from exercising their voting rights. On the other, the Palestinian people have not voted on such a measure, nor have they been consulted. Evidently, to avoid having “undesirable” Palestinians sit in Parliament, the US is ready to bend the rules and compromise the principles of democracy, at least in far away places, for example Palestine.

Fifth, the contradictions in the US approach to Palestinian democracy are evident in another way. On one hand the US wants Hamas and Jihad to disarm and become players in the politics of the country. On the other hand, it objects when President Abbas tries to co-opt those groups and integrate them into the political system. Once members of Hamas and Jihad are elected, they would have to take the oath of office, which precludes the use of unlawful and undemocratic means in pursuing their objectives. Thus, barring them from participation in the elections means preventing their co-optation and integration into the democratic system under construction. Furthermore, excluding those groups from the elections renders the parliament no longer representative of all factions of the people, which again is in contradiction with the principles of democracy. The US may have forgotten what happened when it supported the Algerian army in preventing Islamic winners in the election from assuming power in proportion to their winnings: civil war and the re-establishment of a military dictatorship, though dressed up as a democracy.

Sixth, the US administration and Israel do have a point in urging an end to terror or violence against civilians, and against Israel in general. But ending terror should apply to all parties and to all forms of terror, including suicide bombing, speeding car shooting, helicopter gunship assassinations, appropriation of land and eviction of innocent civilians from their land and property, and humiliation of the occupied people in their daily life.

Seventh, it may be easier to persuade Hamas and Jihad to disarm by co-opting them than by excluding them from the political process. For example, it may be more effective to convince them to disarm if they can see real hope that the occupation will end in proportion to their disarming, in one location after another. It may also be helpful if they could be assured that Israel would put an end to expansionism into Palestinian territory, which betrays intentions of perpetuating occupation. Furthermore, any reduction of occupation must be genuine and complete, rather than a gimmick for public relations purposes, the way Israel's withdrawal from Gaza has been.

Finally, the US can help President Abbas in his attempts to put an end to violence by convincing Israel to go back to the negotiations table, comply with the Road Map, end its use of excessive force, and ease conditions to allow the Palestinians to develop their economy and rehabilitate their society. Only then can the US claim to be on the side of democracy, stability, and peace between Israel and Palestine and in the Middle East region at large.

## **BETWEEN IMAGE AND REALITY: THE UNITED STATES FLOUNDERS**

### **December 2005**

The image of the US in the Middle East and the Islamic world is poor. The Bush administration wonders why and is anxious to do something to improve it. The administration has mobilized the Voice of America to carry the message of good will, democracy, and freedom across the world. It has established Radio Sawa, Radio Frada, and al Hurra Satellite TV, all aimed at the Arab and Islamic world with the same message: to inspire change, cooperation, democracy and freedom, as perceived by the US. It is now over three years since this new media propaganda campaign has been in operation, but the US image has seen little improvement, if not deterioration. Then comes the human image builder in the person of Ms. Karen Hughes, who abandons her temporary retirement to aid her friend George Bush and serve her country. From Egypt to Jordan, to Indonesia and Turkey, on and on she roams the target countries, with grand appearance and disarming eloquence. And yet there is little image improvement to celebrate. The US is still seen as unfair, a bully, an occupier, and an imperialist, at least by most of the people in the Arab and Islamic countries, if not by the regimes in power.

The poor image and the inability to improve it are easy to comprehend and explain. The image is largely a reflection of the reality, as demonstrated by the policies and action of the given country. If the policies and actions take a more acceptable turn, the reality changes and the image will improve. The policies and actions of the US in recent years have been unfavorable, as seen by vast majorities in the Middle East, the Islamic countries, and in parts of Latin and Central America. Even so, the Bush administration persists in lecturing those countries through its electronic, printed, and human media to accept those same policies and actions as good for them and for their future. Unfortunately propaganda can go only so far in influencing the image in the absence of change in policy and action.

The image of the US has been tarnished by the evident inconsistency between its words and deeds, its perceived failure to be fair and even-handed in international affairs, and its injudicious use of power and violation of the United Nations Charter. To illustrate, the US preaches human rights and the safety of civilians, but it rarely hesitates in bombarding towns and villages in Afghanistan and Iraq, regardless of the inevitable deadly impact on civilians and innocent people. The US preaches democracy and the right to vote and then proceeds to create obstacles to prevent “undesirable” segments of

the population in Palestine and Iraq from participation in the elections. The US promotes the rule of law between nations but marches illegally against Iraq, a member of the United Nations, and becomes an occupier. The US declares its respect for other nations and cultures, and then proceeds to “impose” its own values on those other cultures, as evident in its campaign for democracy, economic reform, free trade, and globalization as conditions for aid and good relations. It does not seem to make a difference whether or not those other countries have the same conception of democracy or preparedness for it. The US pushes for a market system even where the institutions of a market economy barely exist. It also promotes globalization regardless of the inability of those other countries to bear the harsh dislocations and other costs that ensue upon the institution of free trade in a field in which they are at a great disadvantage. The US argues for freedom of expression and then threatens to bombard al-Jazeera TV because it does not agree with its pattern of broadcasting and exposure of the war scenes in Iraq. The US condemns torture and then exports its detainees for interrogation in other countries, where no protection against torture exists; this comes on the heels of the explosive discoveries of prisoner abuse by US forces in the Abu Ghraib prison and in detention in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Finally, the US applies different standards to different countries with regard to WMD: it invades Iraq but tries to appease North Korea; it condemns Syria on a suspicion of acquiring WMD but ignores Israel’s open secret possession of such weapons, and it befriends Pakistan, which has atomic weapons, but threatens Iran on suspicion of considering such weapons. The Arab and Muslim people never cease to ask why this double standard by a superpower that pretends to be a fair and even-handed leader of the world. If only the US would call for elimination of WMD in all countries and regions!

The US is generous, often meaning well in trying to help other countries, but evidently its policies are misguided, poorly informed, and therefore they miss the target. These policies need not be so. For example, it would be more effective to help educate for democracy so that the recipient people can appreciate its benefits and opt for it, instead of imposing it or making its adoption a condition for aid and cooperation. The US offers aid for development but most of it goes for military expenditure and import of consumer goods. Little of that aid brings in badly needed physical capital or new techniques, both of which are indispensable for economic development and growth. The saying used to be: don’t give fish to the hungry; give them fishing poles. In this context, don’t give fishing poles to the needy and underdeveloped; teach them how to make the poles. Technology transfer is basic to development, but the US aid policy gives it very low priority and the regimes in power do not or cannot object.

It would be helpful for the US to remember that what is “right and efficient” in one country or environment, or at a given level of development, may not be so in others. Therefore, it would be useful for the US to abandon its all-purpose recipe for development as fit for all countries, environments, and levels of development. Instead, it would help to adopt strategies that are country-specific, based on a thorough study and understanding of the individual country, its people, institutions, and culture. Measures for development within the framework of the country-specific strategies would be more effective if presented as recommendations, with choices of method of implementation, so that the recipient countries would be able to choose.

Finally, the US would do itself and its image a great service by putting an end to its occupation of Iraq, leaving the responsibility for peace keeping and stabilization to the United Nations, the Arab League, the European Union, or all three of them as soon as possible. In this sense it would also be helpful to encourage Israel to put an end to its occupation of Arab land. The Arab and Islamic countries will no doubt welcome such steps and begin to see the US and its image in a more positive and rosy light.

### **CONFLICT IN THE HOLY LAND: ANY REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC? January 2006**

After 100 years of sustained Arab Israeli conflict, and over fifty years of personal involvement in promoting peace and reconciliation, with no imminent peace agreement, one is likely to become pessimistic about the peace prospects. I have witnessed violence in Palestine as far back as the 1930s and the 1940s. I was there when the United Nations 1947 Partition Plan was rejected by the Arabs and accepted by the Jews. I was there when Israel was born and the Palestinian refugee problem was created. I have persisted in studying the problem, explaining the issues, and proposing solutions. I have lectured, published books and papers, and collaborated with like-minded peace promoters, Arabs and Jews, always hoping that I could make a difference. Many others outside government have done the same, probably with more dedication than mine. Yet, the results have often been depressing as far as the establishment of peace is concerned.

The costs and the benefits of the conflict have been large, but differentially distributed. The Palestinians have suffered a catastrophe or what they call Nakba. They lost thousands of lives, tens of thousands have been injured, maimed, or jailed, while hundreds of thousands have been dislocated and made into refugees. The Arab states suffered defeat in war, and humiliation through occupation of their land by Israel. In contrast, Israel did suffer the loss of life and injury, but it gained independence and sovereignty, and acquired more territory than allocated to it by the United Nations. In the meantime Israel has become a military power and a first class nation in science and technology. Even so, both Arabs and Israelis still seem unconvinced that it is time to compromise enough to make peace. In the meantime several of my co-promoters of peace have passed away with unfulfilled dreams of peace and tranquility in the Middle East region. The fight between Palestinians and Israelis has become especially cruel and ugly, with suicide bombing by Palestinians and targeted assassinations by the Israeli military. Many observers have argued that peace between these two people is impossible because their demands and counter demands are irreconcilable. They say the Palestinians are too weak to fight, too proud to compromise, and they have lost so much they have no room left for compromise. Israel, on the other hand, is too strong and greedy to want to compromise.

I do not share this assessment. In fact I see many signs that a breakthrough is not only possible, but also highly probable in the near future. For example, the Palestinians and Israelis have recognized each other's legitimate right to exist as independent and secure states, each in a part of the contested land. In 1988 the Palestinians recognized the right of Israel to exist in peace and thus paved the way for Israel to look more positively on the Palestinians' political and territorial claims and meet them in negotiating a settlement. They went to Madrid and Oslo, to Camp David and Aqaba, and back to Camp David and Washington D.C. Arafat and Rabin shook hands there and signed a Declaration of Principles agreement, with President Clinton playing host, broker, witness, and champion of peace between them. The Palestinian leadership came back from the Diaspora to form the Palestine National Authority and create the semblance of a Palestinian government in the land they considered their own. The road was not smooth. It was full of potholes and obstacles to peace. Distrust and intransigence prevailed and the negotiations fell through, but the forces of peace have remained alert and persistent.

It is true that failure of the negotiations has provoked a violent Intifadah (uprising) by the Palestinians, which has been costly to both Palestinians and Israelis. The loss of life and property has been augmented by economic hardship for the Palestinians and use of excessive force by the Israelis. Even so the peace promoters were able to come up with positive proposals for peace. The Quartet, (the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations) proposed a Road Map to peace. To the surprise of many, both Arabs and Israelis accepted the Road Map, though Israel had some reservations regarding details. Unfortunately both parties dragged their feet on fulfilling their obligations, thus making implementation of the Road Map a casualty of their ambivalence, but the Road Map is still on the table and both parties say they are committed to it.

As a peace agreement seemed to be beyond reach, Ariel Sharon declared his intention to take unilateral action in the direction of peace. He unilaterally disengaged the Israeli military from Gaza and evacuated Jewish settlements from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. The disengagement from Gaza has been far short of Palestinian expectations, but it did remove the Israeli troops and give the people internal freedom and "autonomy." The exaggerated celebrations by the Palestinians were a good indication of their hope and willingness to cooperate with Israel for more steps in that direction. Most Palestinians remained skeptical of Sharon's intentions, especially as he continued to build the Wall, which the Israelis call the Fence, to separate Israel from the West Bank. The Wall has inflicted hardship on the Arab population in the occupied West Bank, but even so it indicates that Israel concedes that the land beyond the Wall belongs to the Palestinians. Furthermore, by evacuating the Jewish settlements Israel acknowledged that "facts on the ground" such as the settlements and the Wall, are removable.

Because of his policies Ariel Sharon faced trouble within his coalition, especially from his party, Likud. Rather than retreat, he surprised everybody by quitting the Likud party and forming a new party, Kadima (Forward), with a platform of peace. He even managed to attract leaders from Likud, Mapai (Labor), and other parties to join his new party and support his platform. Though it is premature to assess the strength of the party and whether Sharon can deliver on his peace promises, his influence cannot be ignored as a positive sign.

Sharon is not alone in Israel seeking peace with the Palestinians. While he was creating an earthquake in his Likud party, Amir Peretz was causing an eruption in Mapai, his party. He replaced Shimon Peres as Chairman, declared his commitment to peace, and put more focus on socio-economic conditions in the country. All of these changes in Israeli politics tend to favor peace with the Palestinians. However, peace agreements require both sides of the conflict to cooperate. Interestingly enough, radical changes seem on the horizon in Palestinian politics as well. New leaders are challenging the status quo organization, intellectuals and technocrats are raising questions and forming new parties, all of which suggests that the Palestinians are also beginning to face reality. They seem to recognize that corruption must be ended, self-reliance must be encouraged, and peace with Israel is indispensable for independence, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of their economy and society. Furthermore, they seem to be approaching change by democratic means, including elections, which is another positive sign in favor of peace.

Last but not least, I think of the positive, though invisible, influence of the non-governmental promoters of peace. Their role is invaluable as educators for peace and co-existence, and as sources of ideas and strategies for peace making. Academicians, freelancers, and non-partisan experts are essential for educating policy makers, leaders, and the public on the horrors of war and the inevitability of peace. This is the mission I have adopted about half a century ago, and it is still the mission I work for, always hoping that the parties to the conflict will soon march, side by side with their neighbors, on the road to security, peace, and stability in their own countries, and in the Middle East region at large.

**THE LEGACY OF PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH  
AND THE ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT  
February 2006**

President George W. Bush has been in office for five years, and he has three more years to go. Like every other president, he certainly would like to leave behind a positive legacy as a creative, efficient, kind, and strong leader that others would want to emulate. Whether he will succeed remains to be seen, though the signs so far are not promising. Even so, it is still possible for him to rehabilitate his record and guarantee himself an enviable legacy by achieving peace between the Arabs and Israel. He certainly is capable of that achievement.

Up to now President Bush has succeeded in piling up an unflattering record in both domestic and foreign affairs. As a starter, he has been described as the selected, not elected, president. The US Supreme Court came to his rescue and put an end to the challenge to his first term presumed victory. While some observers may regard his being selected in itself as an achievement, this is not how it sounds in a democratic framework.

When he came to office the US federal budget was in balance. It took little time and effort for the President to turn the balance into a big deficit, and the trend has continued ever since. In spite of his promise of “No Child Left Behind” in education, he can hardly claim to have succeeded. Large numbers of schools and school children lag behind in financing, equipment, and decent accommodations. In the field of health, the record has not been any better. The number of uninsured has increased. Costs of health care have continued to go up, and the costs of prescription drugs have soared. The new Medicare plan for prescription drugs has been confusing, costly, and burdensome. Individual states have had to step in to rescue the needy patients, pending Federal reorganization to solve the problem.

When the 9/11 disasters struck, the President was nowhere to be seen. The glory of leadership went to New York Mayor Giuliani instead. The President’s performance after the Katrina hurricane disaster has been erratic, to say the least. He was praising the FEMA staff for their efficiency, even as their failures were unfolding. Now, months

later, some victims of Katrina are still in dislocation and the city of New Orleans remains close to a ghost town.

President Bush has tried to rescue the economy by implementing his favorite cure for all economic ills, a tax cut, which has favored the rich and penalized the rest. As a result, inequality in the US has been on the rise and real incomes have been on the decline. The economy has remained anemic, with little reduction in unemployment, while tens of thousands are now threatened of losing their jobs. Worker pension security in the private sector has been dwindling, partly because of business insecurity, and partly because the Bush administration is anxious to weaken the labor unions, regardless of the impact on the workers.

One more domestic issue deserves attention, namely spying on US citizens, without court orders, in contravention of the law. The President claims that he has inherent power to authorize such actions, but he has failed to show the legal framework that gives him that power. Adding up all these negatives can be threatening to the hoped for legacy of greatness.

Unfortunately the record in foreign affairs is not any better, though the President seems proud of that record. The facts are clear: he waged a war that was not necessary, given that Saddam Hussein's emasculated regime was not going to last for ever; all diplomatic means were not exhausted; and the UN Security Council did not authorize the invasion of Iraq, in accordance with the UN Charter. In the process, Iraq has been ruined; over 2,200 Americans have been killed and over 16,000 have been injured. The Iraqi dead and injured run into the hundreds of thousands, and the war is not over yet, even though the President has long ago declared the mission accomplished.

The President went hunting for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which turned out to be imaginary. He went there to build a democracy and ended up splitting the country into religious factions, a result that threatens the basic unity of the country. And now, three years later, the Iraqi economy is still in recession and the people are suffering from insecurity and deprivations. To add insult to injury, the Bush administration has been outsourcing torture interrogation by rendering suspects to other countries where human rights are not well respected. This comes on the heels of discovery that torture, degradation, and sometimes death have occurred in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo, and elsewhere, in violation of human rights and the Geneva Conventions. Unfortunately, these horrible facts add up to a poor record, which can hardly contribute to a desirable legacy.

Even so, all is not lost and the President still has a major card he can play, not only to improve his record but also to guarantee an important place for himself in the history of the US presidency, and in the annals of peacemaking and conflict resolution. The President can achieve all that by taking charge and making peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, thus putting an end to the 100-year old Arab Israeli war.

President Bush has already set the foundation for resolving that conflict. He has recognized the right of the Palestinians to independence and has influenced Israel to do the same. He has led the Quartet into formulating a Roadmap to peace. To his credit, both Israel and the Palestinians have accepted that plan in principle. What remains is for the President to make sure the Roadmap is implemented, and that he can do.

President Bush knows that Israel will not move toward peace unless pressured by the US on which it depends materially, militarily, and diplomatically. Similarly, the

Palestinians can hardly move, given their many weaknesses, without some backing from the US, especially by assuring them that moving toward peace and security would certainly bring them closer to statehood. The President has strong allies in the Middle East. If he were to focus on peacemaking in the region, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Tunisia will certainly stand by him to fortify his efforts, especially in dealing with the Palestinians.

Both Israelis and Palestinians will have new leaders in the coming weeks. Israel has achieved most of what it wanted. The Palestinians are exhausted and have little leverage in dealing with Israel except violence, which has proved to be self-defeating. Both are, therefore, ready for a settlement and are anxious to have a third party smooth the way between them, in spite of Hamas' victory in the elections. President Bush is in a good position to take charge, help implement the Roadmap, and make peace in the region. By doing so he will have attained a well-deserved legacy as a peacemaker, and put an end to the suffering of both Arabs and Israelis and to the one hundred year enmity and conflict between them. Let us hope that President Bush will succeed in making peace and in securing a most favorable legacy.

## **THE PALESTINIANS AND DEMOCRACY!**

**March 2006**

The Palestinians have been under pressure to adopt democracy, have an elected government, and let the people have the power to make decisions. The pressure came especially from the US, EU, and Israel (the Triad), on the assumption that democratic states do not fight each other, and democratic people would not support terror or violence. The Palestinians have listened, adopted democracy, as superficially defined by the US, and went to the polls to elect a new legislative council. The elections were certified as fair, well organized, peaceful, and admirable. Even so, the results have been a disappointing shock to those countries pushing for elections. The Triad members have been disturbed that supporters of Hamas, a terrorist group according to the US and Israel, has won an absolute majority of the seats in the legislative council. Fatah, the party in power, has become a minority. Now Hamas has the mandate to form a government, but the US will not deal with Hamas; Israel will not deal with Hamas; and the European Union is sanguine about dealing with Hamas. Worse still, the US and Israel are set to impose sanctions, not only on the government to be, but virtually on the Palestinian people as a whole. The US intends to stop aid to the PA and is seeking the return of funds already allocated. Israel has decided to suspend transfer of funds due the PNA, collected as taxes on its behalf. Israel is also contemplating the isolation of Gaza from the West Bank by restricting movement between the two regions, and preventing newly elected members of Hamas from traveling even to attend sessions of the legislative council. All three members of the Triad insist that Hamas must recognize the State of Israel, disavow violence, disarm its militia, and accept all previous agreements between the PA and the international community, including Israel, before any of them would deal with a Hamas-dominated government.

This state of affairs raises at least two major questions: What happens to the concept of democracy when the promoters of democracy do not respect its results? Second, what incentives does Hamas have to change its attitude toward Israel, the occupying power, when the Triad are pre-empting any action it may take by boycott and imposed sanctions against it? There is nothing in the concept of democracy that stipulates the ideology or platform of the parties running for elections, as long as the

voters have the right to vote and exercise that right fairly. To ignore those rights and their results renders the campaign for democracy a sham. It also reduces the credibility of those promoters of democracy and raises questions about the integrity of their intentions. The US must be cognizant of that dilemma as it proceeds with its campaign to democratize the whole Middle East. As for Israel, it seems that regardless of the PA government in power, unless that government is willing to comply with its terms in advance, no negotiations seem possible, contrary to all forms of diplomacy and peaceful resolution of conflicts. By taking that stand, Israel seems anxious to close all doors to peace, while it punishes the Palestinian people and denies them the human freedoms they are entitled to.

On the question of Hamas' attitude toward Israel, Israel is justified to be concerned about Hamas' refusal to recognize its legitimacy, and about Hamas' resort to violence in its struggle to end the occupation of Palestinian land. However, Israel is not justified to jump to conclusions regarding the behavior of the government yet to be established by Hamas. Hamas has just found itself in a position of power. It has not had time to reflect on how to proceed, nor has it announced its agenda for the future. Hamas knows that its own ascension to power has been made possible by the Oslo Agreement, which led to the creation of the PA in the first place. Therefore, it is most unlikely for Hamas to disavow that agreement, which would render its own position illegitimate in view of the co-signatories of the Oslo Agreement, including Israel. Hamas also knows that continuity in government requires respect for actions of the previous regime, and any modification of previous decision must go through the legislative process. Until then it is bound by the decisions that are on the books. Furthermore, Hamas knows that Mahmoud Abbas, Chairman of the PA, not a Hamas member, has been elected by a vast majority of the popular vote, and they have to work with him to be able to implement any policies or make any structural changes. Therefore, cooperation by Chairman Mahmoud Abbas is indispensable for Hamas' success in establishing a viable and stable government. On the other hand, none of the critical parties, the Triad, has offered any real incentives for Hamas to make major changes in its attitude toward Israel. Israel continues to occupy Palestinian territory, imposes severe restrictions on the mobility of the Palestinian people, and now it threatens to choke the new government even before it is formed.

Resolving conflict by peaceful means requires sensitivity of each party to the position of the other parties in the conflict. It requires patience, flexibility, and sustained communication by each with its "enemy." Without communication, even if only through a third party, little can be achieved by peaceful means. The Triad might take a look at the history of Likud and the PLO before they had any communication with each other. Likud was originally a terrorist organization, by Israel's own definition of terrorism. But when its leaders had a share in power, they became politicians, diplomats and leaders of a government, which eventually negotiated with the Palestinians. Menahem Begin, Moshe Shamir, and Ariel Sharon are good examples. Similarly, the PLO would not recognize Israel for 24 years, but when Arafat saw the pending rewards, he was willing to compromise, even at the risk of losing the support of many Palestinians. Is there any reason Ismael Haniyeh, the prime minister designate of the pending government, will not follow the same path followed by Israeli and Palestinian leaders before him? The Triad would do much better by allowing Hamas enough time to compose its policies, and identify the objectives and ways of dealing with the international community. The Triad

would be more influential in dealing with the PA by recognizing that Hamas, the Party, is separate from the government of the PA, just as the PLO was separate from the government. This may be especially important if the new government includes non-Hamas members. Finally, the Triad should know that imposing sanctions on Hamas at this point may be used as an excuse for any Hamas failure, and the blame would fall on the Triad and its unjustified pressure and obstructive actions. By contrast, the Triad may be far more successful in inducing change in Hamas by showing some flexibility in timing and action, and by offering some incentives for change. For example, Israel can relax the restrictions on mobility of the people and on the movement of goods in and out of the West Bank and Gaza. Israel can also resume the transfer of funds due the Palestinians. The US and the EU can resume aid to the Palestinians for a reasonable period of time before taking action. Allowing Hamas to succeed in government may be the key to its transformation. If all these steps prove sterile, there will always be time to hasten Hamas' failure and the call for new elections. This approach will not only honor the idea of democracy, but it will also spare the Palestinian people any undue hardship due to sanctions, while it may entice Hamas to become more realistic, more diplomatic, and more inclined to use politics, rather than the gun, to resolve the conflict.

**NOT BY FIREARMS ALONE!**  
**April 2006**

It seems that there is an addiction to firearms in some Arab countries, especially where restrictions are limited and the government is weak. This is most evident in the Occupied Territories, nominally under the PNA. The Palestinians tend to use every occasion to display their firearms, and use them, for fun or otherwise. They display firearms in weddings, in funerals, in victory celebrations after elections, and in settling feuds between individuals, families, and clans. They fire in the air as if to tell the whole world that they are happy, though sometimes the happiness turns into tragedy. My own maternal grandfather died during his daughter's wedding celebration because of a friendly shot by an invited relative. That was almost a century ago, but the tradition has hardly changed. About two years ago a child was killed by a "friendly" shot in a wedding ceremony in a village close to where my grandfather died.

The Palestinians tend to display arms and fire shots in the air to celebrate a candidate's victory, or to honor a martyr during his/her funeral, regardless of how that person has earned the martyrdom. They display arms and march publicly, with hoods covering their faces, to express dissatisfaction with government officials, members of the Legislative Council, University officials, and even with the Chairman of the PNA. This last phenomenon is most disturbing because it reflects chaos, disrespect for civil society, and overestimation of the bravery and wisdom of the perpetrators of such behavior. Armed, hooded groups of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have recently invaded the offices of the Legislative Council to demand employment. Others went to the home of the Chairman of the PNA in a similar fashion. Still others, being unhappy with the educational program, stormed the offices of a university president, abused the president and frightened the staff, but achieved nothing. This is in addition to the die-hard tendency to use arms in individual disputes, family feuds, and sometimes in religious conflicts, which often result in bloodshed. They do all that and then agree to a peace making ceremony or *Sulha*. The display and use of firearms in public are not limited to the common people. Saddam Hussein used to lift his rifle in one hand, and fire shots in the air. Yasser Arafat insisted on addressing the United Nations with a pistol in his holster, though he was persuaded to do without it.

The display and use of arms presumably draw attention by making noise as shots are fired in the air, but they also pollute the air. Those who display and use firearms probably feel powerful, but only against the unarmed. Where is the bravery in scaring unarmed officials, or in attacking unprotected educational institutions? By contrast, they rarely face armed soldiers or enemy gunships with their AK47s, even when they carry arms in the name of resistance to occupation.

Some armed groups have demonstrated in the streets while seeking employment in the security forces. However, by doing so they tended to undermine the functions of the security forces and to disqualify themselves as potential members of those forces, which are responsible for maintaining law and order.

Then there is the economic cost of displaying and using firearms. Firing in the air is wasteful. Firearms and ammunition are expensive, especially for people who are suffering from unemployment, poverty, and malnutrition. The majority of the Palestinians depend on aid from the United Nations and donor countries and individuals for most of their essential needs. Yet they seem able to acquire firearms and waste ammunition for little benefit in return.

Much the same happens in Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and other Arab countries where the government is weak and law and order are haphazard. However, those countries are poor examples for the Palestinians to follow. The Palestinians are in transition from scattered refugee communities to citizens of a national state in formation. To achieve statehood they owe it to themselves to establish law and order within their own communities. They owe it to themselves to behave like citizens in their own state by respecting other citizens, as they would like to be respected. Kidnapping civilians, national or foreign, is a poor example of civil or nationalist behavior. They owe it to themselves to help create a stable and viable government, with respected and viable institutions. They also owe it to themselves to invest in a growing and viable economy that would support the budding state and its ever-growing population. All these goals are threatened by the rule of hooded and armed groups, who take the law into their own hands and replace it with scare tactics and lawless behavior. At the same time, the Palestinians need international political and economic support to achieve statehood. Allowing rogue armed groups to defy the authorities and spread chaos and disorder can hardly win the support of the international community. Civil behavior is a mark of social maturity, which is a pre-requisite for state viability and as a mark of a free society. It is also a signal that the citizens are able to make use of the instruments at their disposal wisely, carefully, and with great discipline in accordance with the laws of the state. Every man in Switzerland owns a gun, since they all serve in the army and keep their guns afterwards, but you never see Swiss armed groups roaming the streets or making demands on their government at the point of a gun. Nor do the Israelis, Arabs and Jews, present their demands to the government, the Parliament, or the President of the state, wearing hoods or carrying arms.

The Palestinians are at a crossroads. They have a choice between civility among themselves, abidance by the law, and advancement toward statehood, or aggravation of the state of chaos, disorder, and the rule of illegal force, all of which lead to a failed state even before it is born. Hopefully the Palestinians will make the right choice before it is too late (assuming there is still time), advance civil society, restrict the use of arms to what is legal, safe, and justified by the rules of that society. If they choose civility over

scare tactics, they may find that restricting the use of arms would save resources, which may be invested in the welfare of the individual and the community. They may also find that demands from Parliament, the PNA Chairman, and the University President by written petition, face-to-face negotiations, or by peaceful unarmed demonstrations can be far more effective than by confronting them at gunpoint.

## **ENDURING OBSTACLES TO AN ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE!**

**May 2006**

Peacemaking in the Middle East is more in jeopardy now than it has been for a long time. This is due in part to political dynamics within the Israeli and Palestinian societies, but also because of the sustained efforts to enhance Israel's objectives and to undermine those of the Arabs, especially in the United States. No doubt the victory of Hamas has complicated the situation, but it may also force both the Israelis and the Palestinians to face reality and act more rationally to achieve peace. However, external forces tend to slow down any such progress toward realism. Among such forces are the virtually blind support of Israel and the equally strong undermining of the Arab cause, particularly in the US. The blind support has recently been well documented in *THE ISRAEL LOBBY*, an essay by John Mearsheimer and Stephen Watt, [London Review of Books, vol. 28, no.6, March 2006]. Two articles respectively by Lawrence Rosen and Bernard Lewis in *The American Scholar* may illustrate the undermining of the Arab cause.

In *THE ISRAEL LOBBY*, more accurately the Zionist lobby, Mearsheimer and Watt present a penetrating and realistic picture of the power of the Zionist lobby to advance the Israeli [Zionist] agenda, often at the expense of the Arabs, and the US interests. This mostly factual study has met with a flare up of criticism, in two main forms: those that are legitimate, and those that are biased and prejudicial. Some were challenges of fact and interpretation, which is legitimate, but most were charges of anti-Semitism against the authors. A few denied any harm to US interests by identifying the interests of the US with those of Israel, in the sense that what is good for Israel is good for the US, but not the other way around. Actually the Israel Lobby should be admired for its efficiency and effectiveness. It is up to the Arabs to create a countervailing lobby, and up to the Americans to ensure that US national interests come first, and to recognize that evenhandedness in international affairs enhances those interests.

In his article, titled "The Arab Personality," on the cover and "What We Got Wrong" on the inside of the *AMERICAN SCHOLAR*, [Winter 2005], Professor Lawrence Rosen questions Bernard Lewis' asking "What Went Wrong" to account for "Arab failure to keep pace with the economic, political, and scientific innovations of the

West,” suggesting that the problem lies in the Arab personality. As a better alternative Professor Rosen suggests three concepts to explain Arab resistance to Western style reform: One, “in the Arab world the self is never seen as divided” presumably between belief and reason as it is in the West;” two, “doubt about fundamental beliefs has always been equated with unbelief”, and that is risky; and, third, “political institutions have never been separated from the individuals connected with them.” Thus the Arab personality must be the obstacle to change.

While trying to correct a faulty approach to Arab society and culture, Professor Rosen has presented a faulty approach of his own, first by speaking of an Arab Personality and culture, and then by making generalizations that are neither obvious nor testable. Is it accurate or helpful to speak of an Arab Personality to represent the 22 Arab countries, stretching from Morocco to Iraq, and from Sudan to Syria and Lebanon? And is it accurate to speak of the Arabs as if they were of one religion, ethnic group, or cultural orientation? Not only are there major cultural differences and diverse patterns of behavior, as Professor Rosen himself notes in passing, but individuals and groups do express doubt about certain fundamentals. They sometimes rebel, seek wisdom from the learned, or they do their own interpretation of the fundamentals. Similarly, while political institutions may not be separated from the individuals in power, these individuals may be separated from institutions, either by replacing them or by changing the institutions.

The Arab world resists Western style reform because its history with the West has been one of humiliation, oppression, and perceived betrayal. Even today, Western suggestions for economic and political reform come as demands to be enforced by international institutions, if not adopted voluntarily.

Professor Rosen seems to misinterpret some of the dynamics of Arab society. It is true that the word *fitna* has one meaning relating to beauty and charm, but in this context it means sedition, insurrection, or riot, which may lead to chaos. On the other hand, chaos does not mean temptation or seduction. The Arabic words for chaos are *tashawush* or *fawda*, meaning confusion or disorder.

By some standards women in the Arab world are not free, but there are major differences between one country and another. Women in Tunisia and Lebanon enjoy much more freedom than women in Saudi Arabia, with a wide variation in between.

Finally, Professor Rosen seems to object to asking, “What went wrong?” or to imply that something has gone wrong to prevent the Arabs from advancing scientifically and technologically. To deny that something has gone wrong does not help in explaining the depressed status of knowledge in the Arab world. Something did go wrong. First it was corruption, which led to the decline of the Arab empire. Then came the stagnating rule of the Ottoman Empire, which lasted a few centuries. Then it was domination by the Western powers, who came as liberators, but acted as dominators. Even more important, the Arabs hurt themselves by learning to memorize the Qur’an as a duty, instead of learning to read it and analyze its contents. This has resulted in conformity instead of promoting literacy and critical thinking. The Western liberators did little to influence or reverse that detrimental system of education. Yes, something did go wrong. The Arab countries are yet to free themselves from the shackles of the past, learn from the advanced countries, or find their own way to knowledge, freedom, and modernization in thought and action.

Coming from another direction, Professor Bernard Lewis deals with ANTI-SEMITISM, American Scholar [Winter '06], especially what he considers Arab anti-Semitism. He begins by inventing new definitions to fit his changing perceptions of anti-Semitism: Is anti-Semitism an attitude against all Semites, or against those of a certain religion, language, or ethnic origin? Professor Lewis skims through selected historical anecdotes to arrive at the conclusion that the Arabs have adopted the new Western concept of anti-Semitism, just as the West was feeling embarrassed about it. This new anti-Semitism is expressed by judging Jews on a different standard from others, and by accusing "Jews of cosmic evil." Though his selective illustrations suffer from sins of omission and commission, limited space precludes a detailed critique of his illustrations and conclusions. One conclusion, however, deserves special attention, namely that "the new anti-Semitism has little or no bearing on the rights and wrongs of the Palestine conflict, but it must surely have some effect on perceptions of the problem." However, the rights and wrongs are a matter of perception. By his account this new anti-Semitism by the Arabs, who themselves are Semites by language, religion, and ethnic origin, developed during World War II and more so after 1948. This is incorrect on at least three counts: First, the Arab attitude toward the Jews does not reflect any accusation of Jews of cosmic evil. Second, the Arabs do not think of all Jews in a negative way. They have a negative attitude against Zionists and Zionist colonization of Arab Land. Finally, the Arab negative attitude developed around the end of the 19th century (birth of Zionism), and the beginning of the twentieth century (Western colonial penetration). Objections to Zionism and colonization evolved concurrently with Arab objections to British and French colonialism, which also was the root of Zionist colonization of Palestine. Zionism and colonization were legitimized and reinforced by the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The Zionist insatiable appetite for Arab land and the harsh Israeli treatment of Arabs under occupation have since then continually reinforced the negative Arab attitude toward Zionism and Israel's policies. The bond between British-French colonialism and Zionism was reaffirmed by the Israeli-British-French invasion of Egypt in 1956.

Finally, Professor Lewis criticizes the UN for the "special care" it accords the Palestinian refugees. He apparently forgets that the UN resolution to partition Palestine in 1947, which led to the creation of the State of Israel, was also responsible for the refugee problem. It is unfortunate, as Professor Lewis correctly states, that the UN did not have the power to enforce its resolutions, thanks to the United States' abuse of its veto power. Had the UN had such power, the Palestinians would still be in their homes, Israel would be settled within the boundaries specified by the UN Partition Plan, the Arab Israeli conflict would be resolved, and the new fictional anti-Semitism of the Arabs against the Jews would be inconceivable.<sup>25</sup>

**ISRAEL: JEWISH AND A DEMOCRACY:  
IS THAT POSSIBLE?  
June 2006**

When presenting his new cabinet to the *Knesset*, Ehud Olmert recalled the vision for the state of Israel as being founded on two bases: “the Jewish base and the democratic base” as a reaffirmation of the founders’ intent to have a “Jewish state” and a democratic state that “will provide ‘complete social and political equality to all its citizens, regardless of religion, race, or gender.’” These are high ideals, but are they achievable, and have they been achieved? The answer is YES and NO.

Can Israel be a Jewish state and a democracy at the same time? It can if all the citizens are Jews, for then there is no room for infringing on the rights of certain groups because of religion. However, the answer must be NO if some of the citizens are not Jews, as it is the case in Israel. Israel includes a large minority of Arab citizens, and therefore it is questionable whether the state can be Jewish and a democracy that guarantees equality among the citizens.

Democracy means rule by the people. It does not mean rule by some of the people, Jews, Christians, Muslims or other. Twenty percent of the citizens of Israel are Arabs, to whom Jewishness of the state means that they are treated differently from the Jewish majority. Being a Jew in a Jewish state confers benefits that non-Jews cannot enjoy, even though they are citizens. Plato’s democracy had slaves among the population, but they were not citizens. Similarly, the American democracy included slaves among the population, but the slaves were not classified as citizens until slavery was abolished and the rights of equality were institutionalized.

Ehud Olmert stated the principles on which Israeli democracy stands, namely social and political equality of all citizens, which means including the non-Jewish citizens. Unfortunately this has not been the case with the Arab minority, ever since establishment of the state. Neither the Jewishness of the state nor equality among the citizens has been realized. In fact it is doubtful that the two features can coexist. If Israel wants to achieve democracy as perceived by its founders, it cannot confer special privileges on the Jewish citizens at the expense of the others. Therefore, to achieve

democracy, it must abandon the idea of being a Jewish State. On the other hand, if Jewishness of the state does not confer privileges on the Jews, compared with the others, then its Jewishness will have no meaning, other than to create antagonism between Jews and non-Jews, and that cannot be among the objectives of the founders. So far Israel has held on to the idea of a Jewish state, but it has failed to create a democracy. Here are some illustrations.

1) If Israel were a democracy, its Arab citizens, who comprise 20 percent of the population, would be represented in the cabinet, but they are not. In the United States the secretary of state is a black and a woman; the attorney general is Hispanic, even though the black and Hispanic minorities are smaller than the Arab minority in Israel.

2) If Israel were a democracy, the votes of the Arab members of the Knesset would count toward achieving a majority in favor or against any issue, but they are not. A Jewish majority is implicitly stipulated to rule on all major issues, including approval or disapproval of the new government. These two forms of deprivation render the representation of the Arab in the Knesset to be of no significance in policy making

3) If Israel were a democracy, its Arab citizens would have equal access to the labor market, to the academic institutions, and to the government bureaucracies, at all levels, according to their merit, which is not so.

4) If Israel were a democracy, the Arab citizens would be secure in their land and property against any infringement by Jewish citizens or by the land authority, which is a government department. On the contrary, Arab land and property have been subject to confiscation and expropriation, in the name of security, industrial rezoning, or other fabricated excuses that are inconsistent with true democracy and equality.

5) If Israel were a democracy, its Arab citizens would be treated with equal respect and facilitation in everyday life and when exiting or entering the country, at checkpoints and at airports. In actuality they are treated with humiliation, harassment, delaying tactics, and other ways that never apply to Jewish citizens.

6) If Israel were a democracy, no member of the Knesset or the cabinet would propose stripping the Arab citizens of their citizenship and induce them to leave the country. If those citizens wanted to leave on their own, that should be their privilege, but to be stripped of their citizenship and forced to belong to another state is contrary to all rights of citizenship or rules of democracy.

7) If Israel were a democracy, its Arab citizens would not be denied the legal right of family unification enjoyed by Jewish citizens when they wed a national of another country. A temporary law, which has been upheld by the High Court of Israel, presumably in the name of security, has compromised the right of family unification of the Arab citizens but no Arab citizen of Israel believes that it is a question of security.

It is not sufficient in a democracy to declare that all citizens are equal and the rights of the minorities are protected. If equality prevails, as Prime Minister Olmert has stipulated for a democracy, there should be no need for protection. Protection is needed only when infringement on the rights of the minority is evident or probable. The rule by majority is a matter of consensus to break a deadlock, but it does not entitle the majority to compromise the rights of the minority, or to tamper with the principles of equality. There is a widespread myth in the United States that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. That, however, is more rhetoric than fact. For example, the Christians, though a very small minority in Syria, enjoy more equality than the Arabs do in Israel.

The Copts in Egypt, though a small minority, have always been represented in the cabinet, and their land and property are more secure than the land and property of the Arabs in Israel. Yet neither Syria nor Egypt is ever described as a democracy.

The Israeli policy makers often explain the evident inequality as due to state security, but by doing so, they admit the existence of inequality and help to institutionalize it. Of course, Ehud Olmert did not invent the discriminatory policies and actions against the Arab citizens. This has been the pattern since the establishment of the state. Thus, the persistence of inequality between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel can lead only to one conclusion, namely that discrimination is inherent in the state institutions and policies, which is contrary to the principles of democracy. On the other hand, this evident institutionalized inequality tends to discourage the Arab citizens from being loyal citizens and true believers in the democratic character of the state.

If Israel wants to be a true democracy, it must abandon the idea of a Jewish state. But if it must maintain the claim to being a Jewish state, it must face the facts and renounce the claim of being a democracy, with guaranteed equality for all its citizens. The behavior of the state authorities and the Jewish people of Israel demonstrate the virtual impossibility of having both a Jewish state and a democracy in Israel.

<sup>25</sup> The AMERICAN SCHOLAR did not publish my comments on the Rosen and Lewis articles claiming lack of space.

## **CRISES IN THE ARAB WORLD AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE!**

### **July 2006**

The Arab countries are in a crisis, whether they admit it or not. They are economically underdeveloped, in spite of the glittering signs of modernization here and there. They are politically unstable, held together internally by dysfunctional traditions, by invoking religion, and by repression. And they are socially divided: the educated and the illiterate, the rich and the poor, and those who discriminate and the women and minorities who are the victims of discrimination.

The Palestinians share some of the above features, but their dilemma is extraordinary. It involves non-Arab parties in a conflict over territory, sovereignty, and national identity. The Palestinians are plagued by internal disputes that have brought them to the brink of total anarchy, insecurity, and civil war. A majority of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories suffer from poverty and deprivation to the extent that their daily survival seems tied to the generosity and humaneness of the international community.

There is an Arabic proverb that says: After every hardship comes a relief, or after darkness comes dawn. Whether the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, can foresee a relief from their hardship and a breakthrough of dawn is uncertain. It depends on how they react to their depressing conditions, how ready they are to acknowledge and face their gloomy reality, and how well they adapt to changes in the international environment, which have rendered tradition and old habits and regimes no longer viable.

There is civil war in Sudan, fragmentation into war lordships in Lebanon, rule of the jungle in most of Yemen, wide chasms between the government and people in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, and most of North Africa, and fictional or borrowed modernity in the Gulf area. Repression is common to all of them except Lebanon, where there is no authority strong enough to repress its opponents. The Arab leaders talk about reform to gain favor with the international community and financial institutions, but they are unwilling to allow the people to share in the governance of their countries. On the other hand, the people are not alert or brave enough to claim their basic freedoms, which are never given, but must be taken, if they are wanted. The new information technology and culture may be the means to alert the people and guide them into a peaceful revolution in thought, organization, and action to institute the necessary changes in government, economy, and social relations to realize those basic freedoms. If so, it will

have to be a new generation of leaders, policy makers, and watch dogs who will ensure that substantive and positive changes get underway. That will be the dawn the Arab people are dreaming about.

The Palestinian situation is far worse than anywhere in the Arab world, with the possible exception of Sudan. The Palestinians are fragmented. Their new government, Hamas, is based on ideology. It is effective in rhetoric, but not in planning, or in mobilizing resources to operate as a government, maintain law and order, or resist Israeli occupation. It is true that Hamas faces a ruthless opponent, Israel. Hamas is also handicapped by President Mahmud Abbas, who has come to terms with Israel's existence as a sovereign state in a part of Palestine. He supports a two-state solution, and he believes that negotiations and nonviolence are the only viable ways to a peaceful agreement with Israel. Hamas' ideology is opposed to Abbas on all those position, and President Abbas has failed to persuade Hamas to his point of view. At the same time, he lacks the power, if not the authority, to establish law and order, and mobilize resources to revive the economy, employ the people, and win their favor by diplomacy and good leadership. It is a stalemate, which only the Palestinians themselves can break.

All Palestinian factions have a responsibility toward finding a way out of the stalemate. Living in the past, nourished by self-aggrandizing rhetoric and old traditions, and by using religion as a sword or a shield, has led to one disaster after another. The Palestinians have tried violence and it has not worked. They have sought help from the Arab states and that has not succeeded. They have trusted the international conscience and sensitivity to attain justice and that has led nowhere. So far the only breakthrough has been when Yasser Arafat faced reality and compromised by recognizing Israel's right to exist, side by side with a state of Palestine in a two-state solution. That was the breakthrough that made it possible for the Palestinian Old Guard leaders to march out of Tunisia to pursue their dream of independence and national sovereignty in their homeland.

The road has been rocky and hazardous enough to slow down their march almost to an absolute halt, if not to a retreat. It is time for another breakthrough. The Hamas government is in charge, but it has been caught off guard after winning the elections. Evidently Hamas had no contingency plans to act and react as the situation changes. Firing rockets into Israel, most of which miss their targets and sending suicide bombs have proved inefficient and costly. In fact violence against Israel has tended to invite severe counter violence by their more powerful opponent, as the ongoing brutal Israeli assault on Gaza clearly illustrates. Hamas has also failed to anticipate, or ignored, the expected adverse reactions to its victory and political platform. The results have been a total disaster, humiliation, stagnation, and more poverty and insecurity among the people.

On his part President Abbas has been unable to unify the PNA and face Israel as leader of all the Palestinians in seeking implementation of the two-state solution. On the contrary, the confrontation of his party, Fatah, with Hamas has been bloody, chaotic, and counter productive. Apparently Abbas and his party were not prepared to deal with contingencies either, and they have been naïve enough to accept weapons from Israel to enhance their own security, thus aggravating the conflict with Hamas.

Mahmud Abbas is the President and, given his constitutional authority, he should be able to co-opt Hamas and persuade Israel back to the negotiating table. Failing that,

he can dissolve the Hamas government and call for new elections, and if that does not work, he can resign.

Mahmud Abbas and Ismael Haniyah, the Hamas prime minister, have few choices left. They need each other to move forward, minimize the costs to the Palestinian people, and find a way to peace and security in a two-state solution. They must work together to open the windows, let the light in, and welcome the dawn that may herald a better future. Israel can wait since time is on its side; the international community can wait because it is not suffering; but the Palestinian people cannot wait long before they find it necessary to tell their leaders to move on or move out of the way. The Dawn must break through and Abbas and Haniyah have no right to block it.

## **A NON-PARTISAN APPROACH TO IRAQ**

**JUNE 2007**

### **PREAMBLE**

The best interests of the US are of primary consideration. The most powerful country in the world has vital international interests, which must be protected and enhanced, in cooperation with others, but not intentionally at the expense of others. However, success and victory have relative meanings, ranging from maximum benefits to minimum costs. Victory does not mean vanquishing the enemy. Compromise is the essence of peace making, conflict resolution, and avoidance of revenge. One can maximize benefits and not be victorious. In contrast, one can minimize costs and be regarded as triumphant, at least in the long run. Overcoming obstacles is a science and an art, and that is where good management, intuition, and fair decision making come in. It is important for the United States to put an end to the human costs of the war in Iraq, and to reduce the material costs as much as possible, sooner rather than later. This means trying to reverse the trend of the last few years.

The conditions in Iraq are not improving, if not deteriorating, though this is arguable, since the assessment of events depends much on where the assessor comes from politically, economically, and strategically. The Coalition Forces (CF) have sustained their efforts to contain the conflict, but they have made little progress against the violent insurgents, especially in Baghdad and Anbar Province. It is evident that a different approach may be advisable and timely. This is especially true since the US is carrying most of the war and reconstruction burden in human and material costs. The American taxpayers are wondering how billions of dollars have been allocated to the operations in Iraq, with little positive observable effects. If not dealt with soon, the situation may become irreversible. This seems to be also the gist of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group's assessment, which has just been released by its co-chairs Baker and Hamilton. However, this is a non-partisan proposal, and it has little in common with the Baker/Hamilton study.

### **THE NON-PARTISAN PROPOSAL**

This is a proposal in support of US interests, peace, and conflict resolution, with more benefits and lower costs for all concerned, especially to the US. The proposal is to invite the UN and the League of Arab States to gradually, take over the responsibilities of the CF in Iraq and allow them to leave Iraq within a given period of time, say one year. The UN/LAS replacement forces will go to Iraq as peacekeepers, not as peacemakers. In that capacity they will have no adversary, on the assumption that the Iraqi people want peace and stability in their country. The UN/LAS will not take sides in the conflict, but act as mediators and facilitators of communication between the various factions. To be able to do that, they will need to explain their mission to the Iraqi people and emphasize their positive role in guiding reconstruction and economic development. They will also highlight the fact that they have recruited the forces and leaders of the mission independently of any outside influence, on the basis of expertise, social qualifications, and experience in mediation, conflict, and peacekeeping.

#### TERMS OF THE MISSION

To be able to carry out its mission, the UN/LAS forces will determine its own approach to the conflict and its resolution. They will carry defensive weapons only. They will not go into combat, nor will they have combat weapons at their disposal. They will depend on the cooperation of the Iraqi people, the prestige of the organizations they represent, and the experience of their leaders and troops in the field. They will also have material benefits to dispense in guiding and promoting reconstruction, which most Iraqis want.

The UN/LAS will receive adequate material support to cover the costs for all operations. The support will come from the UN members, or from the CF home countries that bear all the costs at the present time. This arrangement will accrue savings for those countries since the UN/LAL will deploy fewer troops than the CF, use less equipment, and avoid the heavy losses and destruction entailed by combat. Probably about 50,000 troops will be sufficient for this mission, to replace the current American force of 137,000 in addition to the troop contribution of the allies.

To make sure the mission is functioning as expected, it will report periodically to the UN Security Council, or to the Secretary General of the UN and the Secretary General of the LAS, as will be determined in advance.

#### WHY THE UN AND LAS?

The UN is an all-inclusive organization. It includes among its members both the CF home countries and Iraq. The UN is non-partisan and cannot take sides with any faction against any other. However, it can make judgments on the actions of the different factions, and make suggestions and recommendations for improvement. It will also try to prevent harmful acts by other means that are at its disposal, including creating a buffer zone to maintain peace between the warring parties.

The UN will have no problem communicating with all the factions since it is nonpartisan. It will avoid any outside influence. And it will keep communication with various factions open to maintain their cooperation. In this respect the UN is unique because of its experience in mediation, conflict resolution, and peacekeeping, especially in the Middle East. The UN will also have access to the largest pool of expertise for this

mission, whose personnel will be expected to behave in a fair, reasonable, and helpful manner.

The LAS, on the other hand, includes all Arab countries. Its members use the Arabic language used in Iraq. They are familiar with the intricacies of the conflict as seen by the different Iraqi factions. They understand the importance of culture and religion in the conflict. Therefore, they should be able to reconcile some of the differences and neutralize those that cannot be reconciled, especially the differences related to religion. They will be helpful in maintaining unity in the country because it is in the region's benefit as well as in Iraq's benefit. Furthermore, the LAS will have no self-interest in Iraq and will dedicate all efforts to the success of its mission, as defined in the terms of engagement of the mission.

### BENEFITS TO IRAQ

Iraq is now in a most chaotic condition. Many in Iraq attribute the conflict to foreign occupation. The UN/LAS mission will free them of the perception of foreign occupation because neither the UN nor the LAS can be considered an occupier. As soon as the CF begin to leave Iraq the fear of permanent occupation will begin to dissipate. By the same token, the Iraqi casualties and their material losses will begin to decline. The infrastructure will no longer be a target for destruction. The UN/LAS will come in as an accepted mediator and peacekeeper and expect no reward for their actions, except the promise of success of their mission in promoting stability, keeping the peace, and resolving the conflict. Finally, the Iraqis will be responsible for their own affairs and will be told what, when, and how to reconstruct their economy and society, if they ask for guidance. The UN/LAS will be there with material and technical knowledge as recommended by the mission.

### BENEFITS TO THE CF HOME COUNTRIES

The CF home countries will be able to gradually withdraw from Iraq in an honorable way. They will be delegating responsibilities to keep the peace and promote stability and unity in Iraq to international organizations that have experience, qualifications, and have no partisan self-interest in the conflict. They will be able to bring the human losses to an end, and realize a great reduction of the material losses. They will be freed from the accusation of intending to be permanent occupiers. They will also be able to bid for the Iraqi oil on the international market, or reach a bilateral agreement with Iraq, without fear of being accused of trying to stay in Iraq to secure privileged access to the oil reserves of that country.

The CF home countries know that democracy cannot be imposed from above, or by a foreign occupier. It has to be inbred through education and practice for it to work, be stable, and permanent. The UN/LAS will have nothing to do with imposing democracy on the Iraqi people. On the other hand, the US and its allies have virtually realized the objectives for which they invaded Iraq: displacement of Saddam Hussein and ridding the country of WMD, Saddam Hussein is out and Iraq is free of WMD. All other objectives are artificial, representing values that are foreign and strange to the majority of the Iraqi people. They are perceived as an imposition on Iraq, its culture, and its religion. Those other objectives are best left to the Iraqi people to contemplate and adopt or discard as they see fit.

Finally the US and its allies in the war have no other promising strategy for success in achieving peace, stability, and conflict resolution in Iraq. The Baker/Hamilton proposals are too many, difficult to adopt, and will take time to make a difference. In fact there is no strategy on the table that promised more benefits or lower costs than this non-partisan proposal. Hopefully all parties concerned will consider it seriously and proceed to make the proposed mission a reality.

### **Political Economy of Three Wars in the Middle East:**

#### **Sudan, Iraq, and Israel/Palestine**

**JULY 2007**

These three wars have a lot in common. All originate in policies of one foreign imperial power, namely Britain. All reflect chronic ethnic, religious, and political differences between parties to the conflict. Also they seem to be characterized by unequal access to resources, native or acquired, cruelty and dehumanization, and high costs in life and material.

Sudan's problems started in 1916 with the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium tended to neglect the South in education, development, and participation in governance, compared with the North. The Condominium also annexed Darfur, which had been sort of independent, without consulting the people of that province, and they also neglected them even more than they did in the South. By the time Sudan became independent in 1956 signs of trouble were evident. The South wanted equality of access to resources, development, education, and participation in governance.

Britain did little to develop Iraq and educate the people beyond what was necessary to run the Iraqi government. When independence came Iraq found itself with little education and backward technology. The idea of democracy may have been talked about but no one did anything to establish the institutions and training necessary to make democracy functional and viable. In 1958 the monarchy was abolished and replaced by a republic, but the functionality and viability of the new system was little improved. The presidency turned into tenure for life until Saddam Hussein was deposed and eventually executed by the US forces and the American imposed Iraqi government.

The Israel/Palestine conflict started over a century ago and took its eventual shape in 1917 with the Balfour Declaration, which committed the British government to facilitate the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine, but without infringement on the cultural and economic rights of the native people. The Arabs, including the Palestinians, responded quickly with a rejection of the idea of a national home for the Jews on their land. Violence soon followed and it has not stopped, except

during WWII when the British government suppressed all contrary activities in order to concentrate on the war effort. At the end of WWII the conflict was resumed. The British government decided to end the mandate and leave the issue in the hands of the UN. The UN adopted the 1947 Partition Plan, which was accepted by the Jews and rejected by the Arabs. The neighboring Arab governments dispatched their military forces to prevent implementation of the Partition Plan. Israel was able to repulse all of them and gain a third more land than allocated by the UN. The rest of Palestine was divided: Jordan annexed the West Bank, and Egypt administered the Gaza Strip. As British influence began to subside, American influence started to mount, also in favor of Israel. The dynamics of the conflict reached a climax in the 1967 six-day war, which gave Israel control of the rest of Palestine, occupation of the Golan Heights from Syria, and all of Sinai from Egypt. Following the 1973 war Egypt felt strong enough to negotiate peace with Israel; a peace agreement was signed in 1978 at Camp David under the watchful eye of President Jimmy Carter. The agreement gave the Sinai back to Egypt in stages ending in 1981; it gave Israel peace and assurance that no all-out war with the Arabs will be forthcoming without Egypt. The Golan Heights, in contrast, are still under Israeli occupation. The Palestinians did not agree to leave matters in the hands of the Arab countries. In 1974 the PLO gained recognition by the United Nations as sole representative of the Palestinian people, but it took them until 1988 to indirectly accept the existence of Israel. Only then it became feasible to negotiate with Israel and have access to the US government good offices. In 1993 the Israeli Prime Minister Ishaq Rabin and Chairman Yasser Arafat signed the Declaration of Principles negotiated directly by Palestinian and Israeli officials within the framework of what became known as the Oslo Agreement. The Agreement put the Palestinians back in charge of their own affairs (sort of), and allowed Yasser Arafat and his administration to return to the West Bank and Gaza Strip in preparation for a two-state solution. Israel, however, continued the occupation pending implementation of the Declared principles of the Agreement. To this day Israel and Palestine have not complied with that Agreement.

Foreign intervention in all three cases came also from neighboring countries and other small nations directly or indirectly. Ethiopia, Chad, Kenya, Libya, and Nigeria were involved in Sudan. Even Israel played a role in support of the rebels by transporting arms to them.

#### WHY THE CONFLICT AND THE WAR?

War can be to seize territory, subdue an enemy, gain materially, test technology, spread beliefs and doctrines, or secure access to strategic resources such as oil. It can also be to augment the security of an ally.

Sudan's South contained mostly Christians and Animists, while Muslim Arabs were a majority in Khartoum, the capital city, and in the North. The Arabs are Caucasians, but the South and Darfur inhabitants are mostly African Negroids, though they are mostly Muslims like the Arabs of the North. People in the South demand equality of access to resources and government services, and freedom of religion, especially when the Khartoum government tried to adopt Islam as the State religion and the Shari'a (Islamic law) as the law of the country. After a quarter of a century of violence the government of Sudan agreed to exempt the non-Muslims from the Shari'a Law and promised equality, as contained in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

reached in 2003 and signed in 2005. The two parties agreed that in 2011 there would be a referendum regarding the future relations between the central government and the South. In contrast, the people of Darfur have wanted equality but have not been able to reach an agreement with the central government. It is important to mention that the South and Darfur contain the three most important natural resources of the country, arable land, water, and the newly discovered oil, all of which are controlled by the central government.

Iraq's first war with the West was ignited when Saddam Hussein decided that Kuwait was part of Iraq. In 1990 he invaded Kuwait and occupied it briefly, until a coalition under auspices of the UN and leadership of the United States defeated the Iraqi forces and expelled them out of Kuwait. As a result and because of assumed threats of the Iraqi regime under Saddam, Iraq was subjected to economic and trade sanctions by the UN and to a no-fly zone by the US and Britain, beginning in 1991. In the meantime the Kurds living in the North, Kirkuk and Mosul District, declared autonomy with the help of the US, and set its own independent government. The Kurdish province flourished, but the rest of the country suffered much deprivation, poverty, and unemployment. After the 9/11/2001 attacks on the Trade Center in New York, the US accused Iraq of hosting terrorists, and compiling WMD. The case was brought before the UN Security Council but the Council was not ready to approve the use of force against Iraq. The US, however, seemed intent on liberating Iraq from Saddam Hussein, removing the threat of WMD, and of fighting terrorism. A Coalition of the Willing, led by the US, invaded Iraq on April 3, 2003 and occupied it. The US established its headquarters in Baghdad, the British in Basra, and the Kurds stayed in the Kirkuk Province. The rest of the country, and most of Baghdad eventually fell under the chaotic rule of insurgents, private militias, and tribal chiefs. Sectarian divisions became the rule and insecurity predominated. Iraqis were now identified as Sunnis, Shi'is, or Kurds, but not as Arabs or as Iraqis. Fragmentation of power, chaos, and Terror were now the facts of everyday life, and they still are. Although most Iraqis and most Americans want the occupation forces to leave Iraq, the US administration is still stuck on realizing its objectives, which in the mean time have been expanded to include the establishment of democracy in Iraq as a model and prototype for democracy in the whole Middle East. Apparently creating a democracy in Iraq had been on the minds of a select group of advisors and supporters of President George W. Bush since the mid 1970s. This group includes former president Bush, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and Donald Rumsfeld, all of them guided by Ahmad Chalabi, and influenced by the Israeli lobby, to secure access to Iraq's clean and cheap oil. Saddam has been deposed and executed; WMD have not been found; and no relationship between Iraqi insurgents and al Qaeda has been established, and yet the occupation and war go on.

The Israel/Palestine conflict survives because neither party would agree to serious compromises. The Palestinians request the implementation of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, which require Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in the 1967 war, respect UN Resolution 194, which provides for the return of Palestinian refugees, or compensation for what they left behind, a two state solution, and peace and security for all. Israel has agreed in principle to abide by Resolution 242, subject to interpretation and negotiation. However, Israel has denied responsibility for the refugee problem, and has insisted on full recognition of its sovereignty and right to exist by all the Arabs, a

condition not yet fulfilled, not even by all Palestinian factions. In the meantime, the Palestinians keep losing territory for Jewish settlements in the West Bank, as Israel accumulates obstacles that hinder withdrawal to the pre-June 4 1967 borders. The latest obstacle in this drama is the erection of a “defense wall” on Palestinian land, separating Israel from the West Bank. Peace now seems farther away than ever before.

## PEACE PROSPECTS

The peace prospects are influenced by several factors:

First, the international community, individually and collectively, tends to take sides with one party or another, sometimes blindly and irrationally.

Second, the veto power of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council serves as an obstacle to approval or implementation of UN resolutions.

Third, in each of the conflicts under observation, the stronger party hesitates on giving up any of its privileges, and no other power is willing to force it to do so. The weaker party continues to hope and struggle, even when it is losing some of its earlier achievements.

Fourth, the weaker party in each conflict tends to be fragmented and disunited in ideology and action, which weakens its position in negotiating with the stronger party.

Fifth, the stronger parties, the Government of Sudan, the US in Iraq, and Israel in Israel/Palestine, have the appearance of legitimacy, access to resources including advanced weapons and technology, and to security within their own territories.

Sixth, in all these cases there has been too much cruelty and dehumanization to forget and forgive, or to settle willingly for less than the prior minimum established by each party. Here are some illustrations.

The government of Sudan has taken advantage of the UN Charter, which dictates that the UN must secure permission of the government of the country before taking any action within its boundaries, unless authorized to do so by the Security Council. Since any one of the five permanent members of the Security Council can veto a resolution, the government of Sudan feels secure in its refusal to compromise with rebels, even when they resort to violence against it. In its latest effort to secure access for a peacekeeping UN force in Darfur, the UN had to compromise and agree that all members of the force must be from Africa, with only some from Asia. Whether this force will be allowed in remains to be seen.

In the case of the Iraq war, the US government went in without securing approval of the UN Security Council, and regardless of the objections of the Secretary General. The Security Council could not pass a resolution against the US because of the veto power; even if it had passed a resolution against the invasion, who would enforce it? In other words, MIGHT IS RIGHT, even in today’s Global society.

This has also been the story of Israel in its conflict with the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. Not only has the US sided with Israel blindly and openly, but also it has cast a veto vote against all resolutions objected to by Israel. Hence, the stalemate continues, as do the violence and the suffering.

The stronger party has little incentive to compromise in as much as the destruction and losses it suffers are minimal, compared with those of the weaker party, in whose territory the war activity takes place. Sudan, for instance, fights the rebels where they happen to be, in the South or in Darfur, or on the borders of the neighboring

countries in which they have safe shelter. Khartoum and the North are safe and peaceful. The same applies to Iraq where the fighting goes on, far away from the US, Britain, or home country of other members of the Coalition of the Willing. The American people feel little of the suffering of the Iraqi people, who are threatened all the time with violence. They also suffer shortages of food, medicine, jobs, and security of existence, all of which are inflicted on them by the stronger party, the US. The same may be observed in Israel/Palestine. The violent encounters since 1967 have been mostly in the WBG. Because of this geopolitical strategy the infrastructure of the weaker party is destroyed, the losses mount. Hundreds of villages get demolished and abandoned, as was the case in Palestine in 1948/49, and as recently as a few weeks ago in Darfur. The people lose hope for peace in their own country and decide to move on. This is happening massively in Iraq where fifty thousand people leave their home each month. The casualties among the Palestinians and the Iraqis are not known, but they run into the hundreds of thousands dead, and many more injured or maimed for life, compared with a little over 20 thousand Jews and Israelis in all the wars combined, as of March 1997. The American losses in Iraq are a little over 3,500 soldiers and less than 30,000 injured. Destruction in Israel has been minimal compared to the massive destruction of Arab villages, the uprooting of trees, the restriction of movement, destruction of the economy, and the obstruction of development and growth, except of the population. All in all, the war has been dehumanized in all three cases.

Dehumanization means to render the prospective victim invisible and unrecognized by the perpetrator of violence. This means that the soldier carrying the weapon does not consider the victim a human being. He does not feel for him/her, because he or she is invisible and because the soldier has been convinced that it is the only choice: either you kill or get killed. The advances in technology have facilitated dehumanization. From the catapult to gunpowder to the rifle, to the cannon, to the flying objects, which carry explosives and drop them on the far away target. Israel is now building an automatic border defense system, which monitors the borders electronically and removes the danger from a distance, without seeing or being seen. According to Israeli sources this will be the first automatic border defense system in the world. However, automation and technology are not the only explanation of dehumanization. The Palestinians and the Israelis did not wait for technology to dehumanize their treatment of each other. The American soldiers in Abu Graib in Baghdad did not need technology to dehumanize the treatment of their prisoners. The government of Sudan would dispatch planes and armored cars to fight the poorly armed rebels, and the Janjaweed (Fursan or mounted fighters) on horseback or camelback to attack the civilians and scare them into fleeing and abandoning their crops, homes, and villages in Darfur. The Janjaweed would then torch what is left behind so that the villagers would have no reason to come back, even if they were able to, just as the Palestinians who became refugees had no place to come back to, after their homes and villages were destroyed. Evidently dehumanization starts with the policy makers and with the training of soldiers, in spite of the existing Geneva Conventions regarding the treatment of enemies caught alive, and the management of their properties pending agreements to end the violence and make peace.

The dehumanization may be associated with the tendency to be cruel to the enemy, but also to those who may be exploited by the military. The use of excessive

force is one form of cruelty; taking advantage of women in the military by their colleagues or superiors is another form. When a state orders the military to do what it considers to be terrorism if performed by the other party, then the state would be the terrorist, which is a third form of cruelty.

One more factor obstructs the achievement of peace in all three cases, namely the fragmentation and disunity among the members of the weaker party. The leadership in the South of Sudan and in Darfur lacked unity, agreement on strategy, or coordination of action. The government of Sudan could easily woo certain factions into disagreement with the leaders and thus weaken their ability to negotiate on behalf of the movement. The same is true in Iraq. The insurgents are not well identified and the opponents of foreign occupation may be Sunnis, Shi'is or Kurds, though they disagree among themselves on how to deal with the stronger power, and how to reflect the benefits of collaborating with that power.

Factionalism among the Palestinians has a long history. The PLO had more than 12 factions, ranging from total rejection of Israel's existence to wanting to cooperate and negotiate a settlement. This fragmentation reached its climax a week ago when the supporters of the President of the PNA, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, and those of the Prime Minister, Ishmael Haniyeh of Hamas, faced each other with arms and bullets until Hamas secured control of Gaza and ousted Fatah from the city, and thus created two separate entities, one ruling in Gaza and the other in the West Bank. Here again the foreign element is primary in as much as the foreign governments in the west are rushing to endorse Abbas the moderate and penalize Haniyeh and Hamas the rejectionists, even though the latter won the elections against Fatah, thus allowing Israel to claim that there is no leader with whom to negotiate a peace agreement.

#### WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The idea that might is right holds in all three cases, regardless of the veto power, because of the apparent legitimacy of the stronger party and its ability to mobilize resources of the country, acquire weapons legally, and hunt the rebels in the name of law and order. In contrast, the rebels and the weaker party have to depend on contributions from supporters, smuggled light weapons, or on help from neighboring countries, who may change their mind and end the support without notice. As a result, the rebels in Sudan have had to face jet fighters, armored cars, tanks, and trained military personnel, with light weapons and, ideology, and determination.

The same applies to the insurgents in Iraq. They face the mighty US military, which come with the most advanced weapons and communication equipment. The insurgents come with light weapons, home made explosives, and determination to sacrifice their own lives in the cause of their objectives, which in many cases are vague and little understood by the opponents. In the meantime casualties and destruction continue to mount on both sides. The planners of the war and their expert advisors seem to have only limited understanding of Iraq, the Arabs, or the Middle East. They went in convinced of the righteousness of their declared causes and now they face a dilemma of misunderstanding. Yet, fighters against occupation have almost always succeeded. The US might as well heed that.

And so it is in the Israel/Palestine encounters. Israeli forces come with helicopter gun ships, tanks, armored cars, and laser-controlled missiles. They target individuals to

assassinate, buildings and institutions to destroy, and any suspicious activity by the Palestinians. In contrast, the Palestinians, like the Iraqi insurgents, come with light weapons, homemade explosives, strong commitments, and slingshots. The contrast is most telling in the case of a lost life in the struggle against each other: among the Israelis it is a tragedy; among the Palestinians it is a celebration because the victim will be a martyr. The contrast is also evident in the fact that the Palestinians have not been able to down a single Israeli helicopter or fighter plane. Israel manufactures much of its weapons and it is able to secure the rest from the US and other manufacturers in the West. The Palestinians have no access to such resources, not even from the Arab countries.

The search for peace in the Israel/Palestine conflict is complicated by the fact that neither party to the conflict is willing to face the reality that no party can achieve all its objectives. Compromise is the key to a solution. The outlines of a solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict are well known: two independent sovereign states side by side, mutual recognition of each other, peace and security for all, a reasonable solution to the refugee problem, outside Israel, with compensation for what they left behind, sharing the natural resources according to international law, and negotiations between the two parties. The two parties to the conflict in Israel/Palestine and in Sudan do not need an outside mediator. They need to talk to each other, with determination, hope, and positive attitude that they will find the solution, and they will find it.

In Iraq the problem is a little different. The US President and his cabinet are too selective of the expert advisors they depend on. They must be able to tell the administration what it wants to hear in support of the current policies, even though the reality of the situation demands otherwise. Hopefully they will begin to consider other positions and begin to comprehend the ineffectiveness of their policies. Their best option at this time is to leave Iraq to the Iraqis, with help from the UN and the Arab League. Let us hope that parties in all three conflicts will find the right way to end these unwanted wars, and find peace and security in the near future.

## **A MIDDLE EAST FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**OCTOBER 2007**

Egypt submitted a proposal at the annual conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna last September to pass a resolution to render the Middle East free of nuclear weapons. 53 members approved; 2 rejected (Israel and the US); 45 abstained, including 25 who are members of the European Union (EU), and the others are hopeful of such membership. Egypt was surprised and disappointed and it protested to the EU members for their abstaining. Egypt, according to the source, was surprised because, until the 2006 meeting, agreements were reached by consensus. In 2006 Israel insisted on a vote. It is apparent that a new pattern has been established.

What is surprising to me is that Egypt expected approval by EU members; especially that it had modified the language of its proposal. Evidently the abstentions were a reaction to two new paragraphs in the text of the proposal: one requests the members, “not to develop, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons.” The other urges the, “nuclear weapon states to refrain from any action hindering (promoting?) the establishment of a Mideast zone free of nuclear weapons.” India, Israel, and Pakistan are not signatories to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, but Egypt is and so are the US and the members of the EU. Presumably the two objectionable paragraphs are targeting Israel. If so, Egypt should not have been surprised in view of the history of the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. If Egypt truly wanted approval of its proposal, it should have avoided putting Israel and its international benefactors on the spot by forcing them to take a stand on its proposal with those two new paragraphs. On one hand, Egypt should have expected the result. On the other, Egypt could not be so naïve as to seek political capital from supporters of the proposal, who represent developing countries which muster little influence in international relations, especially those affecting Israel and its benefactors.

Let us assume that Egypt truly wanted to promote a Mideast region free of nuclear and other, WMD, Egypt could have pursued its objective by other means. First, Egypt could begin by setting an example for others by disposing of any WMD it has, nuclear, biological, or chemical. That would have shown its intentions and sincerity in promoting good will and peaceful relations in the region. Second, Egypt could have invited others to be co-sponsors of the proposal, particularly from among the members of the EU, who previously were in favor of the idea. Third, Egypt could have consulted with others, including Israel and the US, before submitting its proposal so as to assess the chances of its acceptance, and try to mitigate any negative or objectionable aspects of the proposal. Egypt has a peace agreement with Israel and strong ties with the US. Certain diplomatic maneuvering would have been reasonable and even recommended. By consulting with others Egypt could have realized some political gains without having to propose a measure that had little chance of approval by most of the developed countries, which dominate the international scene. Even Israel might have found it worthwhile to cooperate with Egypt at least by abstaining, in return for something it wants from Egypt. In other words, diplomacy would have been more effective in preventing the development and use of nuclear (and other WMD) in the region. According to undocumented rumors, Israel threatened to use nuclear weapons against Egypt in the 1973 war, but the US pressured it not to, and thus succeeded on avoiding a nuclear disaster.

Looking at the problem from another standpoint, it is not possible that Israel was not the target of Egypt's proposal, but another country in the region was? By not consulting with others, Egypt may have missed an opportunity to point a finger at the real target directly and indirectly. Iran, for example, is said to be within reach of the capability to build a nuclear weapon (in 3 to 8 years according to the IAEA), and that is contrary to Egypt's thinking. Israel also may have missed an opportunity that would have prevailed if it had approved the proposal or at least abstained. By doing so Israel would have suggested that it was not the target of Egypt's proposal, but another country in the region was. Israel, however, likes to be in the headlines, sometimes to its own disadvantage, and this may have been such an occasion.

The proposal by Egypt is similar to one presented by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2006 at a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Yet no one objected or criticized Condoleezza Rice, probably because she seemed to be consulting the members of the GCC, not asking them to vote. She thus was able to make her preference known without putting anyone on the spot.

Egypt was correct in proposing to make the Middle East free of nuclear weapons (and hopefully of all WMD), but Egypt could have chosen a different approach to voice that wish and to be heard by countries that dominate the international scene in substance, instead of going after sterile political capital from powerless countries. Egypt is a leader in the M.E. It can help in promoting good will and diplomacy as a new trend in the region. Let us hope that Egypt will do so, and others will too.

## **A PEACE CONFERENCE AT ANAPOLIS**

**NOVEMBER 2007**

In 1974 I had a meeting with Aaron Yariv, then Minister of Information of Israel. As expected, we discussed the Arab Israeli conflict and how to promote a peace process. Two points were highlighted. First, negotiation is the only viable way because neither side would be able to annihilate the other. Second, each party to the conflict would be wise to put itself in the position of the other and imagine how they see the issues and how they would decide in the given circumstances. To illustrate this point, Yariv said that he had followed the development of Yasser Arafat's political career since the 1950s and he has admired his dedication to the Palestinian cause. If he were in Arafat's position, he would have acted the same way that Arafat had acted, except for Arafat's failure to see the issues from Israel's standpoint. In other words, Arafat was not realistic enough for his own cause.

These two highlighted points are relevant to the impending Annapolis Conference between Israel and the Palestinians, sponsored by the United States. However, many questions have been raised to express skepticism, hope, and hopelessness. For example, should a conference be convened without assurances of some success? Who should be invited to participate? Should basic issues be discussed or should the emphasis be on principles and practical matters? Should this conference be considered the start of negotiations? The media have raised many other questions, with comments and predictions that might influence the expectations and results. However, experienced negotiators would try to remain immune to influence by others, especially by those who are much less informed than they themselves are.

The main principles of an agreement are well known. 1) Two states, Israel and Palestine, will coexist peacefully side by side in the pre-1948 territory known as Palestine, within boundaries established by the United Nations 242 and 338 Resolutions,

which have been generally agreed to by both Israelis and Palestinians. Deviation from the designated boundaries would be negotiated, with land swapping and compensation as helpful instruments to stay within the framework of the UN resolutions.

2) The same principle applies to Jerusalem, which, according to the United Nations, should be international, demilitarized, and open to both Israelis and Palestinians to use as their political capital. Thus, the Israelis and Palestinians will each get their wish to have Jerusalem as their capital, the holy and historical places will be secure, and the city will be open to all visitors, regardless of nationality, belief, or denomination.

3) The Palestinian refugees and the Right of Return have been subject to rhetorical declarations and pronouncements since 1949, though little has been done to agree on a solution. To the Palestinians, the Right of Return has become like a religion, and so has its denial by Israel. Realism in this case would be a good first step in the direction of an agreement. Would the Palestinians, if they were to put themselves in Israel's position, agree to welcome 4 million Jews as future citizens of their state? Would the Israelis, if they were to put themselves in the Palestinian's position, forget the land they had departed or forced out from only half a century ago, especially if the United Nations had resolved they have a right of return to it? Actually the Jews claim a right of return to a land they departed or were forced out from two thousand years ago. However, realism and cooperation between the Palestinians and Israelis would smooth the way out of this stalemate in the direction of a solution. For instance, a symbolic acceptance of the right of return of each party by the other would be a first step; offering compensation for land and assets left behind would help; opening the way for Palestinian settlement elsewhere would be a viable alternative for many; a fourth argument for realism is the fact that many Jews departed or were forced out of the Arab countries since 1948 and were absorbed within Israel. One could argue that population exchange has been applied, although the Palestinian and Jewish refugees were not consulted. The hope is that the negotiators will be realistic enough to see the issues from the adversary's side as well and be courageous enough to recognize the solution and express it strongly and precisely.

4) The other resources, including water, minerals, air and sea space would be shared according to a negotiated formula, and guided by the United Nations and international law. Good will and cooperation would be great facilitators in this case.

Now Israel is presenting a new condition for peace: Recognition of Israel by the Arabs, including the Palestinians, as state of the Jewish people. This condition has attracted many groans from around the Arab and Islamic countries. Again realism may be helpful. All the Arab countries belong to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, thus declaring their Islamic identity. Pakistan calls itself the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Egypt, Libya, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates identify themselves as Arab states. Israel's condition does not imply any more than either of these ways of identification imply. In fact some of the Islamic and Arab countries have more restrictions against other religion and nationalities than Israel does.

The Fall Conference at Annapolis would have more chance of success if the number of participants is limited to those directly involved in the negotiations, and to international institutions with experience in conflict resolution. Another criterion for participation would be the ability and experience to apply rational and secular predictions by others notwithstanding.

This is a great opportunity to negotiate an agreement and finalize a solution. President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert are both ready and willing. President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice are anxious to bring about peace in the Middle East. The peace process has been outlined in the Road Map adopted by the Quartet (The US, Russia, The EU, and the UN), and has been given general acceptance by Israel and Palestine. In the meantime, the Palestinians are suffering from the Israeli occupation, unemployment, poverty, and violence. The Israelis are also suffering from violence, anxiety, and uncertainty regarding the future. Even though the Conference may not offer final solutions to all the issues, it would be invaluable to try to resolve some if not all issues. It would be equally invaluable if the negotiators stay in session until a peace agreement has been concluded. Of course, it would be a great loss if the Conference fails, but it would be a greater loss if an attempt is not made.

**PRESIDENT BUSH AND PEACE BETWEEN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**

**JANUARY 2008**

President George W. Bush has realized several objectives on his visit to the Middle East, ignored some potential actions, and dampened the prospects of success by taking others. He left the Palestine/Israel area on a high note, after accepting an invitation for a return visit in May. He declared that he would be a pain to Israel and Palestine if they need more prodding to reach a peace agreement by the end of his term in office. He succeeded in initiating the negotiations at the highest level of Palestinians and Israelis, as they had promised at the Peace Conference in Annapolis. He outlined his view of a peace agreement with regard to borders, the need to end the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian Refugee Issue, and Jerusalem. The Israelis were mostly happy and appreciative of his statements, but the Palestinians were mostly unhappy but polite in their reactions.

The President seemed to be oblivious to what was happening in Gaza, the Southern part of Palestine with about one and a half million people. He seemed to care little for the disproportionate retribution by Israel for the few rockets launched by Hamas against the town of Sderot. He seemed to ignore the role of Syria in concluding a stable and permanent Palestinian/Israeli peace agreement. He also paid little attention to the discrimination against the Arab citizens of Israel.

Among the negative aspects of his visit was his evident full adoption of the Israeli point of view with regard to the basic issues: the borders, the refugees, Jerusalem, and the Israeli settlements on occupied land. He did remind Israel of its failure to dismantle what he called the illegal outposts, as they promised to do four years earlier. He called for democracy in the Arab world, but it had to be on his terms, whether the people of the Middle East agreed with those terms or not, or whether they were ready for democracy or not. Furthermore, his visit and pronouncements have aggravated the schism within both the Palestinian and Israeli political communities. Hamas, which rules in Gaza, has been critical of President Bush's visit and of President Abbas and his government for negotiating with Israel. The Israeli condition is now in jeopardy since the *Israel Beitanu* Party, led by Avigdor Lieberman, has decided to leave the coalition.

The peace negotiations have started and the two leaders, President Abbas Prime and Minister Olmert, have promised to work for a peace agreement along the lines of the Road Map proposed by the Quartet. President Bush has called on Israel to end the occupation, facilitate mobility within the West Bank, and allow the Palestinian economy to grow, but he did not say what he would do if they do not. However, the idea of land for peace was compromised by Bush's comment that the big settlements, though illegal, may stay, as long as Israel would compensate the Palestinians with an equivalent area of land, on which those settlements sit, about 8% of the area of Palestine on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1967. That, of course, is inconsistent with the UN resolutions 242 and 338, which call for withdrawal from the occupied territories. A similar contradiction was evident between President Bush's vision of a solution of the issue of Jerusalem, and the UN resolutions, which recommended that Jerusalem should be internationalized. Instead, Israel has continued to confiscate, build and alter the character of the city as it saw fit to do. The President seems to have also accepted Israel's claim that Israel is a national home for the Jewish People, just as Palestine should be a national home for the Palestinians, including the refugees. Thus, he has absolved Israel of any responsibility for settling or housing the refugees, or for recognizing their right of return, at least symbolically, regardless of the prospects of its implementation.

President Bush could have done other things to promote the peace between Palestine and Israel. For example, he could and should have noted the importance of Gaza, and the democratically elected Hamas government, as integral parts of the Palestinian community. He left the responsibility to President Abbas to deal with the “terrorists” in Gaza, tame them, subdue them, or ignore them and let Palestine be split into two minute and unviable states. Being on a mission of peace and for democracy, the least President Bush could have done would have been to call on both parts of Palestine to calm down and put an end to violence, which was depleting their human and material resources. Finally, the President could and should have said something about Syria, which is very important to peace in the region. A Palestinian/Israeli agreement would be unstable and impermanent unless it is coordinated with a settlement between Syria and Israel regarding the Golan Heights, which were included in Resolution 242 and 338 calling for withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967.

It is unfortunate that some Israeli and some Palestinian leaders seem to be stuck with old ways of acting and reaching to each other’s actions, and each blames the negative effects on the other party. Israel overreacts with disproportionate heavy weight advanced weapons, and the Palestinians go on with rhetoric and provocative actions against Israel, even though both parties know that their actions and reactions have not brought them closer to their-hoped-for-objectives.

President Bush left Palestine/Israel with a mixed bag of apparent accomplishments and an apparent expectation that a peace agreement will be concluded before the end of his term. If realized, such an agreement would save his legacy as the President who brought peace to the Holy Land.

The Palestinians and Israelis are both tired of war and human and material losses. They both want peace and justice for their people, but they disagree on the meaning of peace and justice. That is where the President could still help to make them see the light, agree on a reasonable meaning of these concepts, and proceed toward an agreement. Certainly the President knows this, and he has an entourage of experts on the Middle East, on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, and on an internationally acceptable meaning of peace and justice. Hopefully he would use his resources to help them reach that point. In the meantime, he has appointed Lt. General William Fraser III to help the groundwork towards the agreement on his behalf, but that would not substitute for his continued direct involvement. Finally, the economies of Palestine and Israel are suffering, especially the economy of Palestine, including Gaza. The President can help in enhancing economic development and growth as a means to democracy, security, and peace. Let us hope that he does what is expected of him by the Palestinians and Israelis who trust him, and who crave for democracy, security, and peace.

## **HOW MANY GENERATIONS OF PALESTINIANS ARE EXPENDABLE?**

**MARCH 2008**

Two and a half generations have already been sacrificed since 1948, the year of the *Nakba*, or catastrophe for the Palestinians, and of Independence for the Israelis. Unfortunately both people have been selfish, blindly nationalistic, driven by ideology, and oblivious to the suffering they have caused themselves and each other. In this issue of AVP I am addressing the Palestinians who have let more than half of their own people continue to live as refugees, stateless, in poverty, lacking in education, and dependent on others for survival. They have made that “sacrifice” in the name of what they consider their Right of Return, with little attention to the practicality of their return to their homes, villages and country, which, since 1948, has been Israel. They quote UN General Assembly Resolution 194 to justify their right, even though that resolution is not binding. It can be enforced by the Security Council only if it is passed by a majority, and unanimously by the five permanent members of that Council, which includes the US, Russia, China, France, and England. All the permanent members are supporters of Israel, and any one of them is capable of using its veto power to prevent implementation. Since 1967 the Palestinians have cited Security Council Resolution 242 as another justification for the Right of Return. However, Resolution 242 addresses the whole issues of peace between Israel and its neighbors, and a “Just” solution to the refugee problem, with little indication that “just” means the Refugee’s Right to Return to their homes and villages, which are now within Israel.

The Palestinian refugees are reinforced in their insistence on the Right of Return by their own leaders, the leaders of the Arab countries, and by leaders of nongovernmental organizations, who live in safety and comfort. The rendition of the right

of return as a just settlement regardless of the costs to the refugees themselves, generates false hopes of quick and easy return. The refugees seem to believe that someday they will be able to return to their homes and villages--when, how, or if ever seem to be of little concern to those teasers. Even the General Assembly of the United Nations carries partial responsibility for the apparent perpetuation of the negative impact of the Right of Return motto by delaying a solution to the refugee problem. A majority of member countries of the General Assembly, with little power or influence to make a difference, vote each year on keeping the Right of Return alive. The UN carries a responsibility for perpetuation of the refugee status also by giving economic and other kinds of aid to 3.67 million registered refugees who depend on UNRWA for survival while in that status. Most of all, the Palestinians have not been able to propose an alternative to the Right of Return, assuming they are interested in finding an alternative, probably because they are afraid of being branded as traitors. Yet they do not seem to feel sorry for the generations of Palestinians who are being wasted in the process.

The Palestinians seem to be living in delusions. They always act like victims who deserve sympathy. They accept meager help from other countries for mere survival. They seem to forget that they had opportunities to establish their own state, which they rejected. However, they may still have that opportunity by being a little more realistic in assessing their situation. They seek mediation by other countries, but they rarely comply with the recommendations of the mediators, charging them with bias in favor of Israel. That may be true, but they fail to remember that all the powerful countries are committed to the security of Israel, as illustrated by their political statements, by their votes in the UN, and by their failure to endorse a Security Council resolution on the Right of Return. Yet, even if they were to pass such a resolution, they would always find ways to avoid its enforcement because it could hurt Israel.

Any rational analysis of the Palestinian refugee problem would show that the costs, material and human, do outweigh the benefits of clinging to the Right of Return as a viable solution in the foreseeable future, even though other viable alternatives may be available. The most evident such alternative is to postpone or set aside indefinitely the expectation that the Right of Return will be implemented any time soon. By doing so, the Palestinians become free of the burdensome obligation of continuing to live in camps, of depending on UN aid to survive, or on the austere charity from other countries. That, however, does not mean that they should forget about their Right of Return, philosophically or in principle. It means that they become free to seek their own fortunes anywhere, with the whole world as their horizon. Some will remain poor, but others will become wealthy. Some will face difficulties in finding jobs, but others will become indispensable professionals in the world economy. Some will enjoy help from different countries, while others will find the strength in themselves to create their own opportunities and their own fortunes. In 1978 Him Darin-Drabkin and I proposed a two-state solution and absorption of the refugees in the Palestinian state with boundaries according to UN Resolution 242. The number of refugees at that time was much smaller than it is now. With compensation for the properties left behind and other forms of aid from the world community, a State of Palestine seemed economically viable. It may still be so, but only if the Palestinian refugees and the Palestinian leaders seek additional venues to utilize the energy and human and material capital of their people in their productive ways. Freedom from the refugee status has many advantages. It may bring

start-up capital, in addition to the presumed compensation that may receive for lost opportunities. It may open doors for professional education and training. It may offer business opportunities that are not available to them at the present time. In 1996 I suggested that the Palestinians would do well in Iraq and Sudan where land and water are abundant. A Palestinian colleague objected that the Palestinians are urban people. So what? Could they not learn and excel in agriculture the way other people do?

The Palestinians are capable in the professions, in education and in economic endeavors. However, to be able to take advantage of their capabilities they have to be free, not only from the Israeli siege they have been under for months, but also from the traditional convictions and commitments to a refugee status that has cost them two and a half generations of human capital. The Palestinians can still open the door and get out. They can abandon the refugee status and the refugee camps. They can become residents and citizens wherever the opportunity prevails. They can do all that and still remember their homes, villages, and the properties they left behind, which they hear about but most have never seen. In fact their new status may make it possible for them to visit their places of origin, without claiming the right to return to them. In the meantime they can accumulate knowledge, human and material capital, become wealthy, and develop expertise in political and diplomatic relations, enough to influence their own future in a peaceful and productive way.

Two and a half generations of Palestinians have arguably been wasted. It is high time for the Palestinian people to wake up. It is time to search for a light at the end of the refugee tunnel. It is time to take advantage of the opportunities that may open up for them in Palestine and around the world. By doing so they will no longer be dependent on charity for survival. They will no longer have to rely on unreliable others for protection, or on NGOs, all of whom are too weak to make a difference. The Palestinians are a people with dignity and self-respect. With independence, freedom, and rational thinking, they could and should excel in the world community and among the sovereign nations.

## **US ELECTIONS ARE A MESSAGE TO ISRAEL**

**NOVEMBER 2008**

The election of Barack Obama, an African American, to be president of the United States of America has been a dramatic event in the US and around the world. Congratulations to the President-Elect have poured in from around the globe, with best wishes and great hopes for the future. Though these formalities are usually expected, the recent elections were historically unique. They reflected a certain maturity, rationality, and freedom of the American society. They reflected also the ability of the American people to overcome racism, ethnic, and color difference in deciding for whom they vote. The African American community comprises about 18 percent of the US population and it does not have the material or political power to select the nominee or elect the president. Yet Barack Obama has been elected because the people appreciate his merits and qualifications, and because it was time to liberate themselves from the shackles of the past, like tradition, prejudice, and racial and ethnic differences. The elections also reflected a generational progression toward political equality among the US citizens. The results of the 2008 elections could and should serve as a reminder to all people around the world that anything is possible if the people and their leaders respect the rule of law, the principles of democracy, and the sanctity of human freedom and intellect. This is especially relevant in countries with significant minorities, as happens to be the case in the Arab countries and Israel. This viewpoint focuses on Israel.

Israel is young and its traditions are still being established. It has a high level of education, economic development, and political participation. It claims to be a democracy, which is mostly, but not completely true. Israel has yet to achieve equality in

all these areas for all its citizens, including the Arabs, especially in the practice of democracy.

The Arab citizens of Israel do share in democracy, educational system, and freedoms of expression, mobility, and worship. They form political parties, run for public office, elect and some are elected to the Knesset (parliament). Even so, the Arabs in Israel feel discriminated against by the Jewish majority and by governmental leaders, because of their ethnicity. Discrimination is most glaringly evident when a new government is being formed. As far as I can remember, none of the Arab political parties have been consulted when a designated prime minister tries to form a coalition government. This is so even when participation of the 10 or 11 Arab members in the coalition could make the attempt to form a government successful. This has been true in the recent attempt to form a government by Tzippi Livni. She evidently followed the example of her predecessors and ignored the existence of the Arab parties. If invited to join a coalition they might have made Livni successful.

The question is why Livni and her predecessors have not tried to mobilize Arab members to join a coalition. Some argue that Israel is a Jewish State and therefore its government must not depend on support of the non-Jewish members, but that is not consistent with democracy. The Arab parties are described as Anti-Zionist, but democratic Israel cannot be a Zionist state because that would be inconsistent with democracy.

The Arab members of the Knesset are proficient in Hebrew, all or most of them were born after the establishment of the State, and all are law-abiding citizens. Their exclusion from the counting of a majority for the confirmation of a new government is discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, political ideology, or suspicion of disloyalty, which has never been proven in a court of law.

Some might argue that establishing mutual confidence and equality take time, which is true. But Israel has been in existence longer than the active civil rights movement in the US. The civil rights movement in the US became active in the mid-1950s, when President Eisenhower ordered the troops and the National Guard to Little Rock, Ark, to enforce the education equality act and put an end to segregation in the schools. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, or religion, among others. In 1965 President Johnson succeeded in passing the Voting Rights Act.

The State of Israel has been in existence since 1948. Yet it has been inconsistent with the basic concepts and practices of democracy. The US and other supportive countries have not urged Israel to apply what it preaches and claims to be the only democracy in the Middle East. Why have the leaders of Israel never invited the Arab Parties to join a coalition government? Some people may argue that the Arab Parties have not tried to join a coalition, at least to gain the benefits that accrue through negotiating the terms of participation in the coalition. Others might argue that the Arab Parties are not interested in joining a coalition government whose policies are not acceptable to them, even though such participation would give them leverage to influence those policies. The answer to both of these arguments is that the leaders of the Arab Parties have not been approached or consulted on whether they would join a coalition or not. Apparently it is agreed among the Jewish leaders that a Jewish majority is essential to confirm a

government. It is time for the leaders, including Tzippi Livni, to take a step forward and give the Arab leaders the right to choose to join or not to join.

The leaders of Israel, President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Tzippi Livni, have sent messages of congratulations to President-Elect Obama. How much more sincere and effective those messages of congratulations would have been if they had indicated that the leaders and people of Israel were willing and ready to emulate the democracy of the United States, treat their citizens equally, regardless of ethnicity, ideology, religion, or gender, and let the Arab Parties make their own decision to join a coalition or not. By doing so they would have set an example and a challenge for the other countries of the Middle East and gained support and admiration of the world. By doing so they would also have enhanced the peace process and the security of Israel and all its citizens.

## **FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE FOR AFGHANISTAN**

### **DECEMBER 2008**

It has been my understanding that the United States system of culture and politics promotes independence and freedom for all people, especially since the administration of Woodrow Wilson. However, we have rarely complied with our own political and cultural principles. This is true of our relations with Afghanistan. The Afghan people would certainly want to be free and independent of foreign domination and occupation. Several questions may be raised in this respect: Why do we spend hundreds of billions of dollars annually in our operations there? When do we plan to leave that country to its people and let them enjoy freedom and independence as they see fit? Several possible answers may be provided, including: Liberation of the Afghan People; Protection of our interests; Defense of our country; Creation of democracy, etc. Let us look back at each of these individually.

Liberation of the Afghan people. It would be interesting to find out liberation from whom; who are the occupiers beside our allies and us. We went there to block the Soviet forces from occupying the country. The Soviets have left, but we are still there. Our costs have been mounting, in life and material. The Afghan people, other than some government leaders, have not asked us to be there. Maybe we can free them from Taliban but Taliban are Afghans with certain views apparently not shared by a majority. This means that the conflict with Taliban is an internal matter. The Afghan people should be

allowed to deal with their internal affairs on their own. The internal conflict is due to differences in ideology or religious orientation. Who are we to decide which orientation or ideology should prevail? If anything, the best we can do is encourage co-existence of different ideologies and religious orientations, the way we try to do it in this country. Furthermore, Taliban is not our enemy and cannot be a threat to our existence or sovereignty.

Liberation of the Afghan people may be to reduce the impact of Al Qaeda on the general population and in the foreign policy of Afghanistan. However, the prevailing view is that Al Qaeda is headquartered in Pakistan and not in Afghanistan. If true, then we are wasting our resources, which are concentrated in Afghanistan.

Protection of our interests. As far as I can find out we have no interests that cannot be protected and promoted by peaceful means, such as negotiation, trade, and bilateral agreements. On the other hand, Afghanistan is poor, has few natural resources, limited trade potential, and modest international influence. If so, we do not need to occupy the country, direct its government policies, or send young men and women to face death and injury, or inflict the same on the Afghan soldiers, with collateral effects on Afghan civilians. We do not need to send our planes to destroy homes, infrastructures, and economic enterprises in their search for an imaginary enemy. The costs have been high in lives and material for both sides.

Defense of our Country. The Afghan people have done us no harm, and their potential threat to our country is imaginary at best. Afghanistan is not our enemy, in spite of our intense meddling in their affairs. Furthermore, Afghanistan has a weak military, backward technology, and few resources it can devote to harming us. In fact the governments of the United States and Afghanistan have been on the same side for decades. Let us assume that Taliban and Al Qaeda want to harm us, the most they can do is inflict terrorist acts against our citizens and our interests. Let us find out why they would want to harm us. Maybe they oppose our "occupation" of their country, our meddling in their foreign policies, or our taking sides against them in the internal conflict between them and their government. If so, we should reconsider our policies and our actions to make sure we are doing the right thing by sending over a hundred thousand troops to do what we instruct them to do, regardless of the wishes of the people and of the harm we inflict on them. It may be that we will find ourselves and our policies in the wrong, in which case we can avoid the threat of terrorism by ending our occupation of their country, ceasing to meddle in their internal affairs, and resorting to negotiation to resolve issues between us.

Creation of a Democracy. Education, setting an example, and practice of democracy are the appropriate methods to establish a democracy. Democracy is a way of life and cannot be imposed, especially by an outsider. Extending financial aid to government, helping to build an army, or commending the leaders for their (presumptuous) efforts, are bound to be a failure, as can be observed in most of the developing countries. They hold elections and vote but most of them lack knowledge of the basic principles of democracy and stay bound to tradition, tribal connections, and self-interest. The transition to a democracy takes a long time, as best illustrated by the behavior of the Arabs in Israel. After six decades of interaction with Jews who practice democratic behavior, the Arabs are now on the verge of becoming democratic. How can

we expect the Afghan people to apply democratic principles to their daily life as a result of our actions?

Conclusion. Given all of the above, there are only a few alternative methods to deal with the situation in Afghanistan, solve the conflict, and help the country to develop, as follows:

1. Withdraw all foreign troops as soon as technically possible.
2. Announce the withdrawal of the foreign military, as a gift to the people of Afghanistan, who deserve to be free of foreign occupation and meddling in their internal affairs.
3. Declare a program of aid, if wanted, to advance education, improve the economy, and facilitate communications.
4. Administer the aid program through the United Nations directly to the people and not to the government. This will engage the people and give them the benefits of aid, which are not reaching them at the present time.
5. This program would save us lives and material, and spare ourselves the hatred by the Afghan people for the pain we inflict on them, intentionally or not.
6. The cost of this program would be less than half of what we spend on the military in one year.

Will money work to silence the Taliban and reduce the support Al 'Qa'eda apparently enjoys in Afghanistan? Money is working for the trucking companies that transport the supplies from the Bagram Air Base to the various military posts in East and South Afghanistan. The price depends on the good transported, the distance, and the risk assessed. The estimate is that 10 to 20 percent of the contract fund goes for protection of the convoys of supplies to the military. A Taliban truck leads the convoy and another follows. The money paid for protection may be considered insurance fees, especially that transport companies are not allowed to use weapons stronger than rifles, while Taliban and Al Quaked militants have rockets at their disposal.

In view of these various arguments, I propose that we withdraw our troops from Afghanistan as soon as absolutely possible, replace violence with peace, and the United States bullets with butter.

**WILL THE NATANYAHU GOVERNMENT MAKE PROGRESS TOWARDS  
PEACE?**

**DECEMBER 2009**

Most observers would consider the above question rhetorical or academic and quickly say, unlikely. They will remember that President Bema and PM Natanyahu have expressed different objectives regarding the final solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the status of construction in the Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and other issues. Yet PM Natanyahu may surprise all by changing his declared attitude and agree to a peace settlement within a few months, in principle at least. People will remember that Arab and Israeli leaders have come up with surprises relating to the conflict in the last three decades. President Anwar Sadat surprised all by going to Jerusalem, addressing the Knesset, and eventually signing a peace agreement with Israel. Menahim Begin surprised us all by agreeing with Sadat and co-signing the peace agreement with him under the auspices of former President Jimmy Carter. Yasser Arafat surprised us when he accepted Security Council Resolution 242 and thus implicitly recognized the existence of Israel. By doing so he opened the way for negotiations. Yitzhak Rabin surprised us when he shook hands with Arafat and co-signed the Declaration of Principles based on the Oslo Agreement, under the auspices of former president Clinton. That agreement made it

possible for the Palestinian leaders to come back from Tunisia to Palestine and establish the Palestine National Authority, which has acted as a pseudo government of Palestine. Netanyahu may go into history as the leader who concluded a peace agreement with the Palestinians to increase the security of his country and bring peace and tranquility to his people.

The odds have changed since the days of Arafat and Rabin, but that is when good and strong leadership makes a big difference. Given the system of government in Israel, PM Netanyahu is capable of reaching and signing a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Even so, President Obama and PM Netanyahu will face many obstacles in the way to a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine. On one hand, the Palestinians have two governments, one in Ramallah and the other in Gaza. Attempts to unite them have so far not been successful. A strong and united government will enhance the ability of the government to convince the Palestinian people that peace with Israel is their best option. On the other hand, some proactive members of the coalition government are bound to object to any agreement with the Palestinians. This is indicated by their behavior toward the Israeli Arab citizens, toward the Palestinians in the WBG and toward their land. Here are some illustrations.

First, Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Lieberman has submitted a bill to the Knesset to prohibit the Israeli Arabs from commemorating the NAKBA (Catastrophe) that befell Palestine in 1948/49, on a day that coincides with Israel's Independence Day. Actually the Nakba occurred over several months and any day during that period would be fitting to commemorate the Nakba and avoid the conflict with the Independence Day.

Second, Israel Beitanu, Lieberman's party, has submitted a bill demanding the Israeli Arabs to sign a loyalty oath to the state of Israel as a Jewish, Zionist, and Democratic state, and respect all its symbols, or lose their citizenship. The Israeli cabinet has rejected this proposal, but it can still be brought before the Knesset. There is a contradiction here: How can Israel be considered a democracy when it describes itself as an exclusive Jewish, Zionist state demanding a loyalty oath from one section of the population and not from the other. I, for one, will never sign such an oath.

Third, Israel Beitanu demands Israeli Arabs to serve in the military or a civic agency or else lose their citizenship. In contrast, Israeli Jews who refuse to serve in the military might be sent to jail but never are they threatened with losing their citizenship.

Fourth, a member of the National Union Party, which is in the coalition government, has submitted a bill to declare Jordan as Palestine. The bill was supported in its first reading, out of three, by 53 members including 3 cabinet members who belong to the Labor Party (Ehud Barak, Benjamin Ben Eliezer, and Yitzhak Herzog). President Shimon Peres has criticized the bill as an interference in Jordan's affairs, but not unacceptable for other reasons. This bill and its supporters ignore the fact that Jordan has had a peace agreement with Israel since 1994.

Fifth, Netanyahu has yet to accept the two state solution, which is based on Security Council Resolution 242, and has been accepted by the Palestinians and most other countries, including the United States of America. PM Netanyahu is proposing an alternative: a state and a half solution, which gives the Palestinians political autonomy under the supervision of a friendly Arab country to make sure that Hamas will not take control of the government.

Sixth, Netanyahu insists on continuing construction of Jewish settlements in the West Bank to accommodate the natural growth of the population at the expense of Arab land. Israeli leaders made promises to freeze the construction in the settlements but never kept them. Netanyahu might change his mind and agree to freeze construction as requested by President Obama. That would be a welcome surprise.

An outside neutral observer would certainly wonder how a Jewish, Zionist state could be democratic, especially when 20 percent of its population are not Jews, and most probably not Zionist. Israel can be a national home for the Jews and it can be a national home for the Israeli Arabs.

PM Netanyahu is cognizant of the burdens suffered by the Palestinians in the occupied territories and he says he intends to do something about that. He prefers improving their economic conditions before dealing with the impenetrable political dilemma. Probably, many Palestinians agree with him. Yet he has done little to indicate how serious he is about the economy. He has not announced any plans to facilitate economic development and growth. Restrictions on mobility are still in place. Restrictions on trade are still there. Restrictions on access to water, energy, and health services are still evident. If PM Netanyahu can put an end to grabbing Palestinian land, allow the farmers to bring life to agriculture, the merchants can enliven trade, and the industrialists to promote manufacturing and technical advances that are basic to economic development and growth. By doing these things, PM Netanyahu will help bring peace and tranquility to the area, and that could be his biggest surprise.

## **MYTH AND REALITY IN THE ARAB ISRAELI CONFLICT**

**DECEMBER 2010**

Probably most people wonder why the Arabs and Israel have not resolved their conflict and signed a peace agreement, in view of the numerous attempts to bring about peace between them. Why the peace process has not, so far, succeeded? Scholars, journalists, and policy makers find all kinds of explanations for the stalemate, except the one I consider major obstacle, namely the dominance of myth over reality in describing the conflict, narrating it, and in trying to come up with a solution. By depending on myths and ignoring reality one tends to consider the wrong information and thus one is bound to reach irrelevant conclusions. Whether intended or not is unimportant. The result is always a hindrance of conflict resolution and peacemaking. The alternative would be to discard the myths surrounding the conflict, and search for the real and true information to make relevant decisions, and increase the probability of successful negotiations and the achievement of a peace agreement. I shall explore TEN myths and how they tend to perpetuate the conflict.

Myth # ONE understates the duration of the conflict. The conflict did not start in 1948 or 1967. It started over a century ago when Theodor Herzl published his book, *THE JEWISH STATE* in Palestine, in 1893. That is when Zionism formally started, and when a strong international lobby in favor of a Jewish state in Palestine came into being. That

also is when pressures on the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire mounted and eventually persuaded him to permit Jews to immigrate into Palestine and begin building settlements and cooperative farms.

Myth # TWO was the spreading of the false information that Palestine was a land without people, and the Jews were a people without land. The reality is that Palestine had thousands of people, including my family. I grew up in the family house, which was about 450 years old. It is also false to say that the Jews were a people without land. They were citizens of different countries, presumably with the full rights of citizenship, although the majority of non-Jews in the respective countries often ignored those rights.

Myth # THREE is that Arabs and Jews had always lived together in peace. Actually they co-existed, but had little interaction, social, political, or educational. Arab workers worked for Jewish employers and mixed with Jewish workers, but once the workday ended, interaction between the two people also ended. Arabs and Jews lived in separate sections of the cities and in separate rural communities. They had different languages, Arabic and Hebrew, which were languages of instruction in separate schools for Arabs and Jews. Few Arabs learned Hebrew and few Jews learned Arabic. They had different standards of living, levels of education, religion, and places of worship. The Jews aimed at standards of living enjoyed by Jews in western countries, especially in the countries they left behind. This continued after the State of Israel was established. The Arabs, or most of them lived at the survival level, except for the big landlords and the heads of clans or prominent families, who lived in relative luxury. These wealthier people were the leaders of their communities. The trouble between Arabs and Jews in Palestine started when the British government, which had a mandate over Palestine, issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917, committing itself to facilitate the establishment of a national home for the Jews, as long as it does not infringe on the social and religious rights of the native people. There was no mention of protecting the political rights of the native people. Trouble began soon after, the Arabs protested but that brought no relief. Violence against the Jews and against the British erupted in 1922, 1929, and 1936-1939. The British government applied severe measures to stop the violence in 1939 in order to concentrate on fighting WWII. In 1937 the Peel Commission recommended partition of Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews. The Jews said YES, but the Arabs said NO, insisting that Palestine should be a united, democratic, and secular state for all.

Myth # FOUR is that now, three quarters of a century later, not a single Arab country has a united, democratic, and secular state, especially the Palestinians. Most of them are fractured, guided by religion, and undemocratic, but none of them would admit that much, believing that they are democratic and united. The claim to be secular is never mentioned, except probably in Lebanon.

Myth # FIVE is that democracy prevails in Egypt, Jordan, and Israel, among Middle East countries, which have elections. Actually Egypt and Jordan have closer to a dictatorship than to a democracy. The same applies to other Arab countries. Democracy demands more than formal and phony elections, such as respect for the law and for each other. Israel has a democracy for the Jewish citizens, but not for its Arab citizens, including the Arab members of the Knesset (parliament). The Arab members of the Knesset are excluded from counting when a coalition government is being negotiated or voted on, or when major policy bills are being considered. It has been a tradition that the majority on both of these issues must be Jewish. In fact Israel is admitting its

discrimination against the non-Jews by insisting that it is a State for the Jewish People. However, this is not any less democratic than what happens in the Arab countries, which declare Islam as The State Religion, and treat non-Muslims as less equal citizens than the Muslims.

Myth # SIX is that the Jews forced the Palestinians out of their homes and properties. In reality the Jews did not drive the Arabs out of the country prior to 1948. They purchased land on which they settled from Arabs for exorbitant prices, or else they received the land legally from the public domain controlled by the Mandate Government of Palestine (British). Even in the early part of the 1948/49 war the Jews tried to convince the Arabs to stay, if only as a shield against the threatening Arab armies, which were preparing to prevent the creation of a State of Israel as the Mandate government was coming to an end. I remember Shabati Levy, the Mayor, going around in a car with a loud speaker asking the people of Haifa to stay, but it was too late. The Palestinian leaders had already left the country, on the belief that they would return when the Arab armies defeat the Jewish forces. The common people were afraid and in panic especially after hearing rumors that the Jewish forces were abusing Arab women in the areas they had already occupied. Once the Israeli forces became confident of victory they changed policy: for any excuse they would demolish villages and drive the people across the borders of the neighboring country. I saw inhabitants of 'Amqa, Kuikat, and Birweh driven away and the villages demolished by airplane bombardment. That is how the refugee problem was created.

Myth # SEVEN is that the Jews who resided in the Arab countries left on their own, and of their free will. If so, they would have sold their properties and belongings before leaving, but they did not. It is true, however, that they were encouraged to leave by the Jewish Agency and by the government of Israel at no expense to themselves.

Myth # EIGHT is that the United Nations (UN) and the Security Council would protect the people's rights and sovereignty around the world. This is true on paper, but it is a myth in the case of Israel and in other cases that are special to a member of the Security Council, with wealth and veto power. Members of the UN have their own special vested interests that guide their actions and votes in the UN and outside it. They did liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in 1991 because all permanent members of the Security Council (China, England, France, Russia and the US) were in agreement to do so. This has never been true in the case of the Arab Israeli conflict. Israel, which has come into being through the UN Partition Plan, Resolution 181, has since then violated all resolutions of the UN it did not agree with. It has occupied and retained a third more land than allowed by the Partition Plan; it has annexed Jerusalem in violation of the Partition Plan; it has accepted UN resolution 242, which required it to withdraw to the June 4<sup>th</sup> 1967 borders, but it has not complied; it has built settlements illegally on Palestinian land; it has done all this without suffering any penalty, because it is protected by the US, permanent member of the Security Council. The US has always used the veto power whenever Israel wanted. Thus the conflict continues and the expectation of peace remains a dream.

Myth # NINE is that the big powers can be neutral and good mediators between the Arabs and Israel. Britain started the pattern of bias in favor of the Jews when it announced the Balfour Declaration and throughout the Mandate period, 1922-1948. Since then, Britain has been replaced by the US as the major blind supporter of Israel. Israel has

been smart enough to take advantage of the opportunities generated by the inability of the permanent members of the Security Council to be neutral. The best the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, could do was to accept the blind support of Israel by the US as a given and try to salvage what they can, if it was not too late to salvage anything.

Myth # TEN is that anti-Semitism means anti-Jewish. The fact is that the Akkadians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Arabs, and Ethiopians are all Semites. They are all descendents of Shem, the eldest son of Noah, according to the Bible. They all have Semitic languages. According to The Encyclopaedia Judaica, “the chief surviving members of the list (of Semites) [are] the Jews and the Arabs.” How odd it is that the chief surviving cousins have been fighting over real estate for over a century!

I wonder how long the conflict between these two Semitic people will last if the leaders, policy makers, and journalists recognize these myths for what they are, and pursue the truth and reality in their places.

## **ENDING THE OCCUPATION IS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE**

**JANUARY 2011**

According to many observers the Palestinian leadership should pursue the end of occupation and not waste time on trying to stop construction of or expanding Jewish settlements in the OT. The emphasis on stopping construction in the settlements as a condition for resuming negotiation is what Israel wants, as a way of gaining more land at the expense of the Palestinians. On the other hand, once occupation is ended building Jewish settlements on liberated or unoccupied Palestinian territories would also stop. Therefore, emphasis in the negotiations should be shifted to ending the occupation as the main objective. There are costs and benefits to the present approach.

First, by making direct negotiations dependent on stopping construction of new settlements or expanding old ones, the Palestinians create a stalemate, which gives the promoters of settlements and opponents of ending occupation more time to expand and build new settlements before the occupation ends. Construction of settlements, for whatever reason, would create new facts on the ground, which makes withdrawal to the 1967 borders more complicated and more difficult. Another cost is the high probability of clashes between the settlers and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) on one side, and the Arab owners of the land on the other, which usually costs the Palestinians life and material. Third, the passage of time while in the current unacceptable situation is itself a cost, because the Palestinians could have been working on the establishment of the state

of Palestine. Finally, becoming dependent on other countries and the United Nations for survival is itself a major economic and moral cost. Three of four Arab generations have been sacrificed in the process of trying to promote peace and security.

What are the benefits? The main benefit is psychological: the leaders will appear strong, holding to a principle, even though no material or political benefit comes out of it. They have almost always said NO to Israeli proposals and then when they considered accepting a proposal, it was too late. Why not meet with Netanyahu and find out what he has in mind? There is no shame in changing one's mind, especially when one finds good reasons to do so. What are the Palestinian leaders waiting for? Most probably they are waiting for the US, the Quartet (the UN, the EU, Russia, and the US) or the Arab League to pressure Israel to stop expanding old or building new settlements. It should be evident by now that the US will not pressure Israel to do that, nor will the Quartet or the UN do it, because the US is a member of both. Nor will the Arab League be able or willing to put enough pressure on Israel to stop building settlements. The Arab countries, individually and collectively, have been unable or unwilling to use their resources to influence Israel directly or indirectly to do anything Israel is not willing to do. Therefore, the Palestinians have to depend on themselves to end the occupation.

Violence is not an option, given the huge gap between the military power of Israel and that of the Palestinians. In fact, President Abbas has declared that violence will never again be a medium for liberation and ending the occupation. One alternative is to accept the occupation, which is not practical because most of the Palestinians do not want it. A different version of continued occupation is annexing the Occupied Territories and making them a part of Israel, which also is not practical because the demographic situation favors the Palestinians against Israel. The only other option is ending the occupation through peaceful negotiations, and the best way to that is direct negotiation. President Abbas can invite Prime Minister Netanyahu to meet directly and initiate the negotiations and test his willingness to meet with Abbas continuously until a solution is found. By taking the initiative Abbas would gain international support immediately. However, special committees composed of Israelis and Palestinians should conduct serious negotiations. Third parties may join but only as observers. The committees should be specialized: one for each of the following issues: security of both parties; mutual recognition of the identity of the state; the end of occupation; the boundaries; Jerusalem; the refugees; the ideal relations between Israel and an independent state of Palestine; and everything else. These committees would embark on their duties as soon as possible. They will have legal and technical consultants to advise them on procedure and what may or may not be recommended. The idea of committees was proposed at the Madrid Conference in 1991 and some committees were formed, but the Oslo Agreement superseded the Madrid Conference and nothing came out of the committee proposal.

The committees will meet simultaneously, each concentrating on its subject matter. Each committee will try to reach the closest to an acceptable solution, regardless of how much time it takes. Of course there is no guarantee that the committee approach will succeed, but it has a good chance to succeed, since it breaks down the conflict into its several components, which helps to identify the problems that are causing a stalemate, and encourages others to show signs of success. We are just beginning a new year, which could be the beginning of a new direction by the Palestinians. It is time that they take the initiative and request a return to the negotiations table, and not always respond to

propositions or actions by Israeli leaders. Let us hope that they find a silver lining and embark on the road to an acceptable solution.

## **THE ARAB SPRING: A FOURTH ARAB AWAKENING?**

**JUNE 2011**

Unrest in the Arab countries in the last few months, in the cause of democracy or popular participation in governance, suggests a fourth Arab Awakening. The first was in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which the recent Arab patriotism was born, at least in literary form. Arabic literature signaled discontent with Ottoman rule, oppression, tyranny, and dependence. In 1857 al-Jami'ya al-'Ilmiya al-Suriya (Syrian Scientific Association) was established for all creeds. Nasif Yazziji and Bustrus Bustani composed manuals on a variety of subjects to be used in missionary schools. In 1883 Dr. Faris Nimr Pasha left Lebanon to Egypt in search of freedom of expression. He was one of the founders of the scientific monthly al-Muqtataf, and al-Muquattam, a daily newspaper. Other symbols of the Arab Awakening were the revolutionary placards appearing in Beirut calling for independence of Syria, united with Lebanon, recognition of Arabic as an official language of the country, side by side with Turkish, removal of censorship and other restrictions on freedom of expression, and employment of local recruits for local military service only. Abdul Rahman al-Kawakebi, qualified in journalism, law and public service was imprisoned for his ecumenical position, as a Muslim, befriending Jews or Christians. He was caring for the weak so much that he was called Abu al-du'fa, or father of the weak. He wrote Um-Qura, and Tabai' al-Istibdad (attributes of tyranny). Western powers

exploited this phase of Arab Awakening to overthrow the Ottoman rule over the Arab countries for their own benefit.

The second Arab Awakening was the rise of Arab leaders during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century against the Ottomans, in collaboration with Britain and France, who had ambitions of their own in the Arab countries. WWI provided the opportunity and by 1918 the rule of the Ottomans came to an end. The Arab countries expected to become independent, as promised. However, there was a disagreement on whether Palestine was included in that promise. Another important result was the fragmentation of the Arab countries and their subjugation to British or French Mandates. This meant the replacement of the Ottomans with British or French rulers. France had a mandate power over Syria and Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, and rule over Algeria as an integral part of France since 1832. Britain had a mandate power over Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, the Gulf states, except Oman, which was already under British rule since 1853 and Saudi Arabia, which was not ruled by outsiders. Britain continued to dominate over Egypt, and over Sudan jointly with Egypt.

The Arab countries were restless from the beginning of the second Awakening, mostly because they felt deceived by the new Mandate powers. Therefore the Arab rulers always tried for independence, which they achieved at various times between 1922 for Egypt and 1971 for Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE. This was the third Arab Awakening. The people were freed from the European rule and their urge for independence was enhanced by President Wilson's declaration in 1917 that all nations ought to be independent. Freedom from the mandates of British, French, or Italian (over Libya) was mostly peaceful but not with much cooperation between ruler and ruled. In some cases, such as Algeria's freedom from France, was the most violent, and Jordan's independence was the least violent. The people became free from European rule, only to submit to absolute monarchies, or dictatorial republics. The people did not participate in governance. Democracy did not mean anything to those native rulers. The presidents of republics acted like permanent royalty and some of them planned to leave their presidency to their posterity, as happened in Syria, and was rumored that it would happen in Egypt, had the people not demonstrated in the capital against the existing regime. The president of Tunisia left the country. The president of Egypt, under pressure, resigned after appointing a vice president and a military council to replace him. The president of Tunisia fled to Saudi Arabia. Trouble arose in Syria and the new president who followed his late father is fighting back. The president of Yemen refuses to quit even though he has lost support of some in the military, and even of members of his own tribe. The president of Libya refuses to quit and uses his military against civilians who demonstrate against his rule. Now an international force, NATO, is using force against his military to protect civilians, according to UN resolutions. The King of Bahrain appointed his son to deal with the demonstrators and invited a military force from Saudi Arabia to combat the demonstrators, while he promises reform to satisfy the people; so far nothing has happened.

The Arab countries are in the middle of what may be called the fourth Awakening, or the Arab Spring, as it has been named. What the end will be, and when are still unknown. However, there are several differences between the three preceding Awakenings and this fourth one, as follows:

First, all three previous Awakenings were initiated by the “elite” –intellectuals, political leaders, high ranking military officers, or members of prominent wealthy families with connections to foreign powers. In contrast, the Arab Spring Awakening was initiated and continues to be carried out by the people, but not to the exclusion of the elite. Evidently, the Arab Spring movement did not depend on foreign powers. However, there is suspicion that US President Barack Obama’s address to the Muslim world from Cairo on June 4, 2009, had an influence, especially his talk about democracy, freedom of expression, equality before the law, transparency, and accountability. These values are among the demands of the Arab demonstrators against the present regimes, which have been created during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Awakening. However, foreign intervention seemed inevitable when the presidents of Libya and Yemen, and the King of Bahrain resorted to military power to suppress the unarmed demonstrators by their people. Now NATO forces are bombarding Libyan airpower to protect what they call civilian targets. The US and European countries have imposed sanctions on Syria’s president to leave his position. Pressures are put on Yemen’s president to resign also, but neither is budging. The kind of Bahrain is only advised to introduce reform. This shows that foreign response varies according to the vested interests of the foreign powers that are responding.

Second, the Arab countries still suffer from duality, poverty, with minor exceptions in the oil-exporting countries, low productivity of labor, backward technology, unemployment, and traditionalism. Participation of the people in governance hardly exists, even though most of the Arab countries have had periodic symbolic elections, which give the existing rulers legitimacy to stay in power, as if by the choice of the people.

Third, there was little change in the quality of education during the third Awakening, in spite of the increase in the number of universities, which hardly affected the analytical ability of the graduates, and that reflected on their productivity, inventiveness, and independence of thinking and acting.

Will the Arab Spring be different? Will it make the necessary institutional changes to guarantee freedom of expression by individuals and by the media? Will it make sure that transparency and accountability of government are evident and respected? Will it make sure that merit will guide employment and appointment to political positions, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or religion? Will it assure the people that the elections will be fair, representative of their free choice, and in accordance with the country’s rewritten constitution? And, finally, will it guarantee that students and teachers at all levels have the freedom of expression, and the chance to analyze and debate issues without fear of retribution? These are some of the conditions that need to be satisfied for the Arab Spring to have positive economic, political, and social effects in the Arab countries. That is the way to have a positive social contract between the people and their government. Let us hope that a mutual social contract will be the future of the Arab countries and all other countries.

