

The Arab-Israeli Conflict
and
The PLO's Quest for Diplomatic Recognition

by

Girmay G. Yohannes

A Thesis
presented to the University of Manitoba
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Political Studies Department

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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QUEST FOR DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION

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GIRMAY G. YOHANNES

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Girmay G. Yohannes

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and critically examine the real basis of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) quest for diplomatic recognition as the government of the Palestine state in exile.

The study is prompted by the underlying theme in the literature on the subject that the Arab-Israeli conflict has generated the Palestinian "diaspora". The crucial issue between Israel and the Arab states are the latter's refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist and the question of Palestinian terrorism. With this in mind, most of the peace initiatives since 1948 have focused on the issues of Israeli security and recognition of Israel's right to exist. In spite of the persistent attempts to settle the conflict through diplomatic means, the Middle East has been plagued with conflict for seven decades. Its ramifications are felt not only by those who are directly involved in and affected by the conflict, but also by the entire international community. In 1967 and again in 1973, the two superpowers were at the brink of nuclear confrontation over that conflict, thus threatening world peace and security.

In Israel and among that country's supporters in the West, the nature of the conflict is obfuscated by the persistent belief that the crucial conflict is with Arab

governments--the governments of Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. In truth, the root cause of this complicated conflict is the loss of "Palestinian national rights" which occurred in the wake of the establishment of the state of Israel. Driven, either by fear or by design from their homes and their lands, millions of Arab inhabitants of the area known for centuries as Palestine found themselves as refugees in different parts of the world. The so-called Arab-Israeli conflict is in reality a conflict between Palestinians who seek a homeland for themselves and the state of Israel which either denies their existence and/or refuses to accept their claim.

Until there is mutual recognition of rights, that is, Israeli recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination and Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist within its pre-1967 border, the possibility for cooperative resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is remote. This is not merely a matter of preferring peace to war, which must be the case with any rational person. It is to suggest that neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis will attain their stated goals and aspirations through paramilitary means or terrorism. An Israeli refusal to recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, can only exacerbate terrorism to ascend rather than descend in the Middle East.

Finding a lasting solution to the Palestinian problem might not induce complete peace between Israel and the Arab states, but it would certainly remove one of the major obstacles to peace. It is a question of historical reality that Egypt, Syria, Jordan and other Arab countries became involved not through any substantive dispute with Israel, but as the champions of the Palestinians. True, since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, issues at stake between Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries have become increasingly important. The question of the Sinai with Egypt, the future of the Golan Heights with Syria, and the Jordan River frontier with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, now involve Israel in direct confrontation with these Arab countries on tangible questions that both sides regard as vital to the realization of their national interests.

In 1970 the former Secretary-General of the Israeli Labour Party, Arie L. Eliav, told a group of students at Tel Aviv University that: "Our relations with the Palestinian Arabs constitute the most important element of our relations with the Arab world as a whole, and the two are inseparably linked." If Israel is to live in peace it must come to an agreement with the Arab world on the Palestinian question. A policy of this kind on Israel's part in regard to the Palestinian Arabs, the territorial borders, Jerusalem, and the refugees, is consistent with the true aims of Zionism and of Israel. Thus, it is safe to say that if the Palestinian problem can be resolved,

then points of dispute between Israel and the Arab states can be settled.

The underlying themes present in this study are examined and explained at the outset. First, the roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict; the need to examine the causes of the conflict is based upon the belief that unless one fully comprehends how that dispute initially came about, one cannot adequately assess the chances of a settlement. Second, the issue of Israel's right to exist and the question of its security creates suspicion in the mind of the Arabs about the future intentions of Israel. The suspicion that the Arabs have about Israel appears to have resulted from Israel's long-held position towards the Palestinians and the occupied territories. The Zionist/Israel doctrine has long espoused the concept of "Greater Israel" conforming to the supposed Biblical borders of the Jewish national entity of antiquity. Yet the extent of that entity is unclear. However, the Israeli government continue to claim that Israel has steadfastly offered to negotiate peace treaties with the Arab states on the basis of the territories occupied during the 1967 War, and on the question of the Palestinian problem in exchange for Arab recognition of Israel's right to exist and for peaceful existence. Israel fights only for survival and in reaction to the Arab drive to destroy the Jewish state. Apparently, the record of the Zionist organization's activities in the occupied territories and Israel's long-term policy

appears to refute the claim.

Third, Israel refuses to give cognizance to the Palestinian right to self-determination and their participation in the peace process. While the Israeli position on the Palestinian question has remained unchanged, some Western governments have persistently urged the Palestinians to recognize Israel's right to exist. Apart from the wishful thinking on the part of Israeli supporters in the West, it seems inconceivable that the Palestinians would give in to Western pressure and recognize Israel's right to exist without a major change in Israeli policy and attitude toward their current problem. To "halt the momentum of an accepted idea, to re-examine assumptions, is a disturbing process and requires more courage than governments can generally summon" (Tuchman, 1970: 354). Thus, if a durable peace in the Middle East is to be envisioned, then there is no escape from the challenge that the Palestinian question must be adequately addressed. The thesis examines the extent to which the Israelis value democracy, and their aspiration of maintaining Israel's Jewish identity hinder and complicate a peaceful settlement.

Israel is one of the few countries in the world today which, on the one hand, wishes to remain as a democratic state, and on the other hand, effectively seeks to remain Jewish by denying the democratic rights of its indigenous population. Either for fear of being accused of anti-semitism, or for feeling guilty for the well-calculated

extermination of Jews during the Second World War, Western academic scholarship and journalism has accorded Israel a special immunity from exposing its policy. One can be sure, however, that Israel's view of democracy, its desire to remain strictly Jewish, and its ambition to gather together world Jewry in a country which is largely desert, is one of the greatest deterrents to a negotiated peace settlement.

Fourth, its appearance on the scene in 1964 added a new element to the Arab-Israeli equation. The P.L.O. has outlined a number of objectives. It seeks to legitimize its status as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. It wants to internationalize the Palestinian question through diplomatic means, and as the government of the Palestinian state in exile, to gain formal diplomatic recognition. This thesis will examine the extent to which the appearance of the P.L.O. either facilitates or hinders the solution of the conflict.

Although there are many competing approaches to the study of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Ben-Dor noted that most of the approaches suffer from at least one conspicuous and debilitating liability: "They lack an adequate theory of post-imperial and post-colonial power political practice in the Middle East" (1983:10). Hence, as the founder of the Palestine Research Centre in Beirut, A. Sayegh has suggested that:

Awareness of the distinction between the
Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli
conflict and consciousness of the

centrality of the former as a root cause and the underlying compulsion of the later understanding of the qualitative divergence between the two aspects of Middle East problem requires different approaches and different modalities of conflict resolution (1983:4).

Much has been said and written about the Arab-Israeli conflict; however, "all sources are suspect". The truth of this statement is demonstrated by the tendency that whatever decision-makers say in public forum does not always correspond to what they do in actual practice. Governments seldom publish their policies out of concern for what scholars wish to know. As a result, in the realm of government policies, there are many open questions; for some, there will never be an answer, while others will be answered only with the passage of time.

One thing is certain, however. One does not possess all the relevant documentation for any historical situation, nor is one assured that the accessible documentation can, as a matter of course, be accepted as entirely reliable.

This thesis by no means escapes such difficulties. In order to reduce the risk of bias in the interpretation of data, especially on issues that are controversial, one must ensure that the conflicting parties speak for themselves. This gives fair and balanced representation to each side.

CHAPTER I

THE ROOTS OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Either for reasons of religion or ideology, historic Palestine has served as a battleground throughout the ages. Most vivid, of course, is the present conflict which began with the end of Turkish rule and the coming of the British and French domination, mandate government. This brought an end to the over 400-year-old Ottoman rule of Palestine.

Situated close to the Suez Canal and the Hedjaz Railway line, Palestine lies in the heart of the Middle East. Its strategic and economic importance was well recognized by the British, Germans and French as early as 1869 when the Suez Canal was first opened. In 1912, the British government attempted "to detach Southern Syria as far as Haifa and Acre (i.e. Palestine) to form a separate buffer state under British influence."¹

Britain's scheme to create a buffer state was deterred by the Ottoman Empire and Germany. Even though the Ottoman Empire was the dominant power in that region, Britain's chief rivals in the Middle East were Germany and France. In fact, it was this imperialist rivalry in the Middle East which was "to a considerable extent responsible . . . for the outbreak of hostilities in 1914."² In addition to the European imperialist powers, the World Zionist movement was also committed to the establishment of a Jewish state in the

region it called the ancestral homeland of the Jews.

Jewish communities existed continuously from the time of the Babylonian exile in 586 B.C.* and the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In A.D. 73 the Romans crushed the last Jewish resistance at Massada. Those who survived the Roman massacre left Palestine and settled in different parts of the Middle East and Europe. Since then Jews continued to live in Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Iraq, Iran and in most Arab countries at peace with their neighbors. In most European countries, however, the living conditions of Jews were quite different. From the time they began to settle in Europe until the end of World War II, the Jews were at best tolerated, at worst persecuted. These circumstances moved Theodor Herzl to publish his book Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State) and he oversaw the formation of the World Zionist Organization in 1897.

After the 1897 Basle Conference, the Zionist pioneers pressed hard upon any government which showed sympathy to their aspirations. Britain was neither sympathetic to the Zionist aspirations nor concerned with the suffering of

*After much suffering, exploitation and oppression at the hands of the Egyptian Pharaohs, they were freed and then led by Moses to the land of Palestine. At first, they lived there in loosely associated tribes under the leader called Judah (1200-1020 B.C.). They formed a united nation (1020-928 B.C.) under Kings David, Saul and Solomon. After Solomon's death they split into two kingdoms--the Northern was called Israel which lasted from 928 to 721 B.C., later destroyed by the Assyrians, but the Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, lasted from 928 to 586 B.C. In 586 B.C., Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem, were razed along with its temple, by the Babylonians (see Borthwick Bruce, Comparative Politics of the Middle East, 1980, p. 89).

the Jewish people. If Britain had been sympathetic and concerned with the Jewish problem in Europe, there was no logical justification for the 1905 Alien Immigration Act, introduced to restrict Jewish immigration into England. In spite of this, however, prominent Zionists adapted a policy which was distinctly pro-British. Through such a policy the Zionists hoped to induce a change in British policy towards the Jewish cause. Until 1914, Britain gave nothing more than lip service to the Zionist aspirations. In 1914, however, Britain was compelled to reassess its policy towards Zionist aspirations.

Two distinctive events account for the British policy change on the Jewish question. First came the outbreak of World War I and the Ottoman Sultan's decision to join Germany and Austria in the war against Britain in the Middle East. second, was the 1917 Russian Revolution. In response Britain not only sought Zionist support, but also the co-operation of the Arabs. In order to win their support in its war against the Germans and the Ottoman Empire, Britain not only promised the Zionists that she would help them realize their aspiration of a Jewish homeland in Palestine, but also pledged to assist the Arabs in gaining their independence after the war. These promises were contained in an exchange of letters between Sherif Hussein and Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt at the time (1915 and 1916):

To His Highness, the Sherif of Mecca:
Great Britain is prepared to recognize
and support the independence of the

Arabs in all the regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca.*

Britain at the time was neither seeking to secure Arab territories nor was it interested in promoting the welfare of the Arab population. Rather, the gesture was made as an inducement to the Sherif to rebel against his Suzerain, the Ottoman Sultan, who had proclaimed a Holy War against Great Britain, France, and Russia, and who was in a position to interrupt vital communications with India and the Far East.

While Hussein and his armies were fighting both the Ottoman and German troops, Britain and France were busy signing agreements and drafting declarations which were contrary to the promises and pledges made by McMahon. On May 16, 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement to partition greater Syria was signed. Under this agreement, which is now known as Syria and Lebanon were to come under the French sphere of influence; Trans-Jordan, Iraq and Palestine were to come under the British sphere of influence.**

Until it was discovered by the Bolsheviks in 1917, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was kept secret. Soon after it

*See for detailed information about the correspondence between H. McMahon and Sherif Hussein, Moore, N., The Arab-Israeli Conflict 1974, Vol. III, pp. 6-22; Great Britain House of Commons, Seasonal Papers, Parliamentary Pub. 1938, pp. 3-18; Dobbing, H., Cause for Concern: A Quaker's View of the Palestine Problem, 1970, Beirut, pp. 10-11.

**For detailed information about the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see N. Moore, The Arab-Israeli Conflict 1974, Vol. III, pp. 24-28, IV Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, pp. 244-247 (First Series, 1952).

became public. Sherif Hussein and his son Faisal not only found themselves sitting perilously between two broken stools, but contemplated joining the Arab nationalist movement which had declared its full support for the Ottoman troops in the war effort.

Even though Balfour himself had campaigned for the introduction of the Alien Act (1905) which banned the immigration of the persecuted Russian Jews to Britain, at the request of the British War Cabinet he made the following declaration on November 2, 1917, on the grounds of sympathy:

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine . . .⁴

There was nothing spontaneous about this declaration. It was the outcome of arduous negotiating between Zionist leaders and the British establishment. Apart from Britain's sympathy for the Zionist cause, British imperialists like A. Hankey, then British Secretary for War (who had initially negotiated with the Zionists about the drafted proposal which became known as the Balfour Declaration*),

*See the letter from Mr. A. P. Hankey, Secretary of the British War Cabinet, containing a proposed draft of the Balfour Declaration, Oct. 6, 1917, 18/OA/5. For the original document, See N. Moore, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Vol. III, 1974, p. 30. For its critical analysis, see Herbert Dobbing, Cause for Concern, The Institute for Palestine Studies, Beirut, 1970, pp. 4-14.

Winston Churchill and A. J. Balfour were attracted not only by the idea of having a buffer of Western-oriented Jews (presumably imbued with a certain gratitude towards the British) around the Suez Canal and the route to India, but they were also looking for ways and means by which they could contain Bolshevik influence in the Middle East.⁵

Moreover, the British establishment believed that the 1917 Russian revolution had been instigated and lead by the Jews. This is seen in the statement made by Lord Milner (the man who replaced A. Hankey and became the Secretary of State for War) during a debate on the October Revolution; in the British House of Commons he said that:

We must not lose sight of the fact that this [Bolshevik] movement is engineered and managed by astute Jews, many of them criminals and nearly every commissar in Russia is a Jew.⁶

It is true that in the Bolshevik movement there were Jews who were actively involved in the 1917 Russian Revolution, but the claim that the revolution was "engineered and managed by astute Jews . . . every commissar in Russia [was] a Jew", might come as a surprise to those who dedicated their time to study the Bolshevik movement. To the British establishment, however, it was an important concern and issue which required immediate action. One of the immediate actions taken by the British establishment was the Balfour Declaration. Through this declaration the British government hoped to persuade Russian Jews to abandon their support of the Bolshevik movement and to rely

on the Zionists. The intent of the Balfour Declaration was expressed by Lord Sydenham during a debate in the British House of Commons; referring to the Declaration, he said that:

What we have done is by concessions not to the Jewish people, but to a Zionist extreme faction to start a running sore in the East and no one can tell how far that sore will extend.⁷

British Jewry was, by and large, not at all happy with the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine. Many of its leaders were actively hostile, seeing Zionism as a step to the creation of a double loyalty, which in times of stress would add greatly to the strength of anti-Semitic feeling in Western Europe.⁸ This evidence refutes the claim that the Balfour Declaration was declared in the best interests of world Jewry, instead of in the best interests of British imperialism. As one Jewish memorialist noted, Prime Minister Lloyd George "did not care a damn for the Jews, or their past or their future."⁹

Many British parliamentarians, however, did not only question the government's decision to assist and facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, but also refused to endorse the Balfour Declaration. To contain parliamentary criticism and objections to the idea of a Jewish home in Palestine, in January 1918 without any reference to the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the British government sent a message to Sherif Hussein, through Commander Hogarth, which stated:

The Entente Powers are determined that the Arab race shall be given full opportunity of once again forming a nation in the world. This can only be achieved by the Arabs themselves uniting, and Great Britain and her allies will pursue a policy with this ultimate unity in view.¹⁰

In order to save Palestine's (multi-purpose) venture from condemnation and criticism, the British government once again induced Sherif Hussein's grandson Faisal to sign an agreement with the Zionist organization, which is known as the 1919 Faisal Weizmann Agreement. Faisal representing and acting on behalf of the Arab Kingdom of Hedjaz and Dr. Chaim Weizmann acting on behalf of the Zionist organization, undertook to "adopt all such measures . . . as well as afford the fullest guarantee for carrying into effect the British government's declaration of November 2, 1917 (Article III) . . . as well as to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale and as quickly as possible to settle Jewish immigrants upon the land through closer settlement and intensive cultivation of the soil. In taking such measures, the Arab peasants and tenant farmers shall be protected in their rights, and shall be assisted in forwarding their economic development (Article IV)."¹¹

Faisal was neither a Palestinian nor was he the elected representative of Palestinians. Rather, he was an individual who was solely motivated by self-aggrandizement and who hoped that the British and the Zionists would help him with his claim to the Syrian throne. Furthermore, prior to the

signing of the Faisal-Weizmann Agreement, the British authorities knew that "a strong anti-Zionist current had already developed among the [Palestine] Arab population by 1919."¹²

With little regard for the inherent contradiction between the idea of a Jewish national home and the rights of existing non-Jewish communities, the Balfour Declaration was approved by all the war-time allied governments. It became an integral part of the League of Nations mandate over Palestine granted to Britain in 1920.

Evidence indicates that Britain's imperialist policy was the catalyst of the contemporary Middle East crisis. Without the Balfour Declaration, there would not have been Jewish settlement in Palestine on a large scale to facilitate the later creation of Israel as a strictly Jewish state.

The Arab-Zionist Confrontation and the British Palestine Mandate (1918-1947)

To implement the policy stated in the Balfour Declaration, the British government sent the World Zionist Commission to Palestine in 1918. Its task was to advise the British authorities on all matters concerning Jews, and to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

Even though the British government had predetermined what the Commission's role would be, the Commission considered itself as the quasi-government of the future Jewish state in Palestine.

On its arrival . . . the Commission . . . demanded a Jewish flag for Palestine, the official recognition of the Zionist designation, Eritz Israel, the maintenance of a Jewish garrison in the country, and above all, the right to control over all political measures taken by the military administration . . . Considering itself the nucleus of the Jewish state, it claimed the right to choose those Jews who wanted to enlist in the Police and give them extra pay.¹³

Such a demand by the Zionist Commission not only alarmed and angered the Arabs, but also frustrated the British Military Administrator. Before long, the friction between the Palestine Arabs and the Zionist settlers was intensified. General Bols requested his superior in London to withdraw the commission from Palestine. In his letter to the colonial office, he explicitly stated his views and explained the difficulties with the Zionist Commission as follows:

The Zionist Commission did not loyally accept the orders of the administration, but from the commencement, adopted a hostile, critical and abusive attitude . . . I think the Zionist Commission should be broken.¹⁴

His superiors in London, however, did not break up the commission as the General had suggested. Instead, they replaced him with one of the architects of the Balfour Declaration, Sir Herbert Samuel, the first civilian High Commissioner for Palestine. By then, a strong anti-Zionist current had already developed among the Arab population of Palestine.

In defiance of the mandatory administration, the

Zionist leaders formed (the Jewish) self-defence units-- the bedrock of the future Haganah--under the leadership of Vladimin Jabotinsky in 1919-1920. In protest, the Arabs staged a riot in Jerusalem and in the north of the country, where several Jewish settlements had been founded. "Never before had the Arab population molested the Jewish inhabitants. But to the Jewish observer, the riots unfailingly evoked the dreaded spectre of the pogrom."¹⁵

Since that time, the Zionist Commission began to look upon the Arabs as primitive, backward, a barrier to progress and the fulfillment of a dream. The Zionist trade union Histadrut (tacitly) "practised an economic apartheid between Arabs and Jews."¹⁶ This aroused strong Arab resentment not only against Histadrut, but also against Jews living in Palestine. For the British authorities it was the beginning of their long Palestine nightmare. Due to a lack of coherent approach in policy, both Arabs and Jews lost confidence in the administration.

After two years of continuous violence and riots, the British government issued what is known as the Churchill White Paper of 1922. In it the British government announced a number of measures designed to curtail the violence and riots in Palestine. The White Paper sought to impose restrictions upon the Zionist Commission's role in the administration of the country, to regulate Jewish immigration and promised the transfer of state owned lands to the Palestinian Arabs. Furthermore, the White Paper also attempted to clarify and redefine the 1917 Balfour

Declaration in a manner less favourable to the Zionists.

The British government made the point that it was not contemplated that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish national home, but that such a home should be founded in Palestine. This home is described in the White Paper as simply the development of the existing Jewish community under international guarantee so that it should be assured of being there by right--and not on sufferance. In addition to all this, the White Paper announced a policy (Article 69 of the Palestine Order in Council) for the deportation of persons deemed politically undesirable.

In 1929, religiously motivated violence more serious than that experienced earlier broke out in Jerusalem. "The pretext was trivial: a dispute over a modification of the status quo concerning access to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem."¹⁷ The Wailing Wall is sacred both to Islam and the Jews. As a result, it generated an emotionally charged riot and violence, not only in Palestine, but also in other Arab countries.

In response, the British government issued the Passfield White Paper in 1930. Its objective was to reinforce policies that were proposed under the 1922 Churchill White Paper which sought to limit Jewish immigration to Palestine. In protest against the Passfield White Paper, Dr. Weizmann resigned from his chairmanship of the Zionist organization. In 1931, Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald wrote a personal letter to Dr. Weizmann which rendered the

Passfield White Paper "null and void".

With the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany in 1933, Jewish immigration into Palestine assumed a propensity previously unknown. Arab nationalists organized mass protests and strikes against both Jewish immigration and British/French domination in the region.

The Palestine revolt crowned the revival of the anti-imperial struggle. It began after several incidents, with the formation throughout the country of Arab national Committees which declared a General Strike until the suspension of Jewish immigration.¹⁸

This urban movement was accompanied by guerilla warfare. Armed Palestinians known as Myjahdeen (Freedom Fighters) started military operations in the West Bank.

In an attempt to find a solution to the crisis in Palestine, in 1937 the British government appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry chaired by Lord Peel. The Commission reported:

The effect of Jewish settlement upon the Arab lands has in all cases been detrimental to the interests of Arabs. The Arab antagonism to the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine was mainly based on fears of Jewish domination.¹⁹

Therefore, the Peel Commission made its recommendations as follows:

That the situation in Palestine has reached a deadlock . . . In the light of other information as to past and present conditions in Palestine, we feel justified in recommending that Your Majesty's Government should take appropriate steps for the termination of the present mandate on the basis of partition.²⁰

The Royal Commission's recommendation to partition Palestine was immediately rejected by the Twentieth Zionist Congress.

The Congress rejects the assertion of the Palestine Royal Commission that the mandate has proved unworkable, and demands its fulfillment.

The Congress condemns the "Palliative Proposal" put forward by the Royal Commission as a policy for implementing the mandate . . . the Congress declares that the scheme of partition put forward by the Royal Commission is unacceptable.²¹

The Commission's proposal to partition the country was also rejected by the Arabs. The British government, however, took the Commission's recommendations to the League of Nations for their approval. Without much regard for the opinions of either the Palestinians or the Zionists, the League of Nations Council approved the partition of Palestine in principle, and authorized the British government to implement it.

The Council agrees to the United Kingdom government's carrying out the aforesaid study . . . ²²

The scheme of partition was halted by the outbreak of World War II. Dissatisfied with the Mandatory Administration, both Arabs and Jews were inclined to support Germany and Italy in the War. To deter them from allying with the Germans, the British government abandoned the idea of partition and announced a new policy in 1939 known as the MacDonald White Paper. The British government promised to grant Palestinian independence within a period of 10 years.

Ironically, however, independence was subject to the approval of the Zionist Commission. At the same time, Jewish immigration to Palestine was limited to 75,000 for the following five years, and was subject to the consent of the Arabs.

Conditional independence was not acceptable to either the Zionists or the Arabs. The World Zionist Organization described the MacDonal White Paper as "the darkest hour of Jewish history."

It is a cruel blow . . . This blow will not subdue the Jewish people. The Jews will never accept the closing against them of the gates of Palestine, nor let their national home be converted into a ghetto.²³

It was at this point that the first Jewish terrorists made their appearance to force the British to withdraw from Palestine. "During the Second World War a three cornered fight was taking place in Palestine between Jews, Arabs and British security forces."²⁴ Despite the Jewish pressure on Britain to allow Eastern European Jews to enter Palestine as they came, Britain tightened its immigration policy.

Tens of thousands of Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution began to arrive by the boat load. This created serious problems for the British authorities in Palestine. Measures were introduced to curb illegal immigrants, and in some cases, the British authorities put these immigrants in detention.

In November 1940 the Jewish resistance organization

Haganah planted a bomb aboard the ship Patria which was taking illegal immigrants away from the promised land to internment in Mauritius. The ship sank in Haifa harbour where 240 of the 1,900 refugees aboard were drowned.*

From 1940 to 1947 the two maverick Jewish terrorist groups known as the Stern and the Irgun Zvi Leumi organizations took matters into their own hands and made sporadic attacks on British officials and security forces.²⁵ The most notable of these was the assassination of Lord Moyne in November 1944 by two members of the Stern group. The attacks against the British and Arabs gained momentum in the two years after the war. There were all the familiar tactics of terrorist activities: bombings, street shootings, bank raids, railway minings, and the execution of hostages. In Palestine itself, the single most effective act of Jewish terrorism against the British occurred in July 1946, when bombs were placed in the basement of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem which was serving as the central offices of civilian administration. "Ninety-one people, 15 of them Jews, were killed . . ."* British public opinion was even more inflamed by the hanging of two captured army sergeants as a reprisal for the execution of convicted Jewish terrorists.

*For detailed accounts of Jewish terrorism against both the British establishment and the Arabs, during and after the Second World War, see "The Palestinians" by Colin Smith, revised in 1982 by Murray Dickson and David Stephen, pub. by The Minority Rights Group Ltd., London, 1982, pp. 3-4.

The British government might have anticipated that, if there were any challenges to occur to their long vested interests in the Middle East, they would come from both Arab nationalists and Russian Bolshevism.

In 1947, the British government gave notice to the U.N. General Assembly that it was leaving Palestine in the same year; the U.N. General Assembly assigned a special committee on Palestine. After 11 months of study, the U.N. Special Committee issued its final report on August 27, 1947, favouring the partition scheme.

The basic conflict in Palestine is a conflict of two intense nationalisms . . . Only by means of partition can these conflicting national aspirations find substantial expression and qualify both peoples to take their place as independent nations in the international community and in the U.N.

The partition solution provides that finality which is a most urgent need in the solution.

Jewish immigration is the central issue in Palestine today and is the one fact above all others that rules out the necessary cooperation between the Arab and Jewish communities in a single state. The creation of a Jewish state under a partition scheme is the only hope of removing this issue from the area of conflict . . .

It is recognized that partition has been strongly opposed by Arabs.²⁵

Taking into account the special committee's recommendation on November 29, 1947, the U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolution (S-181) to partition Palestine, in which Arabs and Jews could form their own state, with "some form

of economic union." Resolution (S-181) was opposed on both sides, Arabs and Jews. While the Arabs were arguing about the legality and illegality of the partition resolution, the Jewish settlers occupied a large portion of the territory assigned to the Arabs (see Appendix "A").

The chronology of events in Palestine during the six months preceding the end of the mandate, shows that Jewish forces seized and occupied most of the Arab cities, towns and villages. "Tiberias was occupied on 19 April 1948, Haifa on the 22nd of April, Jaffa on the 28th of April, the new city of Jerusalem on the 30th of April, Beisan on the 8th of May, Safad on the 10th of May and Acre on the 14th of May, 1948."²⁶ (See Appendix "B".)

While much of this development was taking place, on May 14, 1948, under Resolution 186 (S-11) of the U.S. General Assembly, the Palestine Mandate came to an end.

The Secretary-General of the Arab League wrote a letter on May 14, 1948 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations stating that:

Since the mandate over Palestine has come to an end leaving no legally constituted authority behind which is capable of administering law and order in the country, the Arab states have . . . decided to safeguard the Palestinian Arabs national existence from foreign intruders . . . the recent disturbance in Palestine further constitutes a serious and direct threat to peace and security within the territories of the Arab states themselves.²⁷

The letter claimed that in order to fill the vacuum created by the termination of the mandate, the Arab

Arab governments found themselves compelled to intervene for the sole purpose of restoring peace and security and establishing law and order in Palestine.

Since then, the Arab states have maintained that their intervention in Palestine is motivated solely by the desire to safeguard the national existence of Palestinian Arabs. This, however, is disputed by the Zionist leadership. Zionists and Israeli leaders argue that the Arab states declared war hoping to destabilize and destroy Israel, not to maintain peace and order in Palestine.

Despite the involvement of Arab states the so-called Arab-Israeli conflict is in reality a dispute between Palestinians who seek a homeland for themselves and the state of Israel, which either denies Palestinian existence or refuses to accept their claims. Don Peretz notes that "the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the loss of Palestinian Arab rights." The Israelis and their supporters in the West, however, continued to claim that the refugee problem arose as a result of the conflict. They argue that the invading Arab armies told the Palestinians to leave for propaganda purposes. But Jacques de Regnier, who headed the International Red Cross delegation to Palestine during the 1948 War, noted that:

The affair of Deir Yassin had immense repercussions. This was the cleaning up team that was obviously performing its task very conscientiously . . . The press and the radio spread the news everywhere, among Arabs as well as Jews. In this way a general terror was built up among

the Arabs, by fear, the Arabs left their homes to find shelter among their kindred.²⁹

According to Rabbi Elmer Berger, in the 1930's and 1940's, "the Zionists were not only using the tactic of intimidation against the Arabs but also against Jews whom they viewed as unsympathetic and antagonistic to their aspirations. Zionism not only is an aggression against the indigenous population but also constitutes an aggression against the Jewish nationals of other countries who did not wish to have it thrust upon them."³⁰ A shocking example was their behaviour in the Arab village of Deir Yassin. The inhabitants of this village had taken no part in the war, and had even fought off Arab bands who wanted to use the village as their base. On April 19, 1948, the newly created Truat HaHerut party members attacked this village killing "240 men, women and children--and kept a few of them alive to parade as captives through the streets of Jerusalem."³¹ Most of the Jewish community was horrified at the deed and the American Jewish Agency sent a telegram of apology to King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan. But the terrorists, far from being ashamed of their act, were proud of this massacre, publicized it widely, and invited all the foreign correspondents present the view the heaped corpses and the general havoc at Deir Yassin.

In the words of Menachem Begin, then leader of the Irqun, "The massacre [at Deir Yassin] was not only justified, but there would not have been a state of Israel without the victory of Deir Yassin."³² Perhaps this is one of the

classical examples of the notion that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter and Prime Minister. The Irqun's course of action might have been justified by the argument that "in the state of action there is no time to distinguish between the guilty and innocent" (Ben Gurion's justification). But the process of intimidation and terrorization of the Palestinian Arabs continued after the Arab states were militarily defeated and the independence of Israel was proclaimed. General E. L. M. Burns, U.N. Chief of Staff, commented: "Where terror failed to achieve the objective, Israeli armed forces completed the task."³³ Israel had a record of getting rid of Arabs whose lands they desired. Dr. J. David, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Palestine, candidly illustrated the situation as follows:

The objective was achieved by means varying from expert psychological warfare to ruthless compulsion by force. As a result of terror, violence and expulsion, thousands of Palestinians left their homeland to seek refuge in neighbouring Arab countries or in other parts of the world.³⁴

At the same time, the Zionist leadership introduced the Law of Return, and exerted all of its efforts to attract the greatest possible number of Jews from all over the world to settle in Israel.

Sir John Glubb described and called the situation unique and peculiar in modern history:

It is quite essential to vividly grasp the unique conditions of the struggle in Palestine. We have witnessed many wars

in this century in which one country seeks to impose its power on others. But in no war, I think, for many centuries past, has the objective been to remove a nation from its country and to introduce another and entirely different race to occupy its lands, homes, and cities and live there. This peculiarity lends to the Palestine struggle a desperate quality which bears no resemblance to any other war in modern history.³⁵

Driven either by fear or by design, there are about 4.5 million displaced people in the world today who identify themselves as Palestinians, "a number greater than the present population of Israel." Of those, just under two million are actually registered as refugees. The U.N. Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) estimates that 50% draw rations.

Those who have stayed behind include the one million Palestinians who live in the Israeli occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the one million living in East Jordan where they make up a little over half of the population.

There are 600,000 Israeli Arabs living within Israel's pre-1967 borders. The remainder have taken up residence in the following Arab and European countries: "358,000 in Lebanon, 222,000 in Syria, 299,000 in Kuwait, 45,000 in Egypt, 136,000 in Saudi Arabia, 100,000 in other Gulf States."³⁶ It is quite difficult to obtain exact figures on those who took up residence in Europe and North America, but it is believed that the greatest concentration of Palestinians outside the Middle East exists in West Germany, the U.S.A. and Latin America.

The desperate conditions of the Palestinian Arabs has directly emerged from Israel's refusal to recognize their legitimate right to statehood. Menachem Begin when asked about Israel's refusal to recognize the existence of the Palestinians during a 1969 conference, replied:

My friend, take care. When you recognize the concept of Palestine you demolish your right to live in this kibbutz. If this is Palestine and not the land of Israel then you are conquerors and not tillers of the land. You are invaders. If this is Palestine, then it belongs to a people who lived here before you came.³⁷

What one learns from all the events noted above is that since Britain and France partitioned the Levant has seen revolutionary developments which have transformed Palestine, resulting in technological and economic change unparalleled elsewhere in neighboring Arab countries. The most noticeable development, however, is the displacement of one national group and its replacement by another, and the continuing struggle between the two principal national groups, Jews and Arabs, which has obscured conventional class distinctions within each of these communities.

At issue between Israel and the Arab states are questions that are not essentially Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian or Jordanian concerns. The issues are easily identifiable. They include primarily the Palestinian aspiration to establish a state of their own in a territory which they regard as theirs. Secondly are the issues of compensation for property left behind by or taken away from Palestinian Arabs,

and the future of the city of Jerusalem. Apparently, in order to evade or obfuscate the roots of the Arab-Israeli problem (i.e. the Palestinian question), the Israelis have created a mythology which states that the crucial conflict is with the neighbouring Arab countries, because the Arab governments persistently sought to destroy Israel and Israel has no other option but to defend itself from Arab aggression. This will be thoroughly examined and discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER I

FOOTNOTES

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- ²Ibid., p. 92.
- ³Smith, C. The Palestinians, 1982, p. 3.
- ⁴Dobbing, H. Cause for Concern: A Quaker's View of the Palestinian Problem, 1970, p. 7.
- ⁵Cattan, H. Palestine and International Law, 1973, p. 11.
- ⁶Lebzelter, G. Political Anti-Semitism in England, 1918-1939, 1978, p. 13.
- ⁷Hansard Reports, House of Lords, 21 June 1922, p. 1025.
- ⁸Dobbing, ibid., p. 11.
- ⁹Weinstock, op. cit., p. 116.
- ¹⁰Moore, N. The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Vol. III, 1974, p. 34.
- ¹¹Ibid., p. 36.
- ¹²Pearson, H. Memorandum, Secretary of State for War, January 8, 1919.
- ¹³Weinstock, op. cit., pp. 111-112.
- ¹⁴Ingrams, D. Palestine Papers, 1917-1922, 1972, pp.
- ¹⁵Weinstock, op. cit., p. 118.
- ¹⁶Hyamson, A. Palestine Under the Mandate, 1950, p. 165.
- ¹⁷Weinstock, op. cit., p. 118.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 121.
- ¹⁹The Peel Royal Commission Report, June 23, 1937, Chapter X, paragraph 97.
- ²⁰Ibid., Chapter VII, paragraphs 30, 57, 63 and 64.

²¹Moore, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

²²Minutes of the Council, Ninety-Eighth Session, League of Nations Official Journal, 18th Year, Part 2, No. 12 (Dec. 1937), p. 907.

²³Weizmann, C. The Jewish Case Against the White Paper: Documents Submitted to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, June 1939, p. 5.

²⁴Smith, op. cit., p. 11.

²⁵Moore, op. cit., pp. 278, 284.

²⁶Cattan, H. Palestine: The Road to Peace, 1970, pp. 20-21.

²⁷The Arab-Israeli Conflict, N. Moore, 1974, Vol. III, pp. 353-359. U.N. Doc. 5/745, 1948, pp. 83-88.

²⁸U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on The Near East Conflict, July 22, 1970, p. 91.

²⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁰Wards, C. The Rebel: Israeli Aggression in the Middle East, 1984, pp. 52-55.

³¹Smith, op. cit., p. 5.

³²Ibid., p. 11.

³³Burns, E. L. M. Between Arab and Israeli, 1962, p. 288.

³⁴Davis, J. H. The Evasive Peace, 1968, p. 35.

³⁵Pacha, Glubb. The Middle East Crisis, 1967, p. 41.

³⁶Smith, op. cit., pp. 7-11.

³⁷A. Abdullah, The Palestine Question, p. 21.

CHAPTER II

ISSUES IN THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the main issues which have come to be identified with the Arab-Israeli conflict are those of Israel's security, Arab states refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist, and the question of Arab terrorism against Israel's citizens. It is undisputed historical fact that the wars had to do with the existence of a Jewish state in the midst of the Arab world. Yet, to claim that Israel is a victim of Arab aggression and fights only in self-defence, is not only questionable, it is refutable.

After its establishment in 1948, Israelis were quite emphatic about their desire to restore the Biblically defined Jewish national entity. This entity includes Southern Lebanon, a portion of Syria, and Trans-Jordan. David Ben-Gurion, in response to the Peel Commission's recommendation to partition Palestine, said in 1937:

The acceptance of partition does not commit us to renounce Trans-Jordan . . . We shall accept a state with fixed boundaries today, but the boundaries of Zionist aspirations are concerns of the Jewish people and no external factor can limit them.¹

When the Zionists proclaimed the independence of Israel on May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion pointed out that the Jewish state had been established in only a portion of

"Eretz Yisrael" (the land of Israel). The Zionist position was also candidly expressed by Menachem Begin (when he was leader of the Irqun gangs):

The partition of the homeland is illegal. It will never be recognized. The signature of institutions and individuals of the partition agreement is invalid, will not bind the Jewish people. Jerusalem was and will forever be our capital. Eretz Israel will be restored to the people of Israel. All of it. And forever.²

The Zionist vision of Greater Israel precludes the "territorial integrity of virtually every one of Israel's Arab neighbours."³ The strategy of how to realize the Zionist vision of Greater Israel was suggested by David Ben-Gurion when he became the Prime Minister of Israel in 1948.

We should prepare to go over to the offensive with the aim of smashing Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, Syria . . . The weak point of the Arab coalition is Lebanon [for] the Moslem regime is artificial and easy to undermine.⁴

Israel's successive leaders have never concealed their designs to expand territorially. Moshe Dayan, Israel's Defense Minister during the 1960's and 70's said in 1969 that:

Our fathers had reached the frontiers which were recognized in the partition plan. Our generation reached the frontiers in 1949. Now the six day generation has managed to reach Suez, Jordan and the Golan Heights.⁵

Since 1948 Israel has waged wars and carried out innumerable attacks against neighbouring Arab countries

with the purpose of expanding territorial holdings among other strategic objectives. Menachem Begin in a speech to the Israeli Knesset in 1955 boasted about launching a preventive war against the Arab states to annihilate the Arab power and to expand Israel's territory.

The Arabs have been differentiating between genuine security needs in the Israeli core (that is, the state of pre-June 5, 1967) and the peripheral or expansionist needs of Israel in the occupied Arab territories. Most Arab governments argue that since there is no such thing as absolute security, the Arabs cannot possibly satisfy Israeli demands for security. In fact, Israel uses the issue of security as a red herring and as a smoke screen for its expansionist policy. Demanding for security in area occupied during the 1967 war unattainable by definition, since Israel is expanding, not just protecting its borders. The Arabs point to the 1973 War and the Palestinian resistance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as evidence of this inherent insecurity. Thus, while the Israelis tend to see increased territory as necessary to their security, Arabs see this design as precisely the cause of Israeli vulnerability.

Any security threat which the Palestinians present to Israel's security, say the Arabs, results directly from Israeli occupation of Arab land and opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state. The Arabs find it irrational for Israelis to fear what they themselves created

and control.

Since the early 1960's Israel has had the strongest military power in the Middle East, able to defend itself and secure its sovereignty and inflict damage upon its enemies. However, Israel rejects the Arab typology of security needs and the Arab conception of balance of power in the region, even those under U.S. protection. Israel interprets any minor shift towards the Arab view as a threat to its survival.

Israel's approach and strategy has always been centred around the belief that, "At the place of action, there is no need to distinguish between guilty and innocent." The effect of this strategy and approach upon the Arabs is clearly stated by the Arab journalist Sarih.

The Israelis have so humiliated the Arabs militarily and in other ways, that no self-respecting Arab can accept the added humiliation of inaction or surrender . . . The Israelis repeatedly issue warnings to Arabs about the dire consequences of Arab action, and the dire consequences are promptly dished out by the Israelis on a scale much greater than the original Arab.⁶

This is not mere rhetoric. It was the late Prime Minister Golda Meir who said that "Israel will hit back with seven blows for each one she receives."⁷ The tendency to rely on the use of a military mechanism as a means of deterrent and achieving national objectives is the by-product of Israel's successful past. But as Professor Yaakov L. Talmon of Hebrew University observed:

Israel may be able to win and win and go on winning till its last breath, win

itself to death . . . After every victory, we face more difficulty, more complicated problems . . . the abyss of mutual hatred will deepen and the desire for vengeance will mount.⁸

There is no denial about "the abyss of mutual hatred" and the "desire for vengeance" being the hallmark of the present Arab-Israeli relations.

The Israeli perception of the Arab is a reflection of a siege mentality. It has become almost an ideology by which Israeli strategists determine measures and justify their government's course of action. Cohen Azar noted that "the Israeli strategic thinker sees a situation involving political distrust and psychological insecurity along with evil intentions on the other side, as a military threat."⁹

As Professor R. T. Malar noted: "Israel is the only member of the U.N. never to have declared its boundaries." Yet it seeks Arab recognition of its right to exist. Would it be possible for the Arab leaders, and in particular the Palestinians, to recognize a state whose de facto definition of its boundaries includes the territory which they claim as their own national patrimony?

According to the U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, the Arab governments and the Palestinians are requested to recognize Israel's right to exist in pre-1967 borders. Such a suggestion obviously has some merit. The difficulty is that neither the government of Israel nor any of its major political parties recognize the pre-1967 borders as being the limiting borders of Israel.

The West Bank area of Palestine "has all along been considered by the Israelis to be a part of the Greater Israel. This is the real basis for Israel's refusal to negotiate or recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.)".

While Arab governments and the Palestinians are held responsible for the existing crisis in the Middle East, an honest examination of the situation reveals another kind of truth.

In the 1950's, Egypt was in the midst of a revolution. The newly inaugurated Egyptian military regime was more concerned with its own internal problems than it was with the situation in Palestine. Both the Israeli Intelligence Service and its mass media began to conduct an extensive campaign designed to undermine the creditability of the new military regime lead by Gamal A. Nasser. At one point, "the Israeli media compared President Nasser of Egypt with Adolf Hitler and the Egyptian army as reminiscent of the S. S. troops."¹⁰ In the words of Moshe Sharett, Israel's first Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister from 1953-55,*

*Moshe Sharett, one of Zionism's chief diplomats before 1948, Israel's first Foreign Minister and Prime Minister from 1953-1955, had not only recorded how key Israeli policy decisions were made, but his personal diary reveals how Israeli political figures deliberately provoked Arab states through para-militaristic means and covert terrorist actions which stirred up mass hysteria in Israel. The diary not only provides substantial information about Israel's long-term policies and strategies applied to implement such objectives, but it refutes a number of important interpretations which are still being presented as historical truth about the Arab-Israeli conflict.

the situation in Egypt and Nasser's reaction to the Israeli allegatinn was quite the contrary.

The Egyptian show[ed] no tendency . . . [to the] provocative challenge on their side . . . Expressed my doubts in regard to the growth of Egypt's military strength, seeing that this year all the energies of the (Egyptian) army have been absorbed in domestic conflicts and rivalries . . .¹¹

The Egyptians were divided over the question of Neguib's replacement and Nasser's socialist tendencies. Nasser's commitment to nationalize private business and to introduce land reform not only alarmed Egyptian land owners, but also increased the anxiety of Great Britain. Since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, until 1952, Egypt was under the British sphere of influence. Thus it is understandable that the British were concerned about the new development in Egypt. Even though Britain was unhappy with Nasser's socialist policy, it decided to resolve its differences through diplomatic means. To settle their differences through arbitration was viewed by the Israelis as the start of a possible Anglo-Egyptian alliance. To prevent an Anglo-Egyptian alliance, Israel decided to destabilize Egypt through sabotage. This is clear from the coded cable sent by Colonel Benjamin Giveli (who was at the time the head of Israel's military intelligence) to "the Israeli spy ring which had been planted in Egypt . . . in July 1954":

One: start immediate action to prevent or postpone Anglo-Egyptian agreement.

Objectives are: One, cultural and information centres; two, economic

institutions; three, cars of British representatives and other Britons; four, whichever target whose sabotage could bring about a worsening of diplomatic relations.

Two: Inform us on possibilities of action in Canal Zone.

Three: Listen to us every day at 7 o'clock on wavelength G.¹²

These orders were carried out between July 2 and July 27, 1954 by the Network which was composed of about 10 Egyptian Jews under the command of Israeli agents. British and American cultural information centres, British-owned cinemas, were bombed in Cairo and Alexandria. This was believed to have been the work of the Muslim Brothers, who at the time were challenging Nasser's regime. However, "on July 27, 1954 one of the Israeli spies was caught after a bomb exploded in his pocket in Alexandria."¹³ It became clear that the bombing of the U.S. and British cultural centres was the work of the Israeli spy network.

By disrupting and destabilizing Egypt, the Israelis hoped to eliminate Nasser. Israel's efforts were not necessarily motivated by the fear that this regime constituted a direct threat to the existence of Israel. On the contrary, the Israelis believed that because of Nasser's influence in the Middle East and the Third World, as well as an Anglo-Egyptian alliance, would inevitably lead to a negotiated Arab-Israeli peace agreement.

To the less acquainted with Israeli ambition and policy, it might be difficult to comprehend; When one suggests that

the least Israel desired in its dispute with the Arab states is a negotiated peace settlement. However, Israel has continued to refuse any form of negotiation especially one which requires a lasting solution to the current Palestinian problem. To evade an imposed solution to the Palestinian problem, Israel has consciously adopted a policy of destabilization. Through the policy of destabilization an important issue can be easily obscured because world public opinion is shifted towards the current development, i.e. towards the effect rather than to the initial cause.

Israel is one of the few countries which has successfully used a policy of destabilization to shift and manipulate world opinion and to create mythical beliefs. In the West, "it is intoned with ritual uniformity that Israel's wars were strictly defensive."¹⁴ Even serious political analysts make such statements. For example, Hans Morgenthau said that, "Four times the Arabs tried to eliminate Israel by war."¹⁵

Israel's destabilizing policy was not restricted to Egypt, it also included both Syria and Lebanon. In 1954, the Syrian armies revolted to oust the Shishakly regime which had signed an armistice agreement with Israel. The Israelis claimed that the Syrian military unrest had been instigated by the Iraqis and was a direct threat to Israel's national security, Lavon (who was then Chief of the Israeli Defence Force) asked the Israeli cabinet for Israeli intervention into the Syrian internal conflict.

This is the right moment to act--this is the time to move forward and occupy Syria's border position beyond the demilitarized zone . . . This is an historical opportunity; we should not miss it.¹⁶

Until that time, the Syrian border presented no security threat to Israel's existence. Hence, no security reason could credibly be invoked to justify Lavon's desire to move Israeli troops beyond the agreed demilitarized zone. Furthermore, Lavon's pretext of a disintegrating Syria came to an end when President Hashem al Atassi assumed power and suppressed the Syrian army revolt. Atassi also assured Israel that his regime would abide by the armistice agreement reached between his predecessor and Israel. Once the hardliners within the Israeli cabinet realized that the new Syrian government was neither confrontationalist nor a surrogate of Iraq and Egypt, Lavon's decision to move Israeli troops beyond the demilitarized zone was suspended. Although the military option was officially suspended, Israel's desire to destabilize Syria through covert activities and sabotage was not. On December 11, 1954, "Five Israeli soldiers were captured inside Syrian territory while mounting wire-tapping installations on the Syrian telephone network."¹⁷

Israel, however, denied that the captured Israeli soldiers were in any way engaged in illegal activities inside Syria. Instead, it claimed that its soldiers had been captured in Israeli territory, taken to Syria and

detained against their will and in violation of international law. On December 12, 1954 a Syrian civilian airliner was hijacked by Israeli war planes after its takeoff and forced to land at Lydda Airport (the first known airplane hijacking in the Middle East). The Prime Minister of Israel at the time, Moshe Sharette, states in his diary that "our action was without precedent in the history of international practice."

In December 1954, a Syrian civilian airliner was captured by Israeli military aircraft to obtain hostages for exchange with Israeli soldiers who had been captured within Syria.¹⁸

Passengers and crew were detained and interrogated for two days by the Israeli Intelligence Service and they were released because of international protest and condemnation. On January 13, 1954 one of the Israeli soldiers captured by Syria committed suicide while he was in a Syrian prison. The result was a violent emotional upsurge in Israel. Sharette wrote expressing his own frustration and the reasons that the captured Israeli soldier committed suicide:

The boy . . . would have been alive . . .
Our soldiers have not been kidnapped in
Israeli territory by Syrian invaders as
the army spokesman announced. They
penetrated into Syria and not accident-
ally but in order to take care of a
wiretapping installation connected to a
Syrian telephone line.¹⁹

While an emotionally charged claim and counter-claim about the affair in Syria was taking place, Yohoshafat Harkabi, then Israel's Assistant Chief of Military

Intelligence, reported movements of Jordanian troops from Trans-Jordan to the West Bank in two directions: from Inbid to the Nablus region and from Amman to Jerusalem. The Jordanian military movement was viewed by the Israeli Intelligence Service as preparation for attack. A week earlier the Israeli Air Force had bombed Kibya; thus, if not a calculated plan to cause war, then at least willingness to have one started as a consequence of the action. During the bombing of Kibya by the Israeli air force, it was reported that 56 Arabs were killed and many wounded.

It is worthy of mention that at that time the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was under the control of Jordan, and the Gaza Strip under Egypt. Thus since 1948, the Arab armies have been moving in this territory freely. At that time, however, the Israeli government outlined two contingency plans, first to create a condition through which the Palestinian Arabs could not take a permanent settlement in the West Bank and Gaza, and second, to create civil strife in Lebanon by supporting the Christian Phalanges. The Israelis believed that by supporting the Christians, Lebanon would be converted to a Christian state. If Lebanon is transformed into a Christian state then the Arab states would isolate it. Once it is isolated from the Arab world, it would have no option but to establish close ties with Israel. Under such circumstances, Israel would be able to move in and out freely and assure Lebanon would not be used by the Palestinians as their

military and regrouping centre. This long-term Israeli plan was deterred, however, by the presence of Egyptian troops in the Gaza Strip.

Although Egypt was the only country which was capable of deterring Israeli expansionism, the Egyptian economy during that period was deteriorating, creating widespread social and political unrest. Nasser requested military and economic aid from the West; however, no economic or military aid to speak of reached Egypt from the West. John Foster Dulles' previous commitment to help Egypt in the reconstruction of the Aswan Dam had faded into thin air. Nasser's government was challenged by the WAFD Party and by those who opposed his land reform policy.

Nasser became more frustrated with the West, and by the end of 1955 signed an arms deal with Czechoslovakia. The U.S.A. became concerned about the deal. A classified cable signed by Kermit Roosevelt of the CIA was sent to Israel: "If, when the Soviet arms arrive, you will hit Egypt--no one will protest."²⁰ Ben-Gurion said, "If they really get MIGS, I will support their bombing. We can do it! The wild seed has fallen on fertile ground."²¹

Harel Shin Betchief, then Israel's Minister of Information, concluded a statement by saying that, "The U.S. is hinting to us that as far as they are concerned, we have a free hand and God bless us if we act audaciously."²²

In 1956, the 87-year-old Anglo-Franco monopoly of the Suez Canal came to an end through nationalization. The

Soviet Union pledged to help Egypt in order to update the Aswan Dam. To the Western governments, Nasser's decision to deal with the Soviet Union was alarming and the first of its kind to challenge historical Western influence in the region.

Using Israel as its proxy, the United States not only appeared on the scene to fill the vacuum left by the British, but also to deterred Soviet influence in the Middle East. The Israeli press and strategists began to present Israel as the stabilizing factor in the entire Middle East.

According to most Westerners, Nasser was believed to have been the perpetrator and aggressor and Israel was the defender of democracy and protector of Western interests in the region. However, the Israeli leadership holds a more realistic view of the situation. For example, Prime Minister Begin told a group of Zionist sympathizers in New York in 1979 that:

The Egyptian army concentration in Sinai approaches did not prove Nasser was about to attack us. We must be honest with ourselves. ²³ We decided to attack him (Nasser).

Begin, of course, regards the Israeli attack as justified. This was a war of self-defense in the noblest sense of the term. But then, it may be recalled that the term "self-defense" has acquired a technical sense in modern political discourse; it refers to any military action carried out by a state that one directs, serves, or supports.

It is no longer secret that immediately after the armistice agreement signed between Jordan and Israel in 1949, "Israel began encroachments into the demilitarized zones along with the military attacks with many civilian casualties and the expulsion of thousands of Arabs."²⁴ Some of them later formed terrorist bands that carried out what they presumably regarded as reprisals and what Israelis and their Western supporters view as unprovoked terrorism or aggression. Terrorism and aggression as they are advanced by Israel, are to an extent, terms of propaganda, not description. These actions set the stage for further conflict with Egypt and Syria. Israeli raids in the Gaza Strip led to Fedayeen attacks that served as the pretext for the 1956 invasion, though as is known from captured Egyptian documents and other sources, Egypt was attempting to calm the border region in fear of such attack. "The Israelis concocted an elaborate and largely successful propaganda campaign in an effort to show that it was Nasser who was planning an attack, not they, comparing him to Hitler while they effectively mimicked Goebbels."²⁵

Long before the 1967 war, President Nasser was convinced that a war with Israel was inevitable; he also believed that Arab governments should not precipitate a war with Israel prematurely. Nasser urged Arab governments to restrain themselves and avoid direct confrontation with Israel. On state televised TV and radio, Nasser said in 1962:

Whoever says that we have to go to war without getting ready for it is a traitor to his people and his country, and he is a gambler who gambles with the fate of his country and people. War is not fought by means of high sounding words, war involves the fate of countries and it is a matter of life and death.²⁶

Nevertheless, in his concluding remarks, Nasser pointed out that "Egypt would indeed fight if Syria or any other Arab country is subjected to Israeli aggression." Thus, the so-called Arab threat to Israeli security is nothing more than "political ammunition to the hawkish element in the Zionist movement." General Carl Von Horn wrote that "it [was] unlikely that these [Syrian, Egyptian guns] would even [have] come into action had it not been for Israeli provocation."²⁷ Hence, the question of an Arab threat to Israel's national security appears to be designed to blur the basic issues in the conflict, i.e. the Palestinian question of self-determination. Nevertheless, the Palestinians have not only asserted themselves as a political force emphasizing that peace in the Middle East without a solution to their problem is not a possibility, but have been able to gain the recognition that they rightfully deserve from the international community.

CHAPTER II

¹Zichonot, M. Memoirs, 1937, Vol. 4. Published by The University of Tel Aviv, 1974, p. 157.

²Begin, Menachem. The Revolt, revised edition. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1977, p. 433.

³Wards, C. The Rebel: Israeli Aggression in the Middle East, Feb. 27, 1984, p. 53.

⁴Rokach, L. Israel's Sacred Terrorism, 1982, p. 24.

⁵Kaplowitz, M. The Psychological Dimension of the Middle East Conflict, Journal of Conflict Resolution, 1976, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 285-6.

⁶Ibid., p. 286.

⁷Abdullah, A. The Palestine Question, 1983, p. 18.

⁸Peretz, D. Middle East North Africa Review, "Getting to the Heart of the Matter," Palestine, June, 1970, p. 25.

⁹Azan, C. "From War to Peace," Journal of Conflict Resolution, 1979, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 254.

¹⁰Mandel, M. Why Canada Should Recognize the PLO, 1983, p. 14.

¹¹Chomsky, N. The Fateful Triangle, 1983, p. 67.

¹²Rokach, L., op. cit., p. 38.

¹³Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Chomsky, op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁶Ismael, Y. The Middle East Forum: The Palestinian Problem, 1970, p. 79.

¹⁷Rokach, L., op. cit., pp. 14-20.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 53.

²⁰Ibid., p. 54.

²¹Ibid., p. 53.

²²Ibid., p. 55.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Chomsky, op. cit., p. 100.

²⁵Ibid., p. 101.

²⁶Ibid., p. 93.

²⁷Harkabi, Y. Arab Attitudes Towards Israel, 1972, pp. 76-77.

²⁸Soldiering For Peace, 1966, p. 85.

CHAPTER III
PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION AND
THE ISRAELI DIMENSION

The concept of a Palestinian right to self-determination is not new. The 1947 U.N. Partition Resolution (181) envisages the division of Palestine into three separate entities, an Arab state, a Jewish state, and the city of Jerusalem. According to this partition resolution, the city of Jerusalem was to come under a special international regime to be administered by the U. N. The Arab and Jewish states were to be linked by an economic union. Apparently, this resolution was received by a wave of protests and demonstrations amongst the Arabs, and consternation among the Orthodox Jews.

The area designated for the Arab state was to include Western Galilee, the hill country of Samaria and Judea (the West Bank), the coastal plain starting from Isdud to the Egyptian Frontier. The United Nations might have hoped that, by partitioning Palestine, the confrontation between Jewish nationalism and Palestinian Arab nationalism would be avoided, and that the two communities could live side by side in a state of peace and harmony.

Early Zionist movement, and successive Israeli leaders made no secret of their views about the 1947 U. N. partition resolution and about Palestinian rights to self-determination.

As early as their response to the 1937 Peel Commission recommendations, Zionist leaders not only claimed that the Palestinians had no emotional or historical relationship with Palestine, but stated that "the boundaries of the Zionist aspirations [could not be] determined by a foreign power or institution but by the Jewish people themselves."¹

Similar sentiments were expressed about the Partition Resolution. In the words of Menachem Begin, "The partition resolution of the homeland is illegal. It will never be recognized." Moshe Dayan, at a time when he was a principal spokesman for the Labour Party, noted that "a Palestinian should have no difficulty regarding Jordan, Syria or Iraq as his homeland."² A more extreme view was expressed by the late Prime Minister Golda Meier in 1969:

It was not as though there were Palestinian people in Palestine considering themselves as Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They do not exist.³

According to the Zionist movement and successive Israeli leaders, therefore, the Palestinians do not have any legal or historical right to a state of their own. The Israelis argue that the so-called Palestinian Arabs are not the indigenous people of Palestine. Rather, the so-called ~~Palestinians~~ are the sons and daughters of Arabs who came into Palestine from Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and the other Arab countries, attracted by the economic opportunities created by the Zionist restorations. There are 22 rich Arab states, so that the Palestinian Arabs should have no

difficulty in finding a homeland. In effect, because there are 22 Arab states, the Palestinian claim to a state of their own is invalid. Another argument which is frequently used by the Zionists which has remained unchallenged is that there are numerous Palestinians in Jordan, many of them in the government; therefore, Jordan should be converted into a Palestinian state. Using similar logic the Arabs could safely entertain the idea that the problems of Palestine could be solved by settling all Jews in New York, where there are many Jews, greater in number than the Jews residing in Israel at present. Not to mention the Jewish success in the economic sector, the Mayor of New York is Jewish so that they should have no problem in finding some sort of accommodation.

In spite of the Zionist persistence in refuting the existence of the Palestinians, and therefore their claim to self-determination, the views of the international community on this subject have remained sympathetic. The Palestinians are the "descendants of the Philistines and Canaanites who had inhabited the country from the dawn of history until 1948."⁴ Thus, the Palestinians possess not only a historical right to Palestine, but a natural and inalienable right to their homeland. Based on this belief, on December 11, 1948, the U. N. General Assembly adopted a resolution which stated that:

The refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the

property of those choosing not to return and for loss of, or damage to property which, under principles of international law, or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible.⁵

Expressing its grave concerns that no progress has been achieved in solving the Palestinian problem, the U. N. General Assembly passed another resolution on November 10, 1975 calling for:

- (a) the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable right to Palestine, including the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty;
- (b) the exercise by Palestinians of their inalienable right to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted.⁶

What is the rationale behind Israel's rejection of a Palestinian right to self-determination? Do the Israelis really believe what they claim to? To understand the Israeli position, one must look into the origin and ideology of Zionism.

The major components of political Zionism are nationalism, religion and socialism. Thus the question of a Palestinian right to self-determination, the Jewish historical claim to the territories in question, is generally interpreted and debated according to the group's ideological stance. To the religious groups, no part of the ancient Jewish kingdom is more important than Judea and Samaria,*

*The term "Judea and Samaria" is used by the religious Zionists to denote the area of the West Bank by its ancient names. Following the election of the Likud government in 1977, the West Bank became known as Judea and Samaria in government statements and reports.

commonly known as the West Bank. This territory contains the holy sites associated with Jewish history and religion, i.e. Jerusalem, the city of King David where the first temple was erected, Hebron, Beit-El, and Shilo. In Judaism, historical right is linked closely to religious association and religious association is used to legitimize the rights of the Jewish people to Palestine. Without the religious association, the Jewish claim to Palestine would be untenable on the grounds that most Jews live outside of Palestine and that the number of Jews living in Palestine was extremely small, almost a negligible minority.

Until 1967 the question of control over a specific area of territory was confined to the realms of military and political thinking alone. But, as David Newman has noted, the 1967 Arab-Israeli war had an immense effect on Israeli political and policy thought.

Deep ideological beliefs and their relationship to the interpretation of modern Zionism and the permanent future borders of the State of Israel were brought to the fore. This led to much internal debate and conflict within Israeli society.⁷

Following the Six Day War, pressure groups were established, reflecting and representing specific ideological groups within the Israeli populace.

After the Six Day War, pressures were felt within the collectivity to reintroduce the space [newly acquired territory] into the cognitive map and relate toward it in expressive terms.⁸

Pressing for a complete retention of all the territories occupied in 1967, the "Land of Israel" movement was established in August 1967. To this pressure group, the issue was not simply one of control over a piece of land, but of the Jewish national destiny. It drew together individuals from labour, religion, and nationalist movements, into a single frame of thinking.

LOIM became the first major group to break down the traditional Israeli political divisions, to achieve a wide cross-section of public support for its maximalist doctrine.⁹

In response to this new political development in Israel, the government adopted the "Allon Plan"* which called for Jewish settlement in the newly acquired territories. The Allon Plan was designed to enable Israel to maintain the occupation while avoiding the problem of dealing with the Arab population. The Plan called for extensive Jewish settlement along the eastern borders of the West Bank and the Golan Heights. These border areas contained the least dense Arab population concentrations,

*Yigal, Allon was a leading member of successive Israeli Labour governments. It was his settlement plan that was unofficially adopted for the West Bank, and became known as the Allon Plan. As well as being Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister, he headed the all important Inter-Ministerial Settlement Committee in the 1970's. It was also Allon who had negotiated and signed the "Memorandum of Agreement between Israel and the United States on September 1, 1975" which stated that the United States "will not recognize or negotiate with Palestine Liberation Organization so long as the Palestine Liberation Organization does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338."

partly because a large number of Arabs were forced to evacuate this area during the Six Day War.

The Allon Plan, however, did not satisfy the religious groups. These groups, supported by the World Zionist Organization, began to send their members to start new Jewish settlements on the West Bank. They viewed their settlement activities as a renewal of the pioneering trend of the early Kibbutzim. The method adopted to establish the settlements was known as "hitnachalut". The literal meaning of this term is "colonization". In June, 1969 a group of Israelis were brought in to settle on Mount Gerizim near Nablus, but were forcibly removed by the military government. The government provided them an alternate location on the eastern border of Samaria overlooking the Jordan Valley. The offer was turned down. Instead, they insisted on being allowed to settle in any part of Judea and Samaria without any form of political restriction.

It is the right and obligation of the Jewish people to settle throughout the width of the land and therefore, it is forbidden that there should be any political abstraction in fixing of settlement in Judea and Samaria.¹⁰

The religious group see themselves partly as the protector of the Zionist aspirations and partly as the spiritual leaders forced into politics by the urgency of the hour when the Israeli government has strayed from true Zionism. They believe that the government has to be stopped in its folly by those who are rooted in traditional Jewish values. As far as this group is concerned, the ideological

values which brought the state of Israel into existence are being forgotten or pushed aside by the Israeli leaders.

Reflecting the mainstream Israeli religious and right-wing sentiments, Yedidia Segal wrote in the prominent Israeli journal Nekuda that:

Those among us who call for a humanistic attitude towards our [Arab] neighbours are reading the Halucha [religious law] selectively and avoiding specific commandments . . . in a divinely commanded war [milhemet mitzvah]. One must destroy, kill and eliminate men, women and children. The external principles do not change. There is no place for humanistic considerations.¹¹

The religious and right wing groups regard the West Bank as part of the so-called "Eretz Yisrael."^{*} Thus they believe that every Jew has the right to settle in the land of Israel without any impediment either by government or individuals.

The implementation of settlement policies based on this line of belief has been specifically associated with the right-wing Herut Party of Menachem Begin, which has constituted the major coalition partner in the Israeli government since May 1977.¹²

While the Israelis debated among themselves over the question of the Jewish right to settle in the territories

*The land of Israel or "Eretz Yisrael" is the term used by the fundamentalist religious groups and the right-wing Zionist elements to denote the religious and historical significance of the territories which are in question. It also refers to any of the territories within the biblically defined boundaries. The actual religious significance is derived from the divine Promised Land to be found in Genesis 12:18, number 34:1-15.

acquired during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the 1973 war broke out. Never before had the Israeli Army been challenged as strongly as in this war.

There was a crisis of authorities in which the political [and military] leadership was dealt a severe blow due to this unforeseen political event. A great deal of prestige had been lost by the leaders [thus] to retain their support they felt it necessary to institute a change in policy regarding the status of the territories in question.¹³

Since then, the Labour Party policy accent has changed from one of negotiated withdrawal to one of massive Jewish settlement as a result of which Israel could claim the West Bank and Gaza Strip as integral parts of its territory.

There are two major political groupings in Israel, the Labour Party and the Likud Coalition dominated by the Herut Party. The Labour Party governed and dominated Israeli politics until 1977, the Likud Coalition from 1977 to 1984, and under the power sharing arrangement from 1987 until the upcoming election.

The Labour Party is basically the party of the educated class. Its historical practice has been to build facts while maintaining a low key rhetoric with conciliatory tones, at least in public. In private, its position and practice has continued to be "it does not matter what the Gentiles say, what matters is what the Jews do"¹⁴ (Ben-Gurion) and that "the borders [of Israel] are where Jews live, not where there is a line on a map"¹⁵ (Golda Meier). Until 1977, this quiet approach had been Israel's method of

attaining the Zionist aspirations without alienating Western opinion on the subject.

In contrast, the Likud is largely the party of the lower middle class. Its leadership is not so attuned to the Western style of discourse and has been frequently willing to flaunt its disregard for the hypocritical Gentile world, often in a manner regarded as openly insulting to the West, including the U.S.A. For example, in response to Reagan's September, 1982 call for a settlement freeze in the West Bank, the Likud leadership simply announced plans for two new settlements. Meanwhile, Begin sent a letter to President Reagan stating Israel's historical right to the West Bank. Under similar circumstances in the past, the Labour Coalition responded not by establishing new settlements but by "thickening existing ones or by establishing military outposts which soon became settlements while keeping to conciliatory rhetoric."¹⁶

The two major political groups do not fundamentally differ with regard to the occupied territories. Both agree that Israel should effectively control them; both consistently reject any expression of Palestinian national rights west of the Jordan valley. The Labour Coalition contains a larger margin of detractors. According to A. Sayegh, however, a group of the Labour dissenters oppose the government's categorical rejection of a Palestinian state while they endorse its equally categorical rejection of recognition of the P.L.O. Other critics accept the idea of

a Palestinian state and champion negotiations with Palestinian groups other than the P.L.O. Still others advocate dealing with any Palestinian group, including the P.L.O., but reject the idea of a Palestinian state.

Under the circumstances, it would be difficult to catalogue the personalities, and their ideology, spearheading the opposition to the official Israeli policy on the Palestinian problem. Nevertheless, it is possible to note three characteristics of that group. First, far from being united or centrally organized, it is highly fragmented and manifests a propensity for further splintering. Second, far from being coherent in its program it consists of opposition to different elements of the official policy and not to the policy as a whole. Finally, almost all of the Israeli critics of their government's policy towards the Palestine problem share a common standpoint; they agree that Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state is a condition sine qua non for Israel's consent to the establishment of a Palestinian state and/or to negotiations with the P.L.O., or any other Palestinian group. Some of the Labour Party dissenters undoubtedly are animated moral sensitivity to the injustice suffered by the Palestinian people at the hands of the Zionist movement and Israel. Others are clearly motivated by pragmatic and practical considerations.

The professed reason for the government's rejectionist policy is security. There is no doubt that Israel faces a

serious security problem. Evidently, the Palestinian population also has a security problem; in fact, the Palestinians have already suffered the catastrophe which the Israelis justly fear.

Israel is one of the world's major military powers and has proven its military capability by repeatedly defeating its enemies. Israel's concern with security is not necessarily what most people believe to be the case, i.e. the threat of Arab military aggression against its existence. Rather, to the Israelis, the question of security encompasses a variety of issues. These range from economic security to Israel's social fabric, from demographic concerns to geographic considerations.

The occupied territories provide Israel with substantial but unorganized and cheap labour, similar to the so-called guest workers in South Africa. Shai Feldman, Israel's most reputed economic and strategic analyst commented that the guest workers from the occupied territories play a significant role in the Israeli economy, "performing its dirty work at low pay and without rights . . . At present, important sectors of Israel's economy cannot fully function without manpower provided by the West Bank and Gaza Strip."¹⁷

Besides the cheap labour, Israel's agricultural industry would suffer without water from the West Bank. A more significant commodity than oil in the Middle East is water. Undoubtedly, Israel would be able to survive without oil and other commodities but it cannot survive without

fresh water. It is now estimated that about one-third of Israel's fresh water comes directly from the West Bank. By the government's own admission, "cutting Judea and Samaria off from the rest of the country will lead to serious consequences with regards to water management. There is no solution in sight for the water deficiency problem from the natural water resources of the area."¹⁸ Hence the eventual solution must be sought in the importation of water from outside. The only unexploited source outside the West Bank is the Litani River in Southern Lebanon, which Israel has long desired to place under its control.

The territories also offer a controlled market for Israeli goods with export sales exceeding \$600 million annually.

The occupied territories are a controlled market for Israeli goods, with export sales of about \$600 million per year. These sales are paid for in hard currency, since the territories in turn export about \$100 million a year in agricultural products to Jordan and the Gulf states and receive hard currencies from them for various payments and remittances. Income to Israel from West Bank tourism may amount to \$500 million, so that the potential loss to Israel of abandoning the territories may come to over \$1 billion per year.¹⁹

Given this economic reality, if Israel withdraws from these territories and a sovereign Palestinian state is established, the Israeli economy will suffer greatly.

Israel had one clear objective in mind when it agreed to sign the 1979 Camp David Peace Accord. As stated by

Thomas Stauffer, head of the Middle East Studies Centre at Harvard University:

There was a major gain for Israel in the Sinai settlement, in that the most powerful state in the Arab world was removed from the Arab-Israeli conflict, so that Israel could pursue its programs in the occupied territories and Lebanon without undue concern over any military deterrence.²⁰

Following the Camp David Agreement, Jewish settlement activity in the West Bank gained momentum. "Whereas in 1977 there had been 37 settlements in the West Bank in 1980, 165 new settlements were established."²¹

The Begin government began to push forward with its maximalist policies, in order to create as many settlements as possible before the 1981 elections. To speed up matters, Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon announced in October, 1980 a plan to allot land in Jerusalem and other urban centres to building contractors who would undertake immediate construction activity in the West Bank and the Galilee. Between October 1981 and February 1981, "Some 24,000 dunams of land were seized in the West Bank. It was claimed that 20,000 of this was "state" land while the other 4,000 was registered as belonging to Jews in the Grush Etzion area". If this is the case, it is hard to understand why this land was not used previously. The Knesset Finance Committee allocated \$79 million for the establishment of six new settlements and the construction of 400 extra homes in existing locations to be completed before the 1981 election

day.*

Although from economic and security standpoints the annexation of the occupied territories appears to be desirable, from the demographic and political standpoints the annexation of the occupied territories is considered to be a threat to the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. If Israel officially annexes the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it will add 1.5 million Arabs to a population of less than three million Jews.

Israel is not only a country of the Jews residing in it but also the home of the Jews living outside of Israel. According to the Israeli Law of Return,** every Jew has the right to return to their Promised Land of Israel. In spite of having an official policy, it is clearly not possible for Israel to implement its Law of Return in a territory which is no bigger in size than New York City and largely desert.

The objective of gathering together all Jews regardless of their racial background and nationality dictates holding

*For detailed accounts of the settlement plans under Begin's administration, see David Newman, Jewish Settlement in the West Bank, 1982, pp. 51-63, and Noam Chomsky, The Faithful Triangle, 1980, pp. 47-55.

**For the official version of the Law of Return, see 4 Laws of the State of Israel 144 (1950), as amended by 8 laws of the State of Israel 144 (1954), Sefer Hahukim [Israeli Statutes] of 5730 (Hebrew Year) at 34 (March 10, 1970). As well, see for a thorough analysis, N. Moore, The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Vol. III (Documents), Princeton University Press, 1974, pp. 578-579.

on to the territories Israel has occupied since 1967.

During an interview with David Krivine at the Jerusalem Post in 1981, Shimon Peres, the leader of the Labour Party and Israel's present Minister of Foreign Affairs, candidly stated that:

Israel cannot conduct negotiations with the PLO, not because of the PLO's past but because of the geographical map of Israel . . . [Any form of negotiation between Israel and the PLO] can only lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and this we cannot agree to.²²

This refutes the myth that Israel cannot recognize and negotiate peace with the PLO because of its terrorist activities and because of its refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. Rather, it is a conscious and calculated decision on the part of Israel.

There is no single power in view at this time in the Middle East which is capable of deterring Israel when and if it decides to annex the occupied Arab territory. Israel annexed both East Jerusalem in 1967 and the Golan Heights in 1981. No single Arab country, including Syria, was capable of deterring such a move. But for obvious reasons, Israel cannot annex both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, because this would lead to the end of Israel as a strictly Jewish state.

There is every indication that Israel desires to annex the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into its national domain. But the question which continues to confront and keep

successive Israeli leaders in a state of dilemma appears to be how to go about without absorbing the 1.5 million Arabs who are currently residing in these territories, into Israeli political and social life. The Israelis want to maintain their image as a peaceloving and democratic people.

The Israeli political system is based on the Western democratic principle of one person, one vote, as well as the right to vote and to seek election to the Israeli Knesset. The annexation of those occupied territories would not only compel Israel to absorb the indigenous population of the West Bank and Gaza, but also to accord them democratic rights, including the right to vote and seek election to the Knesset. This would make Israel a secular democratic state. One of the PLO objectives is to establish a secular democratic state in Palestine. Evidently this idea is implacably opposed and disregarded by Israel. To annex the territories without providing Palestinians the right to vote and seek office, would create the impression that Israel is not a democratic state, but an apartheid country comparable to the kind of political system existing in South Africa.

Therefore, the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza would require fundamental changes in Israeli political and social values. Such changes could not occur easily nor is there any indication to suggest that either now or in the near future Israeli society desires it. Because the state of Israel could not remain Jewish demographically, culturally and politically, it would not be able to meet the needs for which it was created in the first place.

Given this reality, the conflicting issue between Israel and the Palestinians is much more complex than it appears on the surface. By maintaining its current policy, Israel hopes that the frustrated and disillusioned Palestinians will disappear from the political scene. Such a hope, however, seems to be nothing more than wishful thinking by the Israelis. In spite of their difficulties and frustrations, the Palestinians have continued to assert themselves as a political factor, ensuring a durable peace between Israel and the Arab states remains remote and unattainable. However, a decision between peace and continuous hostilities must be made.

Either by Israeli government officials or by Israeli individuals it is frequently expressed that if the Israelis withdraw from the West Bank and a Palestinian state is established, such a state would develop an irridentist attitude towards other parts of Israeli territory, conflict would inevitably arise, endangering peace and security throughout the whole Middle East. Evidently, without the existence of a Palestinian state the Middle East has been plagued with conflict for nearly half a century. In addition, any security threat which the Palestinians pose to Israel's existence has emerged directly from Israel's refusal to recognize their right to a state of their own.

The issue of security has been not only an Israeli concern, but also a concern of Arab states, not least being the Hashemite dynasty of Jordan.

CHAPTER III

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Chomsky, N. The Fateful Triangle, 1983, p. 51.
- ²Abdullah, A. The Palestine Question, 1983, p. 27.
- ³Cattan, H. Palestine and International Law, 1974, p. 17.
- ⁴Cattan, H. Palestine: The Road to Peace, 1971, p. 7.
- ⁵The U.N. Chronology: Document A/810, 1948.
- ⁶Djonovich, D. U.N. Resolutions, 1974-76, Vol. XV, p. 443.
- ⁷Newman, D. Jewish Settlement in the West Bank: The Role of Gush Emunim, 1982, p. 7.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 21.
- ⁹Ibid., p. 33.
- ¹⁰Ibid., p. 34.
- ¹¹Wards, C. The Rebel, 1984, p. 53.
- ¹²Newman, D., op. cit., p. 62.
- ¹³Ibid., pp. 33-35.
- ¹⁴Chomsky, N., op. cit., p. 48.
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 49.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 46.
- ¹⁷Schwarz, J. Water Resources in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, 1982, p. 10.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 11.
- ¹⁹Chomsky, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
- ²⁰Stauffer, R. T. Christian Science Monitor, Jan. 13, 1982.
- ²¹Newman, op. cit., p. 62.
- ²²Wards, op. cit., p. 55.

CHAPTER IV

PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION
AND THE JORDANIAN DIMENSION

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AND THE JORDANIAN DIMENSION

The best kept secret in Middle East politics is obviously the existing implicit alliance between the Kingdom of Jordan and Israel on the question of Palestinian right to self-determination and to a state of their own on the West Bank. Besides Israel, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan does not desire the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank. The Israelis claim that a Palestinian state there would develop a hostile attitude and endanger peace and security in the region, and Jordan shares this view. Both Israel and Jordan have common vested interests in the West Bank. These range from economic interests to security concerns, from ideological thinking to preserving and protecting Western interests in the Middle East.

The West Bank offers real economic and strategic assets, and Jordan would not want it to remain under anyone else's control, particularly a militant P.L.O. leadership. Hence the government in Amman clings to the view of itself as an aggrieved party with residual legal and political claims to possession of the West Bank; "This dispute indicates that the argument founded upon proximity, duty and national interests have lost a good deal of their cogency."¹

Regardless of the strong opposition of the Arab League, Jordan unilaterally annexed the West Bank in 1950. King Abdullah's unilateral annexation of the West Bank into Jordan's national domain was recognized by Britain and Pakistan, as well as (tacitly) by Israel. It must be noted here that Israel's tacit recognition of the annexation was not based on the belief that Jordan had legal rights so that it was within its jurisdiction to annex the West Bank and make it part of its domain. Rather, the Israelis believed that the annexation of the territory by Jordan would lead to the indigenous population of the West Bank to become Jordanian subjects. If the Palestinians become Jordanian subjects through annexation, then their historical claim to other parts of Palestine will no longer constitute moral or legal rights.

Even though the inherent reality of Palestinian Hashemite Dynasty relations suggests quite the contrary, the U.S. views King Hussein of Jordan as the key and indispensable broker for reconciling Palestinian aspirations for a state of their own and bridging the existing gap between Israel and the Palestinians.

Both Israel and Jordan are the creation of Great Britain. Their legal and political right to exist as independent and sovereign states is continuously questioned and challenged by the Palestinian nationalists. In this respect, both countries share not only a common history in terms of their creation, but also one common enemy posing a

constant threat to their existence. Thus, it would be simplistic to view Jordan's national interests and concerns for security as being less than the Israelis.

Indeed, Jordan's vested interest in the West Bank represents one of the greatest . . . deterrents to any Israeli revision of basic policy toward the Palestine question.²

For fear of deflection from the prevailing anti-Israeli Arab alliance both King Hussein of Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) ranks have consciously decided to at least keep their differences from becoming public. The kind of relation which exists between Jordan's King Hussein and the PLO, however, appears to be one motivated by elementary pragmatism and considerations on both sides. Nonetheless, the nature of their relation is explicitly expressed by Y. Harkabi as follows:

Exercising extreme caution, Arafat and Hussein in effect are exploiting each other. They have found it to their advantage to pave over differences, maintaining silence about past grievances and future aspirations. These two leaders prefer for the present to keep each other at a safe distance. In reality, the competition between Jordan and the PLO is over who will swallow whom.³

In order to achieve the first stage of their objective, i.e., to establish a state of their own in the West Bank, the Palestinians might have found it expedient to co-operate and work with King Hussein. However, few Palestinians have forgotten the unilateral annexation of the West Bank by King Abdullah (grandfather of King Hussein), even fewer the memory

of his repressive role, and none the systematic slaughter of compatriots by the Jordanian army in the Black September of 1970.* Besides, this deeply rooted resentment and past grievance that the Palestinians hold against the Hashemite dynasty of Jordan, is one where both parties differ over a wide range of issues, from ideology to land claims.

Most Palestinians regard Jordan as part of their national entity, yet taken away from them by a power which is much stronger than them. They also believe that Jordan should be united with Palestine and returned to its rightful owner (in this case, the Palestinian people. The question of reunification between Jordan and the rest of Palestine has been raised on a number of occasions. In 1970, Zuhair Mushin (member of the executive council of the PLO) told the Palestinian National Council that:

After we have attained all our rights in the whole of Palestine we must not postpone even for a single moment the reunification of Jordan and Palestine.⁴

At the eighth Palestinian National Council conference held in 1971, the council decided that:

Jordan is ours, Palestine is ours, and we shall build our national unity on the whole of this land after having freed it from both Zionists and the reactionary traitor's [Hussein] presence.⁵

*As many as 2,000 Palestinians may have been killed during the Black September crisis, while the reports at that time referred to double that number of wounded.

Since this is the inherent reality between the Hashemite regime of Jordan and Palestinian nationalism, what grounds for the U.S.-Israeli optimism are there for assuming that the Palestinians would co-operate or accept King Hussein's peace treaty with Israel?

Israeli diplomats and strategists are fully aware of the existing misgivings and tension between the Hashemite regime of Jordan and the Palestinians. They are also aware of the fact that any peace treaty concluded between Jordan and Israel on the future of the West Bank would be rejected by Palestinian nationalists. However, in order to win world public opinion which favours the Israeli position, to create dissension among Palestinians (especially between those who live in Jordan and the West Bank) the Israeli strategists found it extremely attractive to bring King Hussein to the peace table.

The other dimension of why Israel has persistently encouraged the participation of King Hussein in the Arab-Israeli peace talks is candidly expressed by Professor Shlomo Avineri in 1978: According to Avineri, Hussein is not only merely a silent partner in Israel's effort to defuse and undermine the legitimacy of the PLO, but also "a moderate, non-terrorist, one willing to co-operate in preserving [the existing] modus operandi even beyond the signing of a peace accord."⁶ The affinity of both Israel and the Hashemite dynasty of Jordan, derives from the interests that

Both countries are concerned at all times in avoiding isolation and in preserving the existing status quo in that part of

the world. As a result both countries have adapted policies to restrict PLO activities in the West Bank as well as to prevent any semblance of group solidarity.⁷

At different times, the Jordanian army not only moved quickly to intercept Palestinian commandoes intent upon entering Israel, it has also passed and shared intelligence information with the Israeli secret police. Since this is the case, one may wonder why Jordan decided to join the rejectionist Arab states to denounce the 1979 Camp David Peace Accord?

King Hussein joined the rejectionist Arab states and denounced the Camp David Accord for two reasons. First was the fear of domestic political upheaval. Any Arab leader who tends toward compromise with Israel is vulnerable to attack because of the humiliation and shame attendant upon accepting Israel in its present form. Second, Hussein joined the rejectionist Arab states for fear of isolation and condemnation from the Arab world; As was the case for President Sadat of Egypt. Thus King Hussein's indecisiveness about recognition of Israel's right to exist, and conclude an official peace treaty between his country and Israel, appears to have emerged from fear of being seen and condemned as a traitor.

The so-called Jordanian option as a political solution to the Palestinian problem is not new. It has been a long-held Zionist conviction that the Palestinians can and should find full expression through a Jordanian-Palestinian

Confederation. But as Professor W. Khalidi has noted, the Palestinian struggle is waged not for the establishment of Palestinian-Jordanian federal state formula, but for a complete and totally sovereign Palestinian state. "These results could not ensue from a Buntustan 'federal' formula under a Hashemite dressing."⁸ Edward Said has also explained why a federative state formula under Hashemite rule cannot work.

I don't see any simple resolution of the question of Palestinian nationalism versus Hashemite nationalism to this point. They do seem to me in conflict with each other.⁹

The Jordanian population is estimated at three million, out of which 52 per cent or more are Palestinians and the remainder Bedouins. Until now, these two Jordanian national groups have been able to bury their differences beneath the surface. The Jordanian Palestinians, however, remain a potential threat to the Hashemite dynasty. A move by either group could eventually lead to a civil war similar to that which erupted in 1970-71. Should there be a Palestinian victory, there is every reason to believe that a Palestinian controlled government in Jordan would not be accepted by the Bedouins. If the Bedouins come out victorious, they will attempt to impose repressive measures against both the Jordanian Palestinians and the PLO commandoes. Any form of repressive measure imposed by the Bedouin government against Palestinians would not be tolerated by the militant PLO ranks.

If the Palestinian Jordanians with the help of the PLO succeed in establishing a Palestinian controlled government in Amman, it may be acceptable to the Zionists and to the Israeli government because such a move would enable them to justify their long-held claim that Jordan is the homeland of the Palestinians. However, a Palestinian controlled regime in Amman without prior arrangement and agreement on the future of the Israeli occupied territories would not be satisfied by controlling Jordan alone. But it will attempt to convert Jordan into a PLO military base and provide the PLO with the necessary assistance in its effort to liberate all of Palestine. Any military action taken by Israel either to defend its security or pursue its present policy will not only unite the Bedouins and the Palestinians, but will once again bring the Arab states into direct confrontation with Israel.

It must be noted here that the refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist and to direct their activities toward terrorism is a symbol of the deep Palestinian sense of grievance at the advent of Zionism[‡] all that it has meant to them as individuals and as a nation. It would be difficult to foresee this deep sense of grievance fading away before a lasting solution to their present conditions is found.

Anyone who is aware of the existing Palestinian-Jordanian relationship can safely say that any form of peace treaty reached between Israel and Jordan either on the

future of the West Bank or on the living conditions of the Palestinians would not result in a durable peace. Rather, it would lead to the traditional family and ideologically based inter-Arab dispute. Thus if a negotiated peace settlement on the Arab-Israeli conflict is to be realized, it is important that the peacemakers recognize the existing Palestinian-Jordanian differences, and seek ways to resolve them.

CHAPTER IV

FOOTNOTES

¹ Klieman, S. A. The Washington Paper 83: Israel, Jordan, Palestine, 1981, Vol. IX, p. 26.

² Ibid., p. 27.

³ Harkabi, Y. Arab Strategy and Israeli Response, 1977, p. 119.

⁴ Klieman, op. cit., p. 30.

⁵ Ibid., p. 30.

⁶ Avineri, S. "Peacemaking: The Arab-Israeli Conflict," Foreign Affairs, 1978, Vol. 57, p. 51.

⁷ Avineri, S. "A Peace Israel Can Live With," The Nation, 1979, p. 426.

⁸ Khalidi, W. "Thinking the Unthinkable," Foreign Affairs, 1978, Vol. 56, p. 701.

⁹ Said, W. E. "Palestinian Prospects Now," World View, 1979, Vol. 22, p. 7.

CHAPTER V
THE PLO AND ITS QUEST FOR
DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION

Since its inception in 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) not only has asserted itself as a political factor, but also seeks diplomatic recognition as the government of a Palestinian state in exile.

Beginning in February 1974, the PLO has participated as an observer at different international conferences. It has been granted observer status by most of the specialized agencies related to the United Nations. It has been admitted to membership in the conference of non-aligned countries¹ in the conference of Islamic countries. No less than 110 states have expressed their recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people. The PLO has offices and resident representatives in dozens of capitals; in some of those capitals the representatives of the PLO enjoy full diplomatic privileges and immunities.¹

Uncompromising dissent from the new international consensus on Palestine and firm opposition to the world-wide recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization have come consistently from the governments of the United States and Israel.

In the United States and Israel the objective and practice of the PLO as a political organization continues

to remain a matter of debate and concern. In both private and public discussion, the PLO has been associated with political terrorism and the Israeli strategists have been successful in presenting it, not as a political organization with legitimate causes objectives, but as an organized terrorist group. This emphasis distorts the motivational issue which impels Palestinians to resort to terrorism and distorts the focus on Israeli national security.

The PLO objective and strategy can be compared and explained in terms of the circumstances in which the Zionist movement developed and won its victory. To explain the feelings and attitudes of Palestinians who have been driven from their homes, or who live under military occupation, or who remain as second-class citizens in a country that not long ago was their own is extremely crucial. To explain is not to justify, "but if circumstances can help to explain the resort to terror in pre-state Zionism and increasingly in subsequent years, then the same is true with regard to those who see themselves, not unreasonably, as the victims of Zionist success."²

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was founded in 1964 by Ahmed Shukairi, a Palestinian from Gaza, who was at the time Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United Nations, and "who first coined the slogan about driving the Jews into the sea."³

At least seven commando factions make up the PLO. These commando factions differ in both ideology and their

methods of struggle. In spite of such division within the organization, every Palestinian professional or grass roots organization is directly or indirectly affiliated with the PLO. The organization consists of representatives that range from labour administration, professional organizations, cultural groups, and above all, popular resistance organizations which operate either within the Israeli occupied territories or in what has become known as the Palestinian "Diaspora" in the other Arab countries.

It is true that, because of their existing circumstances, the Palestinians have not been able to hold an election based on electoral districts. Yet they have developed a system that enables them to elect representatives to the Palestinian National Council (PNC). Representatives are elected on the basis of a functional constituencies system. The functional constituencies include both the refugee camps and the areas currently under Israeli occupation. Each refugee camp has its own elected administrators and spokespersons. Those who are elected as administrators and spokespersons elect the Palestinian National Council (PNC), the supreme governing body of the Palestinian people. At every regular session the National Council elects the 14 members of the PLO executive committee who in turn elect the chairperson of the Committee. Since 1969, Yassir Arafat has been the chairperson of that committee, as well as the leader of "Fatah", the largest commando group in the PLO. "Fatah" commandos held off a

large Israeli punitive expedition at the battle of Karameh in the Jordanian Valley in 1968.

After the 1968 Karameh War, Fatah's power grew rapidly and many Palestinians joined the movement voluntarily. As Colin Smith notes, "Its strength . . . rose rapidly to 10,000 regular and several hundred militia. Even King Hussein [of Jordan] was not immune to the general euphoria."⁴ Since then, Fatah (meaning, victory) has remained the dominant voice of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Despite its preeminence within the PLO, Fatah does not have a clear ideological stand. By describing itself as an Arab nationalist movement and containing both right-wing and left-wing elements, it tries to remain everyone's friend by accommodating and entertaining everyone's view and ideology. Fatah's origin lies in the Muslim Brotherhood, a nationalist and fundamentalist Islamic movement started in Egypt in 1928. Fatah does not believe in military operations outside the Middle East. It dissociates itself from those renegade groups like the highly secretive Black September teams responsible for the 1972 Munich Olympic massacre.

The second largest PLO faction is the Marxist-Leninist --the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash. Recruits to the PFLP are only accepted if they believe in Marxism and the class struggle. "Most of the recruits come from middle class Palestinian families of whom a typical example would be the girl hijacker, Leila Khalidi."⁵ It was this commando faction that

hijacked the British and Swiss airliners in 1970 to an abandoned World War II landing strip in the Jordanian desert known as Dawson's Field, where the jets were blown up for the benefit of publicity. Two years later the same commando groups hijacked the West German-owned civilian airliner and "collected five million dollars in ransom"⁶ for the safe return of the plane and passengers.

The other groups "are for the most part schisms of schisms", the smallest being the Arab Liberation Front (ALF) which is backed by the Iraqi Ba'thists and has about 100 full-time Fedayeen under the command of Abdel Wahab Kaygali. Their raison d'etre seems to be to enable the Iraqis to keep a finger in the Palestinian pie. This faction seldom mounts any commando raids.

Like the Iraqis, the Libyans and Syrians have founded their own Palestinian commando groups. Libya finances and supports the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command (PFLPGC). This group is believed to have been sent by Qaddafi to fight in Uganda during the 1978-79 civil war, and the following year in Chad. The Syrian backed faction is the Al Saiqa (or "the thunderbolt"). This group is indeed nothing more than an auxiliary of the Syrian army. Its task is mainly to keep an eye on the PLO leadership.

Over a policy and strategy dispute between the ranks of the PFLP, Nayef Hawatmeh resigned from the PFLP in 1970 and founded his own faction, the Popular Democratic Front for

the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). The actual difference between the PFLP and PDFLP is one of policy rather than ideology as is the case between FATAH and the PFLP. Hawatmeh's group not only stresses the value of co-operation with Israel's left-wing elements, but also stresses the need for political dialogue between Israel and Palestinians themselves. The PFLP leadership, however, does not believe that any form of cooperation with Israeli left-wingers and their contributions to the Palestinian cause will have any effect.

In spite of prevailing ideological differences amongst the seven Palestinian commando factions, in the effort to co-ordinate the resistance movement, each has an equal voice in the decision making process of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO executive committee on which the various commando factions are represented meets periodically to discuss issues of importance to the Palestinian problem. It is not uncommon, because of the ideological differences on one hand, and the Arab government's indirect involvement on the Palestine question on the other, for the executive committee's decisions to be disregarded by one or the other group. The more revolutionary commando groups often act independently of the PLO.

Groups such as "ALF, Black September, Black June, even Al Siaga and PFLPGC (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command) have assumed impressive revolutionary names, but because of their willingness to be used

as a proxy for the political ambitions of Arab states, in effect outside the realm of Palestinian concerns and causes, the Israelis have been able to justify their claim that the PLO is nothing more than an organized terrorist group. Some of the actions taken from the belief that "actions speak louder than words" have given some legitimacy and support to the Israeli claim that the Palestine Liberation Organization is not a negotiating, but rather, a shooting party. However, as far as the Palestinian populace is concerned, the prevailing ideological division within the ranks of the PLO, the militant action taken by the factions, as well as the more organized PLO attacks against Israel, are not necessarily a wrong strategy. Rather, each faction is doing its best to ensure that neither the Israelis with their well-trained and equipped army nor the rest of the world can afford to simply ignore the Palestinian problem. In addition, the ideological difference is justified by the claim that:

Divergence of views and outlook is a sign of intellectual vitality and a testimony to the freedom which prevails among the ranks of Palestinians.⁷

Whether ideological diversity and independent actions can be viewed or accepted as a sign of freedom, heroism, or intellectual vitality is a theme better left to those who specifically deal with such issues. It is undesirable, however, that the uncoordinated actions of Palestinian commandos against Israel and its supporters has enabled the

Israelis not only to undermine the legitimacy of the PLO, but also to distort the true nature and dimensions of the Palestinian cause.

Until 1974, the PLO's strategy to liberate Palestine from the Zionist settlers was based solely on armed struggle. Such a strategy, however, neither improved the living conditions of the Palestinians nor changed Israeli policy and attitudes. Instead, it prompted the Israelis to strengthen their institutions and to resist such tactics. As Don Peretz has noted, "The greatest threat which [the PLO] post is not one which would improve the situation for the Palestinians but would jeopardize the democratic institutions of Israel, make it more dependent for assistance on the West, thereby increasing its threat to the Arab world."⁸

In the original National Charter of the PLO issued in 1964, Palestine was defined as "an Arab homeland, bounded by the ties of Arab natinnalism to the other Arab countries-- which, together with Palestine, constitutes a greater Arab homeland." Palestinians were defined as those Arab citizens who, until 1947, had normally resided in Palestine, regardless of whether they have been evicted from it or not. Jews of Palestinian origin are considered Palestinians if they desire to live peacefully and be loyal to a Palestinian state. In effect, then, Jews would be required to abandon their Jewish national identity and become Palestinians of Jewish faith under the 1964 charter.

The Palestinian Natinnal Covenant, adopted in 1968

by the Palestinian National Council, was also somewhat ambiguous in regard to the fate of Jews. It stated that:

Palestine is the homeland of the Palestinian Arab people and an integral part of the Greater Arab Homeland, and the people of Palestine are part of the Arab nation.⁹

Until 1973, the PLO was unclear about the fate of Jews in a Palestinian state. In addition, to accomplish its objective of liberating Palestine from the Zionist settlers, the PLO sought a military solution through guerilla warfare. After the October, 1973 Arab-Israeli war, however, the PLO made a drastic change in strategy. It moved from paramilitary to diplomatic means.

Two distinct events account for the change. One was the Arab summit at Rabat in October 1974, which decided to recognize the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinians. Second, the United Nations General Assembly of 1974 recognized the PLO as a political organization and accorded it observer status in its General Assembly. In that Session of the General Assembly, Yassir Arafat, the chairman of the PLO, made his first appearance at the United Nations, where he stated that, "I came bearing a gun and an olive branch. It is up to Israel to decide which one I am to use."¹⁰

Since then, the PLO has expressed its desire to seek a political settlement in preference to a military action. During the 1974 Rabat Conference, Yassir Arafat hinted that the PLO will be prepared to recognize Israel's right to

exist in exchange for Israel's recognition of a Palestinian state.

The first hint that the Palestinians were prepared to consider the mini-state solution came less than a month after the October war. At that time, it was treated as an almost minor by-product of the new momentum for Middle East peace created by the early Kissinger negotiations and was not given all the attention it deserved.¹¹

The mini-state of Palestine would consist of the two currently occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with a part of Israel between them, "in the same way that India over a vastly greater distance once divided the two wings of Pakistan."¹²

For the Palestinians it involved considerable concessions. Instead of insisting upon the return of Haifa and Jaffa, or the idea of establishing a democratic secular Arab state in Palestine, they would be willing to recognize Israel as a Jewish state in return for Israeli recognition of a Palestinian state on Jordan's West Bank, including Gaza. The establishment of a Palestinian state was given credence at the 1974 Rabat conference by the agreement that the Palestinians would establish a national authority in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.¹³

The new idea of a Palestinian state was "well received by some Israeli liberals" and Jewish organizations, i.e., those anti-annexers who saw the continued presence of Israeli troops in the occupied territories and the annexation of East Jerusalem after the 1967 war for nothing but

endless conflict.

On July 21, 1974 the Israeli government announced its response:

Israel will never negotiate on the future of the West Bank with any Palestinian party, but only with the government of Jordan; Israel will not withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza under any circumstances; it will never recognize or meet the Palestinian Liberation Organization except on the battlefield.¹⁴

S. Klieman noted that the

. . . policy announcement is . . . merely a variation on the earlier announcement of the late Golda Meier to the effect that the Palestinians do not possess the objective international legal qualification for such states and were to be dealt with as a humanitarian refugee problem and settlement in the adjacent Arab countries.¹⁵

Israel's firm opposition to the establishment of a Palestinian state, and its unwillingness to recognize and deal with the PLO, was not only disappointing to the Middle East peace-makers, but also caused major dissatisfaction and concern within the Jewish community. Reacting to the Israeli policy, Rabbi Alexander Schindler wrote in 1975:

The Israelis themselves are threatened by their own short-sightedness. Mr. Rabin's policy of sitting tight, merely denying the claims of the Palestinians and expecting them quietly to fade from the scene, is self-delusion of major proportions. The longer he delays in confronting the problem and producing a concrete and positive program for resolving it, the stronger will support for the PLO become and the more isolated will Israel feel herself.¹⁶

On the same issue, similar suggestions and concerns were expressed by the veteran Zionist leader, Dr. Nahum Goldmann:

The time has come for very painful and unavoidable radical decisions. The postponement of such decisions . . . in the hope that the status quo will last . . . has proved to be an absolute failure. It has not brought any peaceful solution, it has caused another war, it has isolated Israel nearly completely in the family of nations, it has brought about a disastrous economic and financial situation.¹⁷

In December, 1975 the American Jewish Committee adopted a resolution which stated that:

It is our belief that lasting peace in the Middle East cannot ignore the question of the Palestinians.¹⁸

This resolution, however, was condemned by the Zionist Organization of America which noted: "Some of the friends of Israel had unconsciously absorbed the propaganda words of Israel's enemies and had begun to give them wide circulation."¹⁹ To contain Jewish dissent, the World Zionist Organization's policy planning committee introduced a policy designed to restrict Jewish peace activists from advocating any form of accommodation between Israel and the PLO or even discussing such issues publicly.

Apart from the Zionist organizations and Israeli government, a firm rejection of the PLO came from the United States. In spite of some minor differences between their respective positions, both the United States and Israel have adopted similar policies towards the Palestine

Liberation Organization. The Sinai Agreement hinted at the common position of the two governments towards the Palestine problem. Paragraph 4 of that agreement clearly states that:

The United States will oppose and if necessary vote against any initiative in the Security Council . . . to change Resolutions 242 and 338 in ways which are incompatible with their original purpose.

The U.S. will continue to adhere to its present policy with respect to the Palestine Liberation Organization whereby it will not recognize or negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization so long as the Palestine Liberation Organization does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept security council resolutions 242 and 338. (see Appendix "C").*

The settlement and peace envisaged in Resolution 242 and 338 of the U.N. Security Council completely ignores the political aspects of the Palestinian problem. Both resolutions refer to the Palestinian question as a refugee problem. Harold H. Saunders, representing the State

*In the General Assembly of the U.N., the United States representative voted against every resolution which recognizes and defines the national rights of the Palestinian people, for example, against Resolution (2535-B (xxiv); 2672-C (XXV); 2792-D (xxvi); 2963-D (xxvii); 3089-D (xxviii); 3236 (xxix) and 3376 (xxx). It voted against Resolution 3210 (xxix) (inviting the PLO to participate in the debate on the "Question of Palestine" at the plenary meetings of the Assembly), 3237 (xxix) (granting the PLO observer status) and 3375 (xxx) (calling for the participation of the PLO "on an equal footing with other parties", in "all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East.") For complete information, see A. Sayegh, The Palestine Problem and the Role of the PLO, 1976, pp. 3-8.

Department, reporting to the U.S. Congress Subcommittee on Middle East Relations on November 12, 1975 asserted that:

The issue is not whether Palestinian interests should be expressed in a final settlement, but how. There will be no peace between Israel and its neighbours, unless the legitimate interests of the Palestinian Arabs are taken into account in the negotiation of the Arab-Israeli peace.

Furthermore, Saunders added that:

In many ways the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict is the heart of that conflict . . . In my judgement, that Security Council 242 and 338 do not deal with the political aspects of the Palestinian problem . . . which the United States had recently discovered and had come to recognize as something that must be taken into account.²⁰

In the following year, the U.S. representative to the U.N., Daniel P. Moynihan, also told the General Assembly that:

The Palestinian problem has always been broader and more complex than the issues of humanitarian relief to refugees, crucial as that may be at the moment. Its aspects and ramifications have multiplied in recent years. No one can ignore this reality in the context of our current and future peace efforts in the Middle East. We shall not do so.²¹

Was it by accident that the U.S. government had come to recognize the Palestinian problem as something that must be taken into account in the negotiation of Arab-Israeli peace? Or was this extracted from a carefully worded official statement designed to defuse the new international consensus on the Palestinian problem? According to Sageyh, the choice of terminology was clearly intended to subvert

the political reality and the need for Palestinian statehood. It would, therefore, be grossly presumptuous even to suggest that the U.S. government with vested interests and concerns in the dispute, would

. . . suddenly abandon a politically barren and juridicially neutral term to which it had resolutely clung for years and adapted, instead, another term laden with political-juridical meaning, without intending at the same time to accept . . . or to pave the way for its future acceptance of . . . the political juridical consequences of its semantic decisions.²²

This became clearly apparent when the U.K. representative to the U.N. introduced a resolution aimed at amending Resolution 242 (1967) in 1976.

Before the motion to amend Resoluti~~nn~~ 242 of the Security Council was introduced, the representatives of France, Italy, Britain and Sweden jointly expressed their respective views and concerns on the Middle East crisis. Their collective views specifically focused on the Palestinian problem:

It is hardly disputed by anyone that during the attempts to reach a lasting solution the interests and rights of the Palestinian Arabs have not sufficiently been taken into account. It is now evident to all that the Palestinian Arabs have legitimate national interests and rights and that these must be fully taken into account in the search for solutions.²³

The drafted amendment read:

An overall settlement must be based on Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in the 1967 war; on the right of all states in the area, including Israel, to live within recognized, secure and

guaranteed frontiers and on the recognition of the political rights of the Palestinian people to a national identity and to a homeland.²⁴

The incompleteness and deficiency of Resolution 242 was also admitted by its author, Lord Carodan, during an interview with the Jerusalem Post, when he noted that:

Resolution 242 should be amended so as to state clearly the rights of Palestinians to their own state.²⁵

If, by everyone's admission, including that of its original author, Resolution 242 is, in fact, inadequate in dealing with the Palestinian problem, why did the U.S. government decide to veto its amendment, and meanwhile insist that the PLO accept a resolution which denies the Palestinians the right to self-determination?

It shows a lack of sensitivity and inability on the part of the U.S. government to comprehend and foresee the ramifications of Resolution 242 concerning the Palestinians. Unquestionably, if the PLO accepts Resolution 242 in its present form, and recognizes Israel's right to exist, then it would not only legitimize Israeli occupation of the Arab lands, but it would thereby sign a document of unconditional surrender on behalf of the Palestinian people. This would mean that the Palestinians no longer have historical or legal rights to return to the land which they claim to be theirs.

The U.S. policy on the Middle East questions the recognition of the PLO or its participation in any Arab-Israeli peace negotiation is essential or even desirable.

This attitude cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be seen in the context of U.S. political atmosphere. In any pluralistic political system, such as the U.S., governments are sensitive to the concerns and demands of organized interest groups. Zionists are one of the elite, organized power lobbies in America.

It is no longer a secret that the presence of the Jewish lobby group in Washington is felt by every U.S. president. In 1948, President Truman was quoted as saying:

I am sorry, gentlemen, but I have to answer 200,000 who are anxious for the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents.²⁶

In the frenzied politics of the 1947-48 campaign, James Forrestal, Secretary of Defense, said that:

I thought it was a most disastrous and regrettable fact that the foreign policy of this country was determined by the contributions a particular bloc of special interests might make to the party funds.²⁷

During the 1963 "Hearing on Activities of Non-Diplomatic Representatives of Foreign Principals in the United States," the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations obtained 300 pages of testimony from both government and non-government agencies about the activities of the Zinnist Organization of America. The testimony given by the Zionist Organization representative makes fascinating reading. "Roughly \$5 million was spent by the Zionist Organization of America over a period of seven years."²⁸ The interesting part about this disclosure is that it reveals where this money came

from and how it was spent. A substantial part of these funds were originally tax-deductible contributions to the to the United Jewish Appeal. These funds are transmitted back to the United States for the reasons which are candidly expressed by Senator Fulbright as "conduits to support the Israeli press service, to buy chairs of supposed teaching and research at distinguished American universities, to finance trips to Israel for news media people and clergymen, as only examples of a full inventory of astute propaganda service and indoctrination."²⁹

One of the consistent aberrations of American public opinion with respect to Middle Eastern affairs is the almost unchallenged assumption that what is good for Israel is good for the United States. To determine the assumption that what is good for Israel is good for the United States, requires a statement about U.S. national interests in the Middle East. Some examination of strategies and tactics acceptable to the United States to defend and advance those interests is needed.

Those vital interests of the West which the Israelis claim to be defending or protecting in the Middle East:

None of them . . . not a single one of them . . . is within the state of Israel, or ultimately could be safeguarded by the State of Israel. [In fact] because of the U.S. preferential treatment of the State of Israel, a potential threat to the U.S. national interests in the region has become imminent.³⁰

Richard Nolt, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, commented that:

The one-sided official intervention by the U.S. in support of Israel and the overwhelming partisan private support of Americans for Israel have established the U.S. in Arab eyes, as the unswerving champion of Zionism, in spite of efforts by American officials to be fair and even handed.³¹

Since the U.S. appeared on the scene to fill the vacuum left by the British in the Middle East, it has been virtually an axiom of U.S. foreign policy that the Middle East should remain under U.S. political and economic influence. There is no single organized group which is as critical of U.S. Middle East policy as the PLO, and it has persistently sought to effect change. While the PLO was seeking to bring about change in both Israeli and U.S. policy on the question of Palestine, in March 1975 a civil war broke out in Lebanon.

The Palestinian commandos took the side of the Lebanese (largely Muslim) left. Using the Arab League sponsored Arab Deterrent Force, "with the total death rate in the civil war standing at about 64,000"³² Syrian troops entered Beirut in November, 1976. Syria had two objectives when it decided to intervene in the Lebanese civil war; first to ensure that its national interests in Lebanon were not affected by the civil war, and second, to defeat Fatah militarily and remove Yassir Arafat from the PLO leadership. The only Arab government which persisted in questioning Arafat's ideology and leadership is Syria. (The Syrian-Arafat relations will be examined in the following chapter.)

There was no doubt that the PLO involvement in the Lebanese civil war was a period of setback for the Palestinians almost to be compared with the expulsion of Palestinian guerrillas from Jordan by King Hussein in 1970 and 1971. There were losses in terms of lives and arms and Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their refugee camps.

For the world at large, the Palestinian course at that time seemed to be symbolized by terrorism and violence. Desperate and expelled Palestinian commandos from Beirut seized OPEC oil ministers in December, 1975 in Vienna. This was followed by the hijacking of an Air France Flight to Uganda. A Palestinian group calling itself "The Black June" attacked the Semiramis Hotel in Damascus, in retaliation for Syria's involvement in Lebanon, and the Inter-Continental Hotel in Amman Jordan in 1976. The Israeli strategists used these terrorist activities to undermine the PLO's diplomacy started in 1974. For the first time the World Zionist Organization called upon the Israeli government to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination in an abstract sense. The Zionist organization's call for the recognition of a Palestinian right to self-determination was not genuine. This is clear from the following statement:

We risk nothing and make better propaganda, if we recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination in an abstract sense.³³

The Zionist organization was more concerned with the diplomatic isolation in which Israel found itself as a result of its uncompromising policy towards the Palestinians. To mitigate this situation, Professor Yehoshafat Harkabi in 1976 called on Israel to:

. . . declare readiness to recognize the legitimate right of the Palestinians and negotiate with the PLO, provided the Palestinians simultaneously recognize the legitimacy of Israel.³⁴

Harkabi's statement was instigated by the belief that Israel's recognition of the Palestinian's right to self-determination, in an abstract sense, will cause dissension within the Palestinian ranks, whereas intransigent Israeli rejection will help to solidify the Palestinian people and the PLO factions. In effect, this conviction suggests that, if and when an open and direct Israeli approach is made, it could throw the Palestinian camp into turmoil and the possibility of a civil war situation could arise. In this scenario the "maximalists" under Habash could confront the minimalists under Arafat. The PLO's political impact would decline and in the long run destroy itself. Hence, Harkabi's call for the recognition of the PLO and the Palestinian right to self-determination was designed to woo public opinion. This is clear from his earlier writings on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The present state in the Arab-Israeli conflict is not a dispute on how to settle the conflict, but rather a competition in how to win world public opinion.³⁵

Despite this, the PLO was gaining momentum at the international level and consolidating its position within the Middle East. In 1976, the U.N. General Assembly voted to treat the PLO on an equal footing with other states in all deliberations in any Middle East peace conference held under U.N. auspices.

This was followed by the January, 1976 U.N. Security Council resolution which called upon Israel to withdraw its troops from the territory it has occupied since 1967, and permits the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank. According to Chaim Herzog, Israel's U.N. Ambassador at the time:

The U.N. Security Council resolution was not only backed by the confrontationalist Arab states (Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Jordan) but including by the PLO.³⁶

Herzog noted that "The PLO did not only back this peace plan but in fact prepared it." This resolution was vetoed by the United States. The PLO then condemned "the tyranny of the veto" by which the U.S. blocked this important effort to bring about a peaceful two-state settlement. In November, 1976 the Egyptian Prime Minister, Ismail Fahmy, outlined four conditions for what he called a durable and lasting Middle East Peace settlement:

Israel's withdrawal to the pre-1967 war frontier, the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip; the ban on nuclear weapons in the region; and the inspection of nuclear installations in the area.³⁷

In 1977, Syria, Jordan and Egypt informed the United

States that they would sign peace treaties with Israel if Israel would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank. On March 20, 1977 the Palestinian National Council called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state rather than a secular democratic state of Palestine and authorized Palestinian attendance at the peace negotiation conference.

In October, 1977 both superpowers, i.e. the United States and the U.S.S.R., agreed upon a draft resolution of the U.N. Security Council which called for the "termination of the state of war and establishment of normal peaceful relations between Israel and guaranteed borders and demilitarization to enhance security." The U.S. however, quickly withdrew its consent because of Israeli protest. Seth Tillman commented that, "Without exception, proposals for superpower collaboration to bring about a settlement and to guarantee it have been shut down by Israeli leaders and supporters of Israel in the United States."³⁸

The Carter administration introduced a new Middle East Peace Plan. The Carter Peace Plan of 1977 actually amounted to little more than part of a package which was offered by President Sadat of Egypt and soundly rejected by Israel in 1971. President Sadat's earlier version included provision to safeguard Palestinian Arab rights, protect Lebanon's southern border, and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Arab territories. In the 1977 Israeli-Egyptian peace negotiations, however, Sadat was forced to drop these

three provisions. After two years of extensive negotiations, Egypt and Israel signed the much-heralded Camp David Peace Accord on March 26, 1979. The main provisions of the treaty were as follows:

1. The state of war between the two countries was ended;
2. Israel would withdraw its forces from the Sinai Peninsula over a three year period;
3. Egypt and Israel would negotiate the introduction of a self-governing authority for the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza.

Even though Egypt was one of the Arab countries which sponsored the 1976 U.N. General Assembly Resolution which called for the participation of the PLO on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East, it became the first Arab country to recognize and sign a peace treaty with Israel. This was viewed by both the Zionist organizations and the United States as a breakthrough in Arab-Israeli relations. The PLO and most Arab governments, however, not only condemned the Camp David Peace Accord, but decided to expel Egypt from the Arab League and to move their headquarters from Cairo to Tunis.

In 1980, both the conference of non-aligned countries and the European community took a clear stand on the Middle East situation. "The non-aligned condemned both the Camp David Accord and the peace treaties based on them in a conference held in Havana [Cuba] in January, 1980."³⁹ This was followed by the Venice Declaration which became the key

statement of the European community official policy on the subject of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The nine European community heads of government stated that: "The Palestinian problem was not simply a question of refugees. The Palestinians must be placed in a position . . . to exercise fully the right of self-determination." This was followed by the Brezhnev peace proposal which stressed the inalienable right of the Palestinians to a state of their own.

The inalienable rights of the Arab people of Palestine must be secured. Up to and including the establishment of their own state. It is essential to ensure the security and sovereignty of all states in the region, including that of Israel. These are the basic principles.⁴⁰

In its April 1981 session, the Palestinian National Council (PNC) unanimously endorsed the Brezhnev peace proposal for the Middle East. In the same year, the Saudi Arabian peace plan was also introduced. The Saudi peace plan not only expressed the importance of Palestinian participation in any Middle East peace conference, but also set conditions for a lasting peace between Israel and the Arab states. The condition set by the Saudi peace plan was "the acceptance of the Palestinian right to establish a state on the West Bank with East Jerusalem as its capital, an Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, and the recognition of the PLO by Israel as a legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Jumping on the bandwagon, King Hussein of Jordan issued a public statement recognizing the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and as in the Saudi plan, stressed the need for PLO participation in any Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.

The Saudi plan differed from previous Arab proposals in acknowledging the right of all states in the area to live in peace; it was understood that this right must be taken to belong to Israel.⁴¹

The U.S. government demonstrated an interest in the Saudi peace plan when President Reagan appointed Philip Habib as his own special envoy in the Middle East. The Israeli government rejected the Saudi plan because of the conditions set in that proposal (i.e., the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the PLO participation in the negotiations).

Until the late 1970's, the Hashemite dynasty of Jordan had never openly acknowledged the legitimacy of the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people. However, following the 1980 meeting between King Hussein and Chairman Arafat, the rift between the PLO and the Hashemite dynasty of Jordan dating back to 1970, moved closer to reconciliation. Outside the Middle East, Chairman Arafat held an official meeting, with Herr Willy Brandt, the former chancellor of West Germany, Dr. Kreinsky, the Austrian Chancellor, and President Brezhnev of the U.S.S.R. The increasing international acceptance of the PLO as the principal representative of the Palestinian people caused

a high degree of anxiety within the Israeli populace; because the PLO was gaining international recognition not as an organized terrorist group, but as a legitimate government of a Palestinian state in exile. Obviously this is contrary to the Israeli claim which attempts to portray the PLO as nothing but a group of terrorists.

Between 1980 and 1981 there were more attacks by Palestinian commandos on northern Israel and preemptive strikes by Israel against PLO positions in southern Lebanon. While those attacks and counter-attacks were occurring almost daily, a group of Palestinians attempted to assassinate the Israeli ambassador in London on June 6, 1982. According to the critics of the invasion, however, Israel had already planned to invade Lebanon but was deterred by lack of reasons which would legitimize and justify the invasion.

It is clear that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was motivated neither by a desire to prevent a state of anarchy and to save the country, nor was it fought in self-defense. It was aimed at driving the PLO back into terrorism. Some may find it difficult to comprehend why the Israeli government wishes to drive the PLO back into terrorism. N. Chomsky, for example, has suggested that, "The PLO as an orderly political body is more terrifying to the government of Israel than the powerful terrorist PLO."⁴² Arafat's successful diplomacy was a greater danger than the proclaimed Arab threat to Israel's national security.

To overcome the mounting pressure from Western liberal public opinion in favour of a two state settlement, the Israeli government tacitly adopted a policy designed to push the PLO further into terrorism. For some analysts, this may seem a counter-productive political strategy, because it is against the best interests of Israel, and indeed, to much of the world. Ironically, Israel's strategic goal appears to be precisely to achieve this end.

CHAPTER V

FOOTNOTES

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- ⁵Smith, op. cit., p. 9.
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- ¹⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12.

- ¹⁸ The Saunders Report on the Arab-Israeli Conflict, presented to the U.S. Congress Subcommittee on the Near East Conflict on November 12, 1975.
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³⁹The Brezhnev Declaration is cited from his address to the 26th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in February, 1981. See Chomsky, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

⁴⁰Smith, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴¹Smith, op. cit., p. 12.

⁴²Chomsky, op. cit., p. 69.

CHAPTER VI
THE PLO: DURING AND AFTER
THE INVASION OF LEBANON

The principal objective of Israel's invasion of Lebanon was motivated neither by a desire to protect Israel's northern border from PLO terrorism, nor preventing a state of anarchy and saving the city of Beirut. Israel sought to prove once and for all that the PLO was unable to defend its own ostensible citizenry. In the words of Amnon Rubinstein (former dean of the law school at Tel Aviv University and a Knesset member), "The goal was to see the PLO as dead people politically."¹

To a considerable extent, the PLO was uprooted and defeated in terms of conventional war. The stockpiles of weapons were destroyed, training camps were overrun by Israeli tanks and troops, and its military and political infrastructure in Lebanon were neutralized. The PLO commandos along with their headquarters were forced to evacuate Beirut, leaving behind no protection for its citizens in Lebanon.

As Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon gave orders to his troops to drive the PLO out of Lebanon, the sequence of Phalangist massacres was continued culminating in September, 1982 in the massacre at the Sabra and Chatilla Palestinian refugee camps. When the Lebanese Phanges

militias took the initiative to massacre the Palestinian refugees who were stationed in the Israeli controlled area of Southern Lebanon. The nature of the Israeli military assault on Beirut, the use of white phosphorous, supplied by the United States to be used only in self-defense, and the controversy surrounding the massacre of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Chatilla, not only outraged world opinion but also divided Israeli society.

When the first reports of the Sabra and Chatilla incidents reached the outside world, the Israeli government denied its troops were in any way aware that the flushing-out operation had become a general massacre. While the Israeli government had maintained such a position, an Israeli journalist reported that Israeli commanders, including the Minister of Defense Ariel Sharon, had known of the impending massacre when it was about to take place. After this was confirmed by Israeli reporters, many Israelis who had previously supported the invasion of Lebanon expressed their disapproval and demanded a public inquiry in regard to the alleged claim that the Israeli officials and troops stood by and allowed the massacre to take place. Once the commission of inquiry completed the investigation and found the Israeli government equally guilty and responsible for the massacre of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Chatilla, Ariel Sharon (along with his field commander) was forced to resign. Although Sharon and the field commander were forced to resign their

positions, both individuals were given different positions. Thus the resignation of Sharon was designed to contain mounting world criticism which Israel faced as a result of the incident.

The Israeli journalist and writer Mordechai Bar-on candidly stated that:

Anyone who has visited Lebanon during and even after the fighting would see that the war was fought not just against terrorist organizations and the PLO, and not even solely to destroy the PLO's military infrastructure in the region it was fought against the very existence of the Palestinians as a community with its own way of life . . . The Palestinian refugees have once again become a faceless mass of people, uprooted and torn away from any collective way of life.²

According to Dan Connel, an Oxfam officer in Lebanon during the war:

The Israeli strategy was obvious. They were hitting a broad belt, and they kept moving into the belt up toward the populated area and pushing the people in front of it. The Israelis forced an increased number of people into a smaller and smaller space, so that casualties increased geometrically with every single shell or bomb that landed.³

During the height of the invasion, the Israeli journalist Danny Rubinstein, who broke out the massacre of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Chatilla, commented that: "Israeli defense forces personnel conduct themselves in a manner reminiscent of SS troopers."⁴ David Krivine identified the Palestinians as "the Jews of our era."⁵ As a basis for his hunger strike to protest the invasion of Lebanon,

Israeli Doctor Shlomo Schmelzman noted that:

In my childhood I have suffered fear, hunger and humiliation when I passed from the Warsaw ghetto through labour camps, to Buchenwald. Today, as a citizen of Israel, I cannot accept the systematic destruction of cities, towns and refugee camps. I cannot accept the technocratic cruelty of the bombing destroying and killing human beings. I hear too many familiar sounds today, sounds which are being amplified by the war. I hear "dirty Arabs" and I remember "dirty Jews." I hear about "closed areas" and I remember ghettos and camps. I hear about "two legged beasts" [Menachem Begin's description of Palestinians] and I remember Unter Menschen . . . Too many things in Israel remind me of too many things from my childhood.⁶

On June 26, the United Nations Security Council introduced a resolution which called for a ceasefire. The United States vetoed the Security Council resolution because the resolution not only recognized the PLO as a viable political force in Lebanon but also included a clause that would enable the PLO to keep some of its forces in Lebanon. As a substitute for the U.N. peace keeping forces, the Reagan administration decided to send U.S. forces into Lebanon. These represented little more than an attempt to reinforce the Israeli imposed status quo in Lebanon. If peace had been the desired objective on the part of the Reagan administration in Lebanon, there was no reason for it not to support the U.N. Security Council ceasefire resolution introduced at the height of the invasion.

Since 1982, the PLO's military operation capacity and political viability has been greatly undermined. The PLO

at present is politically fragmented and militarily disintegrated. Apparently,

The loss of Lebanon as a central operation and political base, the dispersal of its ranks throughout the Arab world, the intensified policy disputes and attendant internecine power struggles and the unaccustomed financial difficulties⁷

have neither deterred Palestinian commandos from taking military actions against Israel nor has it assured that Israeli security is better than it was prior to June 6, 1982. The chronological events following the invasion of Lebanon indicate a rather different picture. According to Bruce Hoffman, for a very limited time, the invasion of Lebanon had "a salutary effect on Palestinian terrorism directed against targets in Israel. It had a marginal effect, however, on Palestinian operations against Israeli targets outside the country".⁸

After the PLO commandos were forced to evacuate Beirut, Arafat continued to parlay the PLO's military defeat into a political victory. Even he unsuccessfully sought to steer a middle course between the so-called moderate faction and radical rejectionist elements within the umbrella organization. In contrast, Hoffman asserted that:

Arafat's endeavours ultimately foundered on his own hesitancy and alongside of the entrenched intransigence of the PLO rejectionists and the insurmountable opposition of Syria.⁹

Syria has continued to question both Arafat's ideology and leadership. In May, 1983 a Fatah detachment stationed

in the Syrian-held Bekaa Valley mutinied. With Syria's full support, the dissident group openly challenged Arafat's leadership of the PLO. During the first week of June, 1983 the Syrian backed leader, Abdul Musa, then Fatah's chief military commander turned their hand grenades and machine guns on those who decided to support Arafat. Arafat publicly accused the Syrian government of abetting the revolt. Immediately, the Syrian government threw its full weight behind the insurrection forcibly removing the 1,000 Arafat loyalists who at the time were stationed in the Bekaa Valley. Apart from the internal struggle for power within the ranks of the PLO and the loss of Lebanon as a central base, many of the Arab countries have also cut back their financial contributions to the PLO. For example, Saudi Arabia's financial contribution to PLO aid had been roughly estimated at about \$300 million per year, but either because of the drop in oil prices or for other reasons, Saudi Arabia's financial contribution to the PLO has been reduced to about \$50 million per year.

According to most Westerners, Libya is believed to be the one main supporter of the PLO, but Hoffman notes that Libya similarly cut back its financial support, "choosing instead to parcel out selectively amounts only to those PLO member groups who reflect that country's 'hardline' policies."¹⁰ As a result, the need for collective action against Israel is complicated by the Arab governments' direct and indirect involvement in the PLO's internal

struggle for power. Because of its costly war with Iran, and because of a decline in its oil production, Iraq has been compelled not only to reduce its financial aid to the PLO, but to stop it.

Due to the internal struggle for power, the loss of Lebanon and the unaccustomed financial difficulties, one may assume that the Palestinians would either accept military defeat and give up their struggle or continue their military operations against Israel on a very limited scale. It is true that the loss of Lebanon has temporarily disrupted Palestinian military operations in northern Israel. Israel's military action in Lebanon led to the Palestinians shifting their operations to other parts of Israel as well as outside the country. Furthermore, the invasion of Lebanon created a new international terrorist network and solidarity.

During the six months following the invasion, there were seven times as many attacks staged by surrogate terrorists operating either at the behest of the PLO or independently in a demonstration of revolutionary solidarity as in the six months prior to the invasion.¹¹

For example, the Greek Revolutionary popular struggle bombed a Jewish-owned travel agency in July, 1983. Three months later, two Jewish community centres in Knilen and Rome were attacked. The Communist Armed Group and Communist Metropolitan Front respectively claimed credit for the attacks. In September, 1983 the group calling itself Columbia's M-19 stated that it was responsible for the

bombings of the Israeli Embassy and ambassador's residence in Bogota; in October, several Jewish establishments in Brazil claimed that they had received bomb threats from that country's popular revolutionary vanguard. "Unclaimed attacks against Israel or Jewish targets were reported in West Germany, Austria, Guatemala, Bolivia and Ecuador."¹²

Such terrorist activities were not only confined to Israel's interests but as well against the United States. On February 15, 1983 Leamon Hunt, the ranking civilian official in charge of the U.S. group monitoring the Israeli-Egyptian Sinai agreement, was assassinated in Rome. Both the Red Brigade and LARF claimed responsibility for this murder. Just five days earlier, on February 10th, an American academician, Frank Reiger, was kidnapped in Beirut. On the 7th of March, Jeremy Levin, the bureau chief for the U.S.-based cable news network, was also abducted in Beirut, and on March 16th, an American diplomat, William Buckley, was kidnapped in Beirut as well. The first week of April, 1984 a U.S. military courier was assassinated in Greece, only a week after a British cultural attache was murdered in Athens.

The PLO always maintained a close connection with various revolutionary organizations around the world. On May 30, 1972 for example, three members of the Japanese Red Army walked off an Air France jet from Rome at Israel's Lod International Airport and immediately attacked passengers in the terminal building with sub-machine guns and grenades.

According to official Israeli records, 26 people were killed and about 80 were wounded before two of the gunmen were shot dead and the other was captured. The captured gunman told his Israeli interrogators that he had been trained in a PFLP Camp in Southern Lebanon. Either directly or indirectly, most of the revolutionary groups operating around the globe have both political and military alliances. Thus it is not surprising to see the recent trends in terrorist alliances.

Between 1982 and 1985, virtually every terrorist operation in Israel or outside Israel had conformed to an identical pattern of an unseen perpetrator placing a concealed bomb on a bus or at a busy shopping centre, or simply hurling a grenade at a crowd or vehicle passing by. "In the first four months of 1984 there have been as many terrorist operations as throughout the entirety of 1983."¹³ On April 2, 1984 three Palestinians armed with machine guns and hand grenades attacked a shopping centre in Jerusalem. During that incident, 48 people were reported to have been critically wounded. An Israeli policeman described the incident: "It is the third major terrorist attack in Jerusalem in recent months, but it is the first of its kind which terrorists directly assault citizens in such a manner."¹⁴

On April 12, four Palestinians hijacked an Israeli bus near Tel Aviv and forced it into the occupied Gaza Strip with at least 35 passengers aboard. This incident had been given more attention than any of the previous similar

terrorist activities. According to the government's official statement, the Israeli troops stopped the bus north of the city of Ratah by shooting out the tires and the four Arab terrorists were captured alive. The Army's information, released on the day after the incident, noted that Israeli troops stormed the bus at dawn, 10 hours after the hijacking and the four Arab terrorists were killed immediately. Apparently the rescue troops' detailed account of the statement was not only refuted by the editor of the leftist magazine called Haalam Hazeh, but it published one of the four hijackers photograph on the front page of the magazine, being led away alive from the hijacked bus in the Gaza Strip. Because of the contradictory statements provided by both the rescue troops and the editor of Haalam Hazeh, the government was forced to refer the matter to a commission of inquiry in order to determine whether the hijackers were captured dead or alive.

On May 28, 1984 the Commission of inquiry determined that two of the four Arab gunmen were captured alive and later killed by security forces who were interrogating them.

In spite of American tough talk against terrorist and Israeli retaliatory measures against Palestinian commandos in Lebanon and elsewhere, 1985 was no safer than 1984, On June 14, 1985 two Arab gunmen hijacked a Trans World airliner with 153 passengers, of whom 104 were U.S.citizens. The Reagan administration waged a war of words against the hijackers and against those Arab governments whom it claimed

had been indirectly aiding the terrorists to commit such acts. Although publicly the Reagan administration appeared to maintain a policy of not giving in to terrorist demands, there were indirect negotiations between Israel and the United States on the question of the terrorist demands. An Israeli official noted at the time: "We were criticized by the Americans for exchanging 1,150 Palestinians for three Jewish soldiers, so now let us see what the Americans do in this position."¹⁵

After lengthy negotiations between Israel and the Reagan administration, the great majority of Shiite prisoners were exchanged for both the hostages of the TWA plane and for one Israeli soldier who was captured in Lebanon.

On August 20, 1985 the Israeli diplomat Albert Atrackchi, along with his two aides, was assassinated in Egypt. A hitherto unknown group, Egypt's Revolution, claimed responsibility for the attack. On September 25, 1985, three Palestinian gunmen attacked a small yacht moored in the Port of Larnaca. During that attack three Israelis were killed. Although the Israelis claimed that the three victims of the attack were Israeli tourists, at a later date it was acknowledged that the three slain Israelis were intelligence officers. On October 1, 1985 Israel bombed the headquarters of the PLO in Bonj Cedria, 21 miles south of the city of Tunis. This was in retaliation for the slaying of three Israelis in Caranaca, Cyprus. A PLO spokesman noted that 63 people were killed in the attack

including women and children, many of whom were Tunisians. While Arab governments throughout the Middle East and North Africa condemned the attack as "state terrorism" and a "criminal act," the Reagan administration called it a "legitimate response to terrorist attacks." On October 4, 1985 the U.N. Security Council voted 14-0 to condemn Israel for its air raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunis.

Why the United States decided not to veto the Security Council resolution was explained by an American official: "Washington had received intelligence warnings that a U.S. veto might lead to attacks on the U.S. Embassy in Tunisia and the overthrow of the pro-Western Tunisian government of Habib Bourguiba by Libyan-backed dissidents."¹⁶

On October 5, 1985 three Israelis were found shot to death in the West Bank. On the same day, as many as seven Israeli tourists were reported shot to death by an Egyptian policeman who, Israeli defense sources noted, went berserk on a Sinai Peninsula beach. Two days later the Israeli army announced that it had executed four Arabs whom it claimed were responsible for the killing of two Jewish couples at a shopping centre. On the same day (October 7, 1985, heavily armed Palestinian commandos hijacked an Italian cruise ship, the Achille Lauro, carrying more than 400 people in the Mediterranean. Leon Klinghoffer was slain by the hijackers and his body was thrown overboard. Two months later (December 27, 1985) Palestinian commandos staged separate attacks at the facilities of El Al, Israel's national

airline, at the Rome and Vienna international airports. The two terrorist teams struck minutes apart at the two sites, firing assault rifles and throwing hand grenades, leaving a total of at least 17 people dead and 166 wounded.

According to Spanish sources, a man named Abeu Nidal took responsibility for both attacks, but there is no official confirmation from the man himself. A note found on one of the surviving gunmen, however, led police investigators to believe that the airport terrorist attacks were in retaliation for the death of 63 people who were killed during an Israeli air raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunisia. It was also confirmed that the terrorists came from Palestinian refugee camps, specifically from Sabra and Chatilla, and all of them had lost their parents during the massacre of 1982 by the Christian Phalangists.

It is difficult to enlist all the attacks and counter-attacks that are occurring almost daily in the Middle East, but all the terrorist activities and the measures taken to deter such behavior suggest that unless some constructive accommodation to the Palestinian problem is found, any form of military action taken by either the Israelis or the United States will be ineffective in deterring or containing Palestinian terrorism.

In a report released on January 30, 1985 the International Commission of Jurists charged Israel with "torturing," "intimidating," and prescribing "manufactured confessions" in its attempt to control the West Bank

population. Even though the Israeli government has dismissed the commission's charges as "baseless and originating from hostile organizations", Nial MacDermot, British Secretary-General of the Commission, has called the Israeli response "just a burst of anger."¹⁷

Although the apologist for Zionist-Israeli terror fails to mention that there is, to be sure, no moral and historical distinction to be drawn between the terror of Zionist-Israel and that of the PLO. During the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982, Israel's Minister of the Interior, Yosef Bung, candidly stated that:

In 1980, 10 Jews were killed by terrorists and in 1981, 8. In contrast, we have killed about a thousand terrorists in 1982, and caused the loss of life of thousands of inhabitants of an enemy country.¹⁸

It is argued, particularly in the U.S. and Israel, that Arab terrorism is worse than Israel's because the PLO has been used as a proxy for Libya, Iraq, Syria and the Soviet Union; in effect, duped into fighting someone else's war against Israel. This notion perhaps arises out of the fact that the Palestinians are homeless and is in itself specious. By the same logic one must wonder to whom the early Zionist formations were serving as surrogates. Even if such a distinction between Israeli and Arab strategy were allowed a meaning, Israel is hardly free of substantial use of mercenary groups. Professor Yehshayahu Leibovitz, referring to the 1982 Sabra and Chatilla massacre, asserted that:

The massacre was done by us. The Phalangists are our mercenaries, exactly as the Ukrainians and Croatsians and the Slovaksians were the mercenaries of Hitler, who organized them as soldiers to do the work for him. Even so, have we organized the assassins in Lebanon in order to murder the Palestinians?¹⁹

The Black Saturday massacre of December 6, 1975 in which more than 200 Muslim hostages were slaughtered, was carried out in Lebanon by the Maronite Christian Militia (the Phalange) working directly for Israel. The same is true of the burning and razing (with Israeli bulldozers) of Lebanon's Muslim Karantina slum in 1975, and the massacre of the Tel al-Zaatar Palestinian refugee camp in 1976.

In the latter case, the attackers were armed almost exclusively with Israeli small arms, armored personnel carriers and tanks (many still sporting Israeli Defence Force markings). An undetermined number of Palestinians were killed at Tel al-Zaatar.²⁰

Israel had been secretly financing and equipping the Phalange under Bashir Gemayel and Georges Haddad since the early 1970's, using them as a means to accelerate the internal strife in Lebanon to the point of outright civil war. Evidently, "the Phalanges would have been able to form a coherent military/terrorist force without this extensive Israeli backing."

The use of the past to explain and understand the present situation in the Middle East can be ambiguous. But it is a matter of historical fact that "Iraqun murdered 76 Arabs during the month of July, 1938" through such methods as placing bombs in public markets. Similarly, "Iraqun

members murdered 52 Arabs in retaliation for the arrests of one of their members by the British, in 1930."²¹ Terrorism as a form of political communication and strategy was also widely practiced against British officials in the Middle East, such as the assassination of Lord Moyne in 1944 and the assassination of U.N. mediator Folke Bennodote in 1948 by the Irqun.

Terrorism as a form of political communication and a strategy for achieving national goals was not only justified and practiced by the terrorists themselves, but was also endorsed and continued to be practiced by each successive Israeli governments. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion in his 1948 speech to the Israeli Knesset candidly stated that:

The question is only time and place.
Blowing up a house is not enough. What
is necessary is cruel and strong reaction.
We need precision in time, place and
casualties . . . We must strike merci-
lessly women and children included.
Otherwise, the reaction is inefficient.²²

Ben-Gurion's concern about time and place has been well answered by Israeli strategists, "both in terms of public relations and in matching their military capabilities to political ambition by slowly nibbling at their neighbours' flanks rather than attempting a big bite." This small nibble approach has allowed the Israelis to carefully assign blame for each bloodletting on their victims while simultaneously creating the illusion that Israeli territorial occupations have been executed only temporarily and for legitimate security reasons.

After the state of Israel became a reality and the Jews attained their national dream, the application of terrorism as a means of attaining national interests did not cease. In order to secure hostages to swap for Israeli spies held by Syria, the Israeli air force was ordered to hijack a Syrian civilian airliner while it was on a domestic flight in 1954. This was the first known airplane hijacking in the Middle East. In 1967, Israeli forces attacked the clearly identifiable USS Liberty while it was in international waters, killing 34 crewmen and wounding 75 others. The captain of USS Liberty described the situation as: "The navy's bloodiest peace time international incident of the 20th century."²³ The only comparable incident which confronted the U.S. navy in the 20th century was the Japanese attack upon the U.S. gunboat Panay in 1937, in which three crewmen were killed.

This list is merely the tip of the iceberg. The record of Israel with respect to terrorism is replete with hundreds of examples and evidence of systematic beatings and murders of Palestinians in the occupied territories and bulldozing of Palestinian homes. These have remained the order of the day.

Any form of terrorism, regardless of its objectives and intent, may not be morally acceptable. Unresolved conflict such as the Palestine question, however, is the breeding ground for politically motivated acts of terrorism. The objective is that of ensuring public attention to political

statements. Since terrorism demonstrates an act of desperation and frustration, it should be viewed neither as an incomprehensible abnormality nor dismissed as merely aimless acts. Rather, as a response in the extreme, it has its own political and social dynamics which must be dealt with cautiously and with sensitivity.

Apart from what is generally believed to be the case, it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw moral or logical distinctions between terrorism practiced by Jewish organizations in the achievement of their national objectives, and that practiced by Palestinian commandos in the achievement of a similar goal. What is clear, however, is that the terrorist tactics and methods predate those of the Arabs and serve as a model upon which groups such as the PLO commandos may fashion their own practices. In other words, if Jewish-Zionist terrorism was and still is understandable and forgivable in the context of a zealous Zionist struggle for Jewish statehood and security, then it should be no less understandable when practiced by Palestinian commandos.

Israel has succeeded in removing the PLO headquarters from Beirut, and in creating dissenters within the PLO ranks. It has not succeeded, however, in deterring Palestinian terrorism. Since 1983, there has been a dramatic escalation both in the number of Palestinian operations committed in Israel, as well as in the type of incidents perpetrated by the terrorists. Prior to February,

1984 Palestinian terrorism was mostly restricted to bombings or hit-and-run hand grenade assaults. Since then, however, the Palestinian commandos have demonstrated a determination and willingness to carry out wanton, near-suicidal machine gun and hand grenade attacks rather than anonymous bombings. The New York Times commented in an editorial that:

The Israelis are discovering that wrecking the PLO and Mr. Arafat's standing does not mean the end of the Palestinian problem.²⁴

In the wake of Palestinian attacks, the Israelis will doubtlessly undertake additional means of enhancing their security and thwart further attacks. The fact remains, however, that the war against the Palestinians has not ended with the PLO's defeat in Lebanon. In fact, the Palestinian commandos are recovering from the blow dealt to them in 1982 and are marshalling their resources for a new --and potentially more bloody campaign--against Israel and also against the United States.

This development and determination by Palestinian commandos suggests that, without complete recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination and a state of their own, Palestinian terrorism will increase rather than dissipate.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

For the past four decades, much has been said and written on the Middle East crisis. However, because of the many contradictory approaches and competing interests, the likelihood of arriving at a comprehensive and lasting solution acceptable to everyone concerned is difficult to envision. Each conflicting party has recognized the physical presence of the antagonist and fought to eliminate its control of Palestine. Yet neither group has been willing to accord fundamental recognition to the national rights of the other. As a result, the conflict continues to the present day.

In spite of the prevailing competitive interests amongst the conflicting parties, and the direct and indirect super-power involvement in the conflict, there is no other alternative which would facilitate escaping the challenge, "for in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, peace-making, and map-making are inseparable" (Klieman, 1981:46). The concept of map-making and peace-making is not new, rather, it is as old as conflict itself. The scheme of map-making and peace-making was first recommended by the Peel Royal Commission in 1937, and was regarded by it as the only solution which offered any possibility of ultimate peace. Besides the World Zionist Congress, in 1938, the Woodhead Commission

rejected the Partition Plan of the Royal Commission upon finding that the Jewish state contemplated by that plan, after certain modifications of the proposed frontier which its security would necessitate, would contain an Arab minority amounting to 49 per cent of the total population. In 1946, the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry expressed the view that "now and for some time to come any attempt to establish either an independent Palestinian state or independent Palestinian states [through partition] would result in civil strife that might threaten the peace of the world. Without taking into account the committee's recommendation, on November 29, 1947 the U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolution 181 (II) to partition Palestine.

All the proposed solutions have aimed at settling, in one form or another, the Palestine question. Yet most of the proposals advanced have been more palliative than real solutions.

The blame for the failure of the partition scheme as a resolution to the Palestine problem rests, not only upon the two national groups, i.e. the Palestine Arabs and Jews, but also upon the Arab governments whose interests in the dispute were secondary. Nevertheless, with some adjustments, particularly in the area of resource sharing and on the question of security, the alternative for peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict still lies upon the old U.N. partition scheme.

Whether the Arab states and the PLO recognize Israel's

right to exist or not, the existence of Israel is a fait accompli. The Israeli attitude toward the Palestinian people is that they do not exist. The Arab inhabitants of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank and Gaza) should quietly accept the fate decided for them by both the Jewish settlers and the Israeli armies, or they will be subjected to measures necessary to keep order in the area. Otherwise, they are considered terrorists whom the security of Israel requires to be eliminated wherever they are found. Perhaps it is pertinent to reemphasize the statement made by the former president of the Zionist Organization of America, Nahum Goldman: "The Israelis themselves are threatened by their own short-sightedness." Israel's policy of sitting tight, merely denying the claims of the Palestinians and expecting them to quietly fade from the scene, is self-delusion of major proportions. The time has come for very painful and unavoidable radical decisions. The postponement of such decisions in the hope that the status quo will last has proved to be an absolute failure. It has not brought any peaceful solution, rather, it has caused another war, which resulted in a "disastrous economic and political situation."

Every Palestinian, without exception, falls at present into one of the following categories: uprooted, dispossessed refugee, or civilian living under military occupation, subjected to economic, racial, social, political and religious discrimination, in a country which not long ago was considered to be theirs. So long as such conditions

exist, it will be difficult to imagine that Israel will escape from Palestinian direct or indirect attack.

Since 1967, Israel has confiscated over 46 per cent of the total area of the West Bank and 72 per cent of the arable land in the Gaza Strip. All water resources have been put under the Israeli military occupation authority, thereby denying the Palestinians access. Between 1981 and 1983, 108 new Jewish settlements were established in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. All this suggests that Israel is committed to a policy which rejects the possibility of withdrawal from the territories occupied during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The dilemma which Israel faces is how to annex the territory without affecting the demographic and political character of Israel. The new Jewish settlement plan for the West Bank and Gaza not only creates complications to the peace negotiations, it also limits the possibility for Israeli withdrawal.

By focusing attention on the PLO's military tactics and on the Palestinian National Covenant, the Israeli strategists hope to divert public opinion from the imperativeness of the restoration of the Palestinian rights lost in 1948 and 1967. In the struggle to undermine the claim for self-determination, Israeli strategists draw attention to the Palestinian National Covenant, specifically to those articles which call for the destruction of Israel. Articles 5 and 6 of the Covenant specify who can be considered a Palestinian. Article 6 states that Jews

residing in Palestine before the Zionist invasion will be considered Palestinian. On the other side, the Law of Return of 1950, as amended in 1954 and 1970, defines who is to be considered a Jew and live in Palestine with full rights as a Jew: Every Jew has the right to immigrate to this country (1). For the purpose of this law, a Jew means a person born to a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion (4b). Thus one can easily detect similarities between the Law of Return and the Article of the Palestinian National Covenant which defines Palestinians as "those Arab citizens who, until 1947, had normally resided in Palestine, regardless of whether they have been evicted from it or have stayed in it. Anyone born of a Palestinian father after that date, whether inside Palestine or outside it . . . is also a Palestinian." However, a constitution is not a program of action nor does it remain constant. It is a law designed to reflect existing circumstances; it can be amended and, if necessary, completely changed to reflect new circumstances. The Palestinian National Covenant can be properly understood if considered in the context of the situation in which the Palestinians found themselves when it was formulated.

Within the Palestinian National Covenant, there are exhortations for Palestinians to liberate all of Palestine from the Zionist settlers (such as Articles 1, 2 and 21). However, there are several countries which have similar constitutional provisions concerning territories which they

regard as part of their national entity. For example, the West German constitution states that "The entire German people are called upon to achieve in free-determination the unity of and freedom of Germany." Article 2 of the Irish Republic constitution states that, "The national territory consists of the whole Island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas" and also states "Pending the reintegration of the national territory, laws will relate only to Southern Ireland." Of course, Israel does not have a written constitution by which one could arrive at a conclusion. This does not, however, mean that the Israeli position is unclear. On the contrary, Zionist ambitions have been unequivocally expressed for over 70 years, "Israel's borders extend as far as our army can reach." Little seems to have changed in recent years.

In 1974, the Palestinian National Council adopted an interim program called for the creation of an independent Palestinian state in any part of Palestine to be freed from Israeli occupation. This was a substantial shift from the previous PLO position. In his 1974 speech to the U.N. General Assembly Arafat called for the creation of a democratic non-sectarian state in Palestine for Jews, Muslims and Christians, free from discrimination due to creed, colour, religion or ethnic origin. On the grounds that Israel could not serve the purpose for which it was created, i.e., a Jewish state for the Jewish people alone, the idea of a democratic non-sectarian state was rejected. This has

remained the Jewish position.

The PLO endorsed the joint United States-Soviet Union statement of October 1, 1977, on the Middle East crisis, the Venice Declaration of the E.E.C. of June 3, 1980, the Brezhnev plan announced on September 15, 1982, and the joint Egyptian-French proposal submitted to the Security Council in July, 1983. In contrast to this remarkable flexibility on the part of the PLO for a cooperative resolution of the conflict, Israel has been unresponsive.

Israeli policy states that the government will work toward negotiation of a peace agreement with Jordan. The peace would be founded on the existence of two independent states only. One of these states would be Israel with a United Jerusalem as its capital, the other state would be a Jordanian-Palestinian Arab state east of Israel, within borders to be determined in negotiations between Israel and Jordan.

Although both Israel and the United States regard Jordan as the conciliator and the PLO as belligerent, peaceful resolution to the current Palestinian problem is unlikely through the Jordanian option. Whether the Israelis and the Americans find it agreeable or not, the PLO has become the expression of Palestinian national aspirations.

A public opinion poll conducted in 1982 by Pori Institute, a leading public opinion research organization in Israel, in the West Bank and Gaza, found that 89% of the Palestinians polled recognized the PLO as the legitimate

representative of their aspirations.

A summary of the findings was published by Time Magazine and by the Jerusalem Post (February 19-25, 1983). Israel is fully aware of the choice and wishes of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, but for both economic and strategic considerations it has consciously decided not to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization directly.

Israel's attempts to undermine the PLO are nowhere more echoed than in the U.S.A. The United States as a world power on the one hand, and as a peace-maker in the Middle East on the other, has been persistent in its demand that the PLO must recognize Israel's legitimate right to exist in accordance with the conditions outlined in U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 and 338. It is recalled that the settlement and peace envisaged in Resolutions 242 and 338 completely deny the right of Palestine self-determination.

The United States position on the Palestinian problem is clear from the Sinai Agreement of 1975: the United States will oppose and if necessary vote against any initiative in the Security Council to change Resolutions 242 and 338, in ways which are incompatible with their original purpose (paragraph 4). The United States will not recognize or negotiate with the PLO as long as the PLO does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 (paragraph 2).

To impose the recognition of the Resolutions as a precondition is simply to place a barrier in the path of a negotiated political settlement. Furthermore, the question

of recognition, as it is advanced by the U.S., simply suggests that the PLO must recognize the legitimate right of Israel to exist, not as a condition for Israel's recognition of Palestinian right to self-determination, but as a condition for the recognition of the PLO by the U.S. to represent the Palestinian people.

Since the United States appeared on the scene to fill the vacuum left by Britain in the early 1950's, it has sought to minimize the risk of an outright war between Israel and the Arab states and to contain Soviet influence in the region. Israeli supporters in the U.S. have continued to argue that Israel is caught up in the crossfire of three wars--the war between the Arab states and herself; the Arab-Arab conflict between the radical Soviet supported states and conservative Western-oriented states; and the Cold War between East and West where she finds herself defending the interests of the world.

Since 1967 much has been said about Soviet intrusion and breakthrough into the Middle East. As Don Pertez noted, the time is long past when one can think in these terms. First of all, it is a myth to think that the Soviet Union just broke into the Middle East. Russia has been part of the Middle East since long before the Soviet Union appeared on the scene. Russia's influence in the Middle East goes back to Tsarist penetration into Turkey and Iran.

The Soviet involvement in the Middle East, therefore, is not a new phenomenon. What is new is the U.S. penetration

and its direct and indirect involvement in the Middle East. Furthermore, the Soviet Union is a world power with inevitable national and international interests to protect, especially since the Mediterranean is the only sea outlet for not only strategic purposes but for much of Soviet trade. Thus, neither Israel nor the U.S. would be able to contain Soviet involvement in the Middle East.

Therefore, for a co-operative conflict resolution to materialize, first the present U.S./Israeli policy towards the Palestinians and the PLO would have to be modified to reflect the new international consensus on this subject. Second, since the Soviet Union is a world power with vested interests in the Middle East, its participation in the Arab-Israeli peace process is extremely essential. The Israelis view the Soviet Union as unsympathetic to the Jewish cause. As a result, they oppose its participation in the Middle East peace effort.

From 1956 onwards the Soviet Union supported the Arabs. But this does not necessarily make the Soviet Union unsympathetic to the Jewish cause. In 1947-48, the Soviet Union was a strong supporter of the creation of Israel. Its representative at the U.N., Andrei Gromyko, argued on November 26-27, 1947 that, "The Jewish people had been closely linked with Palestine for a considerable period of history" and that the decision to create Israel "will meet the legitimate demands of the Jewish people."

Both Israel and Jordan are opposed to the idea of a

Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip on the grounds that, if a Palestinian state is created between Jordan and Israel, it would degenerate into a PLO terrorist base. Thus, for any peace plan to be successful, it will have to meet the following requirements:

1. The rights of Palestinians to self-determination will have to be recognized in principle, and, as part of the settlement, given satisfaction in practice;
2. Israel's security;
3. Jordan's interests which are residual and implicit and no less significant than Israeli's security.

The question of compensation for the hundreds of millions of dollars worth of Palestinian Arab property absorbed by Israeli Jews, the return to their homes of thousands of Palestinian Arabs who fled or were evicted in the 1948 and 1967 wars, and the nature of Palestinian-Israeli relations in the West Bank, cannot be resolved between Israel and other Arab governments, but only between Israelis and Palestinian Arabs. Unless Israel is encouraged to accord the fundamental right of the Palestinians and to change its present rejectionist policy, the conflict will remain unresolved.

CHAPTER VI

FOOTNOTES

¹Wards, C. The Rebel: Israel's Aggression in the Middle East, 1984, p. 55.

²Chomsky, N. The Fateful Triangle, 1983, p. 243.

³Connel, D. The London Times, July 6, 1982.

⁴Wards, C., op. cit., p. 54.

⁵Ibid., p. 54.

⁶Ibid., p. 55.

⁷Hoffman, B. Recent Trends in Palestinian Terrorism: The PLO Since Lebanon, 1984, p. 1.

⁸Ibid., p. 1.

⁹Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 4.

¹¹The Arab Israeli News Chronology, 1983, p. 13.

¹²Israel Deadline, 1984, p. 111.

¹³Hoffman, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁴Israel Deadline, 1984, p. 123.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 124.

¹⁶The New York Times, Oct. 5, 1985.

¹⁷The London Times, January 30, 1985.

¹⁸Wards, op. cit., p. 56.

¹⁹Chomsky, op. cit., p. 192.

²⁰Wards, op. cit., p. 56.

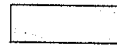
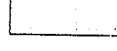
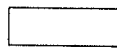
²¹Smith, The Palestinians, 1982, p. 14.

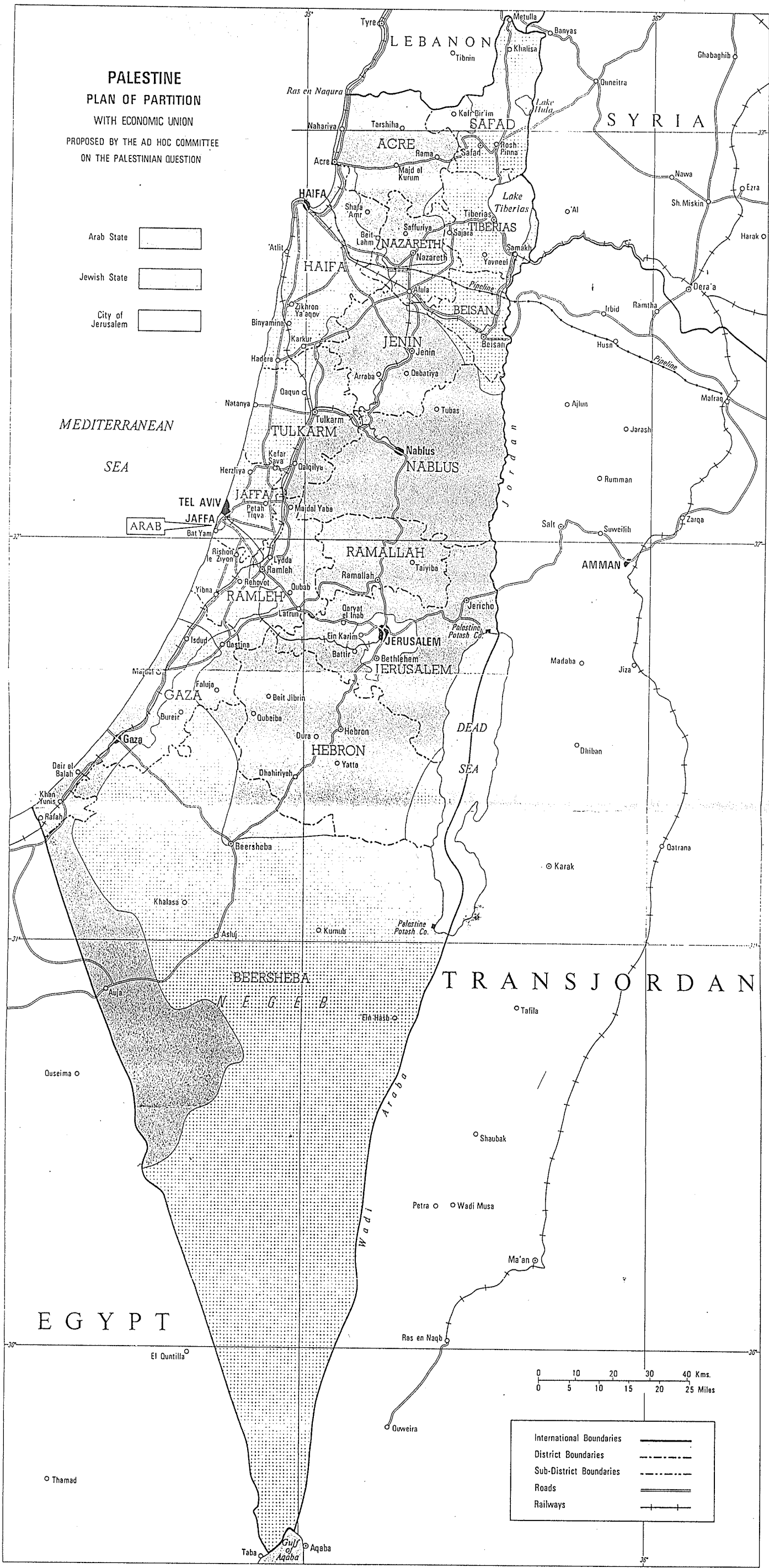
²²Ward, op. cit., p. 53.

²³Smith, C., op. cit., p. 15.

²⁴The New York Times, Feb. 6, 1983.

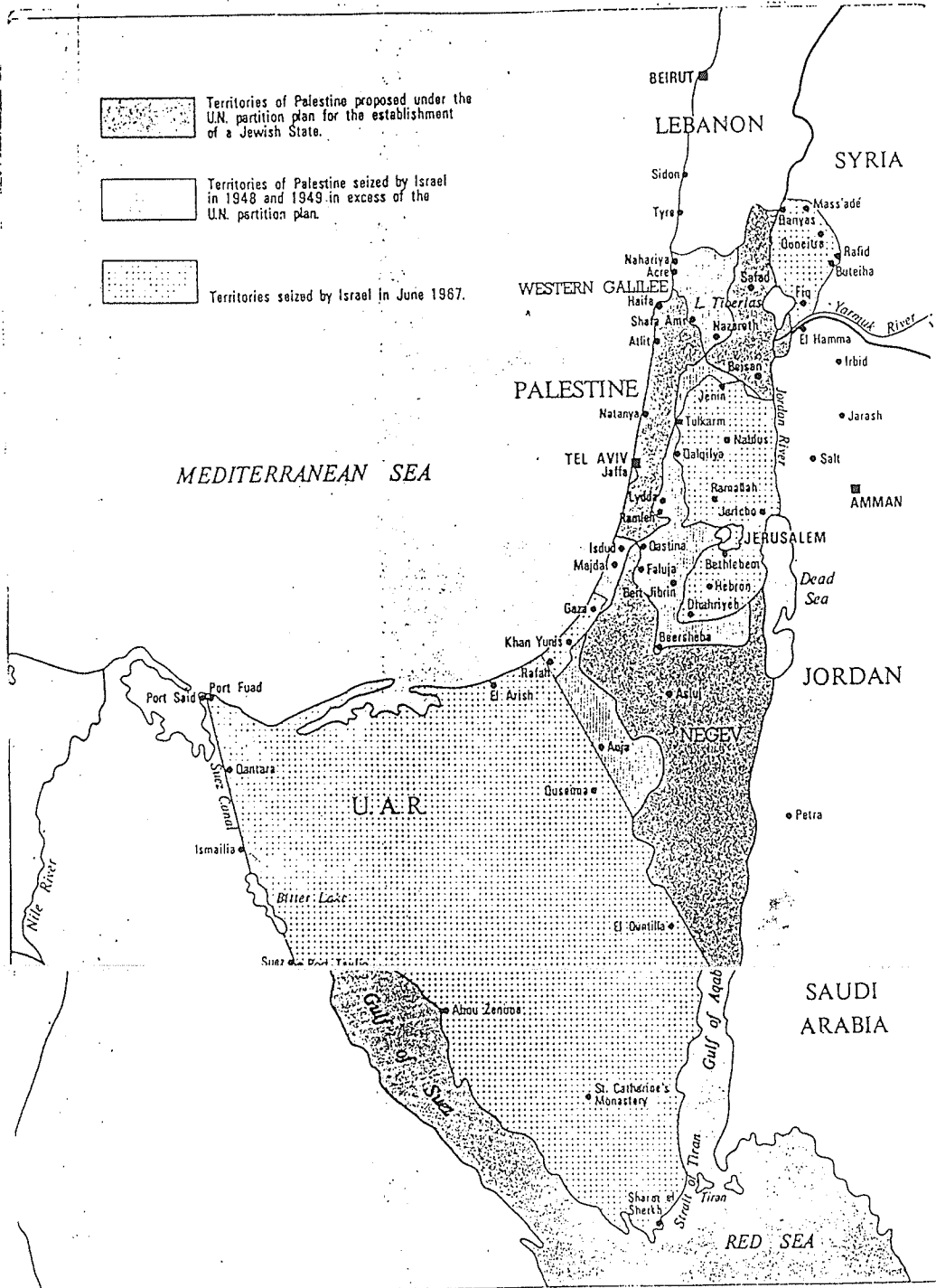
PALESTINE
PLAN OF PARTITION
 WITH ECONOMIC UNION
 PROPOSED BY THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
 ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

Arab State 
 Jewish State 
 City of Jerusalem 



Source: H. Cattar, The Palestinians, 1971.

APPENDIX "B"



Source: H. Cattan, The Palestinians, 1971.

APPENDIX "C"

Resolution of the Security Council S/RES/242 (1967)
of 22 November 1967 concerning the situation in
the Middle East

The Security Council,

(1) *Expressing* its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

(2) *Emphasizing* the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

(3) *Emphasizing further* that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. *Affirms* that the fulfilment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

(i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;

(ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. *Affirms further* the necessity

(a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

(b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;

(c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to

promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

November 22 1967.

APPENDIX "D"

Resolution of the General Assembly 2535 B (XXIV)
of 10 December 1969

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

Recognizing that the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees has arisen from the denial of their inalienable rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Gravely concerned that the denial of their rights has been aggravated by the reported acts of collective punishment, arbitrary detention, curfew, destruction of homes and property, deportation and other repressive acts against the refugees and other inhabitants of the occupied territories,

Recalling Security Council resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967,

Recalling also its resolutions 2252 (ESV) of 4 July 1967, and 2452 A (XXIII) of 19 December 1968 calling upon "the Government of Israel to take effective and immediate steps for the return without delay of those inhabitants who have fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities",

Desirous of giving effect to its resolutions for relieving the plight of the displaced persons and the refugees,

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine;
2. *Draws the attention* of the Security Council to the grave situation resulting from Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories and Israel's refusal to implement the above resolutions;
3. *Requests* the Security Council to take effective measures in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations to ensure the implementation of these resolutions.

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