

**PALESTINIAN ASSESSMENTS
OF THE GULF WAR
AND ITS AFTERMATH**



PASSIA

Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs

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Introduction

In early February 1991, as the Gulf War was still proceeding, PASSIA, in line with its program of holding periodic workshops and seminars on topics related to the Palestine Question and its regional and international dimensions, invited a group of Palestinian academicians to a round-table discussion on the war and future prospects from a Palestinian vantage point. The first meeting was supposed to take place on Thursday, February 14th, but because of travel restrictions and the curfew imposed by the Israeli authorities on the Occupied Territories, only some of those invited were able to attend.

Those present, nevertheless, took the opportunity to discuss the situation with its various dimensions and decided to try and hold an expanded meeting on Monday February 18th 1991.

The meeting on February 18th was attended by academics, heads of cultural centers and professionals. Four presentations were given:

1. Future political prospects of the Palestinian issue;
2. the future of the Palestinian Intifada;
3. the political repercussions of Israeli war measures in the Occupied Territories and
4. the economic situation in the Occupied Territories during the war and future prospects.

The discussion which followed the presentations was motivated by an academic orientation combining both a critical self examination as well as an objective assessment of the developments taking place in the region and in the Occupied Territories. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that the presentations should be expanded into articles and that others who participated in the discussion be encouraged to contribute their own articles.

The compilation of articles presented here is the product of the two February meetings held at PASSIA which were moderated by Dr. Bernard Sabella who also undertook the task of editing the papers. It is to be hoped that this compilation will generate wider discussion among various segments of Palestinian society. Most of the articles were completed by mid-March. It was decided to print them as originally submitted in spite of the quickening pace of developments and their possible effects on the assessments as first presented in these articles.

The article of Salim Tamari, "The Next Phase : Problems of Transition", addresses the concrete realities in the Occupied Territories and suggests means of adaptation to the transitional nature of the present situation. Dr. George Giacaman in "What Next for the Palestinians ?" focuses on the Palestinian situation within its regional and international contexts. His analysis bears some optimism while still considering the obstacles and complications of the post-war era. Samir Hulaileh, an economist, provides both figures and forecasts in his article : "The Gulf Crisis and the Palestinian Economy : New Tasks and Challenges". Hulaileh's assessment reflects the restrictions and constraints likely to affect the healthy economic activity of Palestinians as a result of the Gulf War and of Israeli measures and policies in the economic realm.

Ibrahim Shaban, with a law background, focuses on "The Legal Dimension : The Impact of the Gulf Crisis on the Palestinian Cause". Shaban stresses the need for a standard interpretation and application of international law and for a uniform implementation of UN resolutions to all conflicts of similar nature. Dr. Helga Baumgarten's "The PLO's Political Program and the Gulf Crisis", elects to review the mediation efforts of the PLO to peacefully end the Gulf crisis. She argues that in spite of pressures, the PLO should adhere to its political program, especially as adopted in November 1988 by the PNC in Algiers. Dr. Bernard Sabella assesses the positions of key players in the Arab-Israeli conflict and how these influence Palestinians and their positions. His article,

"Post-Gulf War Prospects : Assessing the Positions", stresses the importance of placing Palestinian decision-making within regional and international contexts and their realities. Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi contributes an article on "Post Gulf-War Assessment : A Palestinian perspective". As he expands on the history of the positions taken by key actors in Middle Eastern politics, he shows how the Gulf War has affected these positions as they apply in particular to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine Question. He concludes with a thorough examination of the Palestinian position, both inside and outside the Occupied Territories and suggests means to maintain the strength and unity of Palestinian society and politics.

PASSIA hopes that the efforts presented here will encourage new and continuous ones that will ensure progressive evaluation of the ever changing scene in the region. Palestinian academic and intellectuals have the tools and experience to address complicated and thorny issues of vital interest to the Palestinian people and to the region at large. It is our hope at PASSIA that our colleagues at universities and cultural institutions will show continued interest and be willing to participate in future undertakings of similar intellectual nature. This is in the hope that the practical results of such undertakings will benefit Palestinian people and society.



THE NEXT PHASE PROBLEMS OF TRANSITION

Dr. Salim Tamari

One of the notable achievements of the Gulf war is that it compelled the Palestinians to make a re-assessment of their future political strategy. This at a time when their crowning achievement in the last decade--the Uprising--had reached an impasse.

Just before the war I referred to this impasse as one leading to political paralysis: "the crux of the intifada's predicament lies in the routinization of the daily aspects of revolt (centred around the commercial strike and street confrontations with the army). [Those features] can neither be escalated into a campaign of total civil disobedience--and hence a complete disengagement with Israeli rule, or into a political initiative which can engage the enemy into a negotiated settlement favourable to the Palestinians. The first option is hampered by the limited organizational potential of the movement, which--at this stage-- seems to have reached its uppermost capacity for popular mobilization (and henceforth have retreated to heavy dependence on the 'direct action' tactics of factional 'strike forces'). The second option is beyond the political capacities of the internal forces of resistance, given the existing balance of forces between the contenders."⁽¹⁾

While the first of these conditions still holds true today (and has even been reenforced by events) the second condition, related to the new balance of forces, has been modified by the war. One can venture, at this early stage of post bellum arrangements, to suggest the following new adjustments:

(1) Israel, unable to perform its self-defined role as a strike force on behalf of Western interests, has been reduced from the status of a junior partner of the U.S. to that of a client state, much

more susceptible to the effects of US and Western European economic aid. Another significant consequence of the war is that it has re-fuelled the dormant Israeli debate on the Palestinian question and the territorial/colonial dilemma that has divided the Israeli polity at the beginning of the Intifada.

(2) With the military blow directed at Iraq the Arab states are no longer divided between "steadfast" states (Iraq, Syria, Libya and Algeria), and those (previously led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia) that represent American interests. On the other hand, the leading Arab states that joined the U.S. led coalition (particularly Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia) are in a position to exact concessions from the Americans for the purpose of restoring their Arabist credentials, and in striving to legitimize their anti-Iraqi campaign.

Politically these concessions can only be meaningful if they were translated into pressure on the Israelis to make territorial concessions in the occupied territories.

(3) The definition of the 'New World Order' in terms of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict is currently the subject of American-European policy formulation. Its main ingredient is the absence of the Soviet Union (and the third world bloc) as a decisive factor in balancing American intervention. But it is unlikely that a Pax Americana in the aftermath of the Gulf war can be confined to American military hegemony in as much as the EEC, Japan, the Scandinavian countries, and the Soviets have substantial interests in the area and are likely to resist American diktat of post-war arrangements. Nor is it in the interest of the Americans any more to act or be perceived to act as the defenders of Israeli intransigence over a peace settlement.

(4) One of the most significant factors in the new framework is the future role of Jordan. Jordan represents the exception in the Arab world as having responded to the dual crisis of economic recession and legitimacy with a genuinely democratic experiment, and was virtually the only country in the Arab East (aside from

radical transformation of neighbouring Arab regimes, especially those in Syria and Egypt, is a pre-requisite for rectifying the existing imbalance created by the defeat of Iraq. Internally this tendency advocates tactical (and in some cases, long-term) alliances with Hamas and other Islamic currents. We see here a political atmosphere reminiscent of the vision that prevailed immediately after the 1967 war.

The second tendency shares with the first one the need for resisting attempts at creating an alternative Palestinian leadership, currently waged by the Americans, the Saudis, and the Syrians.(3)

But this perspective does not see the war as providing a carte blanche for the Israelis to impose any solutions. On the contrary it sees the war as having created new opportunity for political initiatives which must be seized fully by the Palestinian leadership. Writing recently in the Jerusalem press Ghassan al- Khatib noted that one of the main achievements of this war accomplished exactly what the U.S. has refused to acknowledge: an organic linkage between the Gulf war and the issue of Palestine.(4) This linkage, he proceeded, calls for the need to develop the momentum of the new international legitimacy acquired by UN resolutions (particularly SC res. 242, and UN resolution 141). This requires that Palestinians transcend the phase of vetoing political initiatives that they deem to be politically unsatisfactory, and move towards initiating their own political positions that resonate with the new relations of power.(5)

The determinant factor favouring which of these tendencies will prevail depends to a large extent on the ability of the Palestinian movement to launch an initiative that galvanizes the main factions of the PLO around a new minimum program. One that will reassert in principle the November 1988 resolutions of the Algiers PNC, while transcending the political deadlock that is currently facing the intifada. The inability of the movement to move clearly in this direction will not relegate the Palestinian movement to oblivion, as the pundits keep reminding us, but will

Yemen) not to bow to American diktat. So far it proved more resilient than the PLO in adapting itself skilfully to the defeat of Iraq (its major economic partner in the Middle East) and in designating itself as crucial interlocutor in the post-war settlement. Of utmost significance here is that Jordan is now seen by the Palestinians as having a joint role in any planned peace initiative, but one that cannot be implemented without the participation of the PLO.

My aim in this intervention is to suggest that the intransigence of the Israelis over a territorial solution, and the length, complexity and protracted nature of the impending political struggle require the Palestinians to focus on the modalities of the 'transitional period' (i.e. transition to sovereignty) with the same zeal they have focused so far on their long-range objectives. These modalities are related to the future of the intifada, and to the interim measures that they are willing to propose in any forthcoming peace negotiations.

Palestinian Reading of the New Map

There has been two varieties of Palestinian reactions to post-war realities: One, was the feeling that the conduct of the war vindicated the original view which saw the campaign as aiming at removing Iraq as the main obstacle to establishing American imperial hegemony in the Middle East, and that consequently the Palestinians should now resist the imposition of American-Israeli solutions which may or may not have the blessing of America's Arab allies.

Inside the Occupied Territories this perspective calls for the escalation of the intifada,(2) and for non-cooperation with initiatives floated by the American administration and her Arab allies. It views the coming period as a phase of resistance to imposed solutions until the existing balance of forces shifts in favour of the Palestinians. At the heart of this outlook is the assumption that a

imaginative than the United Leadership. While there is a general agreement that educational programs and school attendance should be maintained and protected during the intifada, in practice only during strike days that are initiated by Hamas and Islamic Jihad is school attendance observed. The damage to education is bad enough as a result of Israeli curfews, and does not need to be compounded by the national movement. The Palestinian movement must seek to 'normalise' daily life while struggling against occupation, perhaps inspired by examples set by the Lebanese people. Revival of academic life, cultural innovation, and social activities, must not be seen as domains isolated from the arena of resistance. Even the rituals of joy (such as in weddings and seasonal festivities) which have been subdued during the intifada, must be restored and incorporated into the rituals of rebellion.

(3) The Alternative Economy: The critique of shortcomings of alternative economic models instituted during the intifada is already under way.⁽⁷⁾ The three years of civil disobedience marking the intifada developed an experimental program for an alternative economy which was more form than substance. The successful aspects of this phase was to instill in the people the notion that economic disengagement with Israel is possible (through the boycott of commodities and taxes, and through innovation in local enterprises). Now begins the arduous task of actually developing local production and marketing networks without heavy reliance on substantial injections of aid from abroad. A modicum of a plan is needed to coordinate growth of private industries with the those enterprises and cooperatives initiated by grass-roots movements. This in turn assumes and requires the formulation of a new minimal consensual program among the main factions of UNLU.

(4) A New Minimal Program: The political consensus formulated by the factions of the Palestinian movement during the intifada was crowned by the political program of the Algiers PNC (1988), and its peace initiative. While it is essential to continue the adherence to this initiative, the program itself has to be re- defined

in light of the consequences of the Gulf war and the new political alignments in the region. Without a new minimal program the Palestinian movement will fall back to its (segmented) partisan components--each fighting for its own platform. Disunity here is fatal to the extent that it will allow external forces and the Israelis to deal with the Palestinians as 'political tribes' or worse, to transcend the Palestinian movement altogether and adjudicate a separate deal with Palestinian 'notables'.

The elements of the new minimum program, in my view, must include the following: (a) promoting the early forms of civil disobedience while strengthening the local economy; (b) establishing procedures for consensus building which allows for dissenting opinion to articulate its position without disrupting accords arrived at by a majority; (c) establishing institutional channels to arbitrate inter-factional disputes and establish acceptable ways to resolve them; (d) maintaining a democratic forum for the continuous examination of strategy in the light of ongoing political developments; (e) coordinating activities around this minimum program with political tendencies (e.g. the Islamic currents) that are unlikely to join ranks with the Palestinian peace initiative; (f) maintaining an open dialogue with all adversaries, including the Israelis, on the basis of the Palestinian peace initiative.

An International Mandate?

It should be obvious that the implementation of this minimal program is going to be prolonged and protracted. The current weakness of the Israeli opposition, and United States hesitation to apply substantial pressure on Israel in favour of territorial concessions, mean that it will be years before serious negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians will bear fruit. For this reason the Palestinian side must propose interim measures which will ensure the protection of population of the occupied territories and the survival of their cultural and economic institutions while negotiations are going on.

Two decisive features distinguish these interim measures from the autonomy scheme proposed in 1989 by the Likud government, and then retracted by Itshak Shamir. One is the provisional nature of the measures, and the other is the recognition, at least on the part of the international community, that their end result is the evolvement of the occupied territory toward sovereignty.

Components of this transitional period must include at least some of the following features:

1. Freedom to plan and invest (including the entry of funds) for the economic growth of the territories;
2. Freedom to nominate and elect candidates for local (municipal and village councils) professional and trade union offices, and freedom to nominate and elect representatives at the national level;
3. freedom of movement within the regions of the West Bank and Gaza and between them, including the city of (Arab) Jerusalem;
4. cessation of all punitive measures against educational, cultural, and research institutions, and against the press;
5. freedom for planning, zoning and development of infrastructure for municipal and village councils--to be restricted only by ecological and inter-regional planning considerations;
6. cessation of all colonial settlement activities and freezing the growth of existing Israeli settlements until their fate is determined by a negotiated settlement;
7. the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces (and armed settlers) to regions outside municipal and village councils in the West Bank and Gaza.

These suggestions are not new, and several of them have already been raised in the first political platform attributed to the Intifada leadership (the so-called 14-point platform of January 14, 1988), the first item of which called for adherence to the Fourth Geneva Convention relating to the protection of civilians in times

of war, and the annulment of Emergency Laws (inherited from the British Mandate).⁽⁸⁾

The tasks of maintaining security and internal order during this interim period (including the security of Israeli civilians in the OTs) is a logistic problem of some proportion. Within Palestinian political circles there is a preference that these tasks be vested in an international force acceptable to both Israel and the Palestinians. Initially such an international presence will in all likelihood be rejected by the present Israeli government (and probably by the Labour opposition), not only because of the difficulty of arriving to a mutually agreeable force, but because it implies the (partial) suspension of Israeli sovereignty and control over the territories, prior to the conclusion of a final settlement. But its attractiveness lie in that it will relieve the Israelis from the daily tasks of a brutal rule over an unwilling population--with all the political moral liabilities it entails--without having to relinquish sovereignty immediately.

Perhaps the most concrete arrangement for translating these measures in the transitional period would be to establish a United Nations Mandate over the territories, to be collectively administered by a corporate body designated by the international community. What makes this proposal a pressing issue today is the brutal collective measures undertaken by the Israeli Military Administration during and after the Gulf War. Most notable among them were the prolonged curfews preventing farmers and workers from going to work; the use of curfews to collect taxes and fines from citizens; and extreme measures limiting the movement of people from one district to another, even after the curfews were lifted (those include the liberal use of Green Identity Cards, equivalent to South Africa's pass cards). The fact that these measures were not lifted after the war, and in many cases were expanded and supplanted indicates that they are intended to serve ends other than the proverbial security of state and public order. In my view they have two main objectives: to break the institutional patterns of the intifada, by establishing an extensive network of

permits and control mechanisms which will render every citizen dependent on the state's dispensation of daily needs; and second, to create economic hardships of such magnitude that the population at large would welcome any measure of political liberalization as an alternative to sovereignty.

But these measure have not worked and are unlikely to succeed. What makes Palestinian society so resilient to these draconian steps is a simple agrarian base, and strong social bonds of communal solidarity steeled by a tradition of stubborn resistance. On the other hand it is only through such an interim agreement described above, involving the gradual devolution of Israeli control, and ensuring the protection of civilian life and institutions, that the pre-conditions for substantial negotiations can proceed. The Gulf War has created a new international situation which makes it difficult for Israel to avoid economic and political pressures if it choses to be part of this new order.

On the Palestinian side also a great amount of fortitude, flexibility, and vision is required: first to maintain an internal unity that is capable of resisting the impending pressures to circumvent the PLO, and second to in order to pursue the strategic line of struggle that is needed during the transitional period suggested here.

NOTES

1. "Limited Rebellion and Civil Society: The Uprising's Dilemma" MERIP, May-August 1990.
2. UNLU, Circular No. 68, March 1, 1991. It is clear from the debate over the meeting with US Secretary of State Baker, however, that the leadership is divided over this issue.
3. It is significant that Khaled al-Fahoum, a leading figure in the pro-Syrian Salvation Front, did not posit the Front as an alternative to the current leadership of the PLO after the war. He merely suggested that the Palestinian National Council should be convened and new elections be carried out to replace Arafat. (Interview broadcasted by the BBC World Service, March 9, 1991). During the war itself none of the constituent parties in the SF distinguished itself from the Syrian stance, unlike the Popular and Democratic Fronts (both based in Damascus) who identified themselves with Iraq.
4. Ghassan al-Khatib, "After the Gulf War: A Palestinian Agenda", (in Arabic) al-Quds, March 5, 1991.
5. Al-Khatib, Ibid.
6. For a detailed analysis of the undisciplined side of the uprising see Muhammad al-Manasra "On the Negative Features of the Intifada", (in Arabic) Sawt al Watan, vol 1, No. B, April 1990.
7. Three forthcoming studies deal with "alternative economy" and suggest creative adjustments: Izzat Abdul Hadi in a major work on cooperative (to be published by Beisan Institute, Ramallah, Summer 1991); Samir Hleileh on the development strategies of grass-roots movements, Afaq Filistiniyya No. 6, Spring 1991; and Samir Abdullah, on the domestic economy debate, monograph to be published by the Arab Thought Forum, Summer, 1991.
8. For an analysis see Ali Jerbawi, The Uprising and Political Leadership in the West Bank and Gaza (Arabic), Dar at-Tali'a, Beirut, 1989, pp. 70ff; for a listing of the 14 points see PASSIA 1990 Yearbook, Jerusalem, 1990, p. 209.

WHAT NEXT FOR THE PALESTINIANS?

Dr. George Giacaman

Dire Forebodings

By the end of the second week of the Gulf crisis and as the Palestinian position began to crystallize, Palestinians found themselves the object of a campaign of threats, scorn, and vituperation. The opening salvos came from the Israeli left whose political career even before the onset of the intifada owed much to an on-going dialogue with Palestinians. In the midst of the war-mongering mood and the frenzy of hostility to Iraq that gripped Israel, the Israeli left needed to distance itself very quickly from the position of its Palestinian interlocutors. The emerging national consensus within Israel did not leave much room for dissent, and if the Israeli left were to survive the Gulf crisis, it seemed prudent that it go on the attack.

An assortment of well-known figures led the campaign. The writer A.B.Yehoshua, Knesset members for the Citizen's Rights Movement Yossi Sarid and Dedi Zucker, and Mapam's M.K. Eliezer Granot, expressed shock and deep disappointment. Some threatened the Palestinians with the cessation of dialogue, others fulminated with dire forebodings. In an interview with the New York Times in mid-August Yossi Sarid declared that he no longer felt any need to meet with Palestinians. In the same interview, Dedi Zucker affirmed that the Palestinians had committed a grave error, perhaps even a historic one.

By the end of August a virtual chorus of Arab, Western, and Israeli politicians, analysts, observers, and journalists were predicting the worst for Palestinians at the end of the crisis. Several

Israeli commentators saw this as one more historic mistake to the repetition of which Palestinians appear to be addicted. Latent in this view is the assumption that the Palestinians ought to have joined the war effort against Iraq by dispatching a symbolic contingent to Saudi Arabia for instance, in the manner of Morocco. Whether it was politically feasible for the PLO to align itself with the United States and Israel against Iraq was never discussed. Nevertheless, the foreign minister of Egypt spoke for several Arab regimes and for Israel's government when he alluded to the possibility of withdrawal of recognition of the PLO as the Palestinians' representative as one long-term result of the Gulf crisis.

By the middle of September some among those on the left in the Israeli political spectrum had an opportunity to reassess their position. It must have become clear to them that in the heat of the fray they had uttered words not expressive of their true interests. This is especially relevant in the case of organized groups such as Peace Now. For if dialogue with Palestinians inside and outside the occupied territories were to be irrevocably severed, it was not clear that such groups would be able to survive the outcome. Peace Now in particular is especially susceptible in view of the fact that its existence and cohesion as a movement is predicated on the pursuit of peace with Palestinians through dialogue and joint action. As a result, Peace Now published several advertisements in the Arabic press in East Jerusalem distancing itself from some of the more extreme pronouncements by some of its members. Their official view now recognizes the disparity of positions on the Gulf crisis, affirming at the same time the need not to have this preclude the continuation of dialogue and joint work.

Spoils of War

Meanwhile, the scramble for the political spoils of the crisis started in Israel. The Bush administration went to great lengths to keep Israel out of direct military involvement in the interest of securing Arab legitimacy for its imperial effort. Unconfirmed Press reports suggested that an international conference to settle the

Palestinian-Israeli conflict at the end of the crisis was an early casualty, having been sacrificed by the Bush administration to appease the Shamir government. After the start of the war in mid-January Israel was commended on its "restraint" by one visiting Congressional delegation after the other. It transpired that Israel had shown commendable restraint twice, once in not attacking Iraq before the beginning of the air war, and once again after Iraqi Scuds fell on Tel Aviv and other locations. On this score, Iraq can be seen as having been even more restrained than Israel, with a record of almost ten years of restraint before firing its first missile, and doubly so for not attempting a pre-emptive strike before Israel bombed its nuclear reactor in 1981.

There is more than one reason why Israel's government agreed to stay out of the war even after Israel was hit by Iraqi missiles. For one thing, the attacks on Israel proved to be a veritable PR windfall enabling it to pose again as the victimized underdog after three years of not very favorable coverage due to the uprising in the occupied territories. Every visiting delegation from the United States and Europe was issued gas masks immediately upon arrival at the airport and some even got to use them during their stay, thus sharing in Israel's moment of danger and drama. And all before the peering eye of the T.V. camera.

Israel's government was also hoping to cash in on the crisis. Finance minister Yitzhak Moda'i prepared a list of "expenses" totaling 13 billion dollars. Among the smallest itemized sums was that of damages due to missiles as of date of preparation of list. The list included one billion dollars for lost income from tourism, and ten billion dollars for the settlement of Soviet immigrants. How the latter sum was related to the war was never made clear. The U.S. government was only partially obliging. This confirmed earlier fears that the U.S. was planning to use economic assistance as a bargaining chip to exact political concessions from Israel after the war. Still, Israel was able to raise more private funds than it does at normal times thanks to the effort of various Zionist groups in the U.S.

The main reason for the celebrated restraint of the government of Israel is political and not military or economic. As the war progressed it became demonstrably clear that the war aimed at destroying the military power of Iraq and the power base of the regime, as well as the toppling of Saddam Hussein if possible. Thus the United States was in the process of accomplishing what Israel wished to accomplish but could not on its own. Indeed, Israel's military involvement would have been counter-productive not only because of the strain it would have imposed on the Arab side of the alliance, but because it was not at all clear that Israel could do better than the U.S. forces were doing.

Thus Israel found itself in the enviable position of having someone else do the dirty work it wished to do while it went busily about collecting political credit to be used after the war. As early as mid-September it was clear to many politicians and commentators in Israel that the U.S. may owe its Arab allies a political quid pro quo at the end of the conflict, and that Israel might have to assume part of that bill. Linkage, that is, in all but name.

Linkage

In spite of the fact that in his broadcast towards the end of February in which he announced the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait Saddam Hussein agreed to separate the issues he had conjoined, the confluence of the Gulf war and the Palestine question was already established. Before the war had ended, various American officials including the President and the Secretary of State emphasized the need to address the Israeli-Palestinian question. Soon after the cessation of battle and before the conclusion of a formal cease-fire, the President of the United States again emphasized the need to work towards the solution of the Palestinian problem as well as the Arab Israeli conflict in his speech before the joint session of Congress on March 6, 1991, as did several Arab regimes allied with the United States.

The Secretary of State of the United States also raised this point during his visit to Israel a week later. But if statements by politicians invariably prove ephemeral especially if made in the heat of battle, let me adduce three reasons why the U.S. might need to pursue the beginning of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

First, one should keep in mind that the vast majority of Arabs (as well as the vast majority of Muslims) are strongly opposed to the American aggression against Iraq and view it as a latter-day imperialistic venture, in spite of the fact that they may not necessarily support Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. The issues are separate and separable. It is too early to discern the long-term implications of this for the regimes that allied themselves with the United States, but it is clear that they will need to continue to justify this alliance especially when the scale of death and destruction comes to be known. Cancellation of loans (as in the case of Egypt) and infusion of cash (as in the case of Syria) will not be enough. Nor will it be perceived as a gain that the ruling families in the Gulf sheikhdoms have been preserved. Only concrete gain on an Arab issue of central concern, such as the Palestine question, can possibly do the job. Indeed, several members of the ruling families of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have shown sensitivity to this question and have continued to pledge support to the Palestinian cause even while criticizing the Palestinian leadership. One should therefore expect that these ruling families, with the backing of Egypt, will press their patron for movement on the Palestine question. Their self-interest and that of the United States requires this.

Second, the uncommon and unusual zeal with which the United States pursued the application of Security Council resolutions is bound to be remembered in the Arab and Muslim worlds. The United States and Israel can endlessly deny the viability of comparison between the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Gulf War, but in the minds of the vast majority of Arabs the comparison is eminently viable because of the starkness of the

contrast. The issue of double standards is bound to be raised, and the disparity in the treatment of the two conflicts is bound to be noted. This can evoke powerful emotions in a world where the vast majority who are poor will now have to behold the spectacle of the rich and profligate re-enthroned. Saddam Hussein may have been extremely cynical in raising the issue of Palestine and of poverty and wealth. But he has raised very real issues. Hence, in view of the fact that the United States will have to depend on local regimes for the protection of its interests, propping them up will have to include a political initiative that addresses some of the concerns of the people they rule.

Finally, much has been made of the need to assure the "security and stability" of the Gulf. Indeed, Bush's "new order" requires that American interests in the Gulf remain secure, that the United States not have to fight a war every few years to protect those interests, and that the local regimes assisting in securing those interests be themselves stable. Syria and Egypt are supposed to play a direct military role in ensuring the stability of some of those regimes, and ultimately, Israel is expected to be a part of this "security alliance." Needless to say, this longer view assumes the settlement of the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. As the present war has shown, Israel has been a strategic liability to the United States.

Still, even shorter-term arrangements will require the initiation of a political process that addresses the Palestinian question. It is difficult to see how the Gulf can be made secure in its stability with a festering problem in the front yard of all Arab regimes, especially if the Intifada continues. And there is no reason to believe that the Intifada will wither away or stop.

Doubts

There is nonetheless ample room for skepticism. The relevant question is not so much whether it is in the long-term interest of the U.S. to work seriously for a solution of the Palestinian problem, but whether the present administration has the political

will to bring pressure to bear on the government of Israel to make such a solution possible. Indeed, the history of American policy towards the Middle East at least since 1967 affords a list of declarations forgotten, initiatives thwarted, plans abandoned, and promises not kept. A distinction can be made between the long-term interest of the U.S. in the Middle East, and the ability and hence the willingness of any one administration to pursue those interests in a determined fashion. One important constraining factor on politicians occupying the highest office in the U.S. is the considerable pressure that can be brought to bear upon them by the Israel lobby, which includes a substantial number of United States senators. But what makes such pressure unduly effective is the lack of any credible threat to U.S. interests in the region despite its de facto sponsorship of the cause of Greater Israel. Arab client regimes subservient to the United States have been unable or unwilling to take the practical steps needed to counter the pressure placed on any one administration. Indeed, Arab regimes subservient to one power or another have been the Palestinians' heel of Achilles for more than half a century.

The only pressure that the United States was willing to exercise on the government of Israel by the end of the first year of the Intifada was to have Israel submit its own proposal for a solution to the Palestinian problem. The result was the Shamir plan of May 1989. After failing to have the government of Israel take its plan seriously shortly before the Gulf crises started, Secretary Baker has now renewed his efforts with the difference that he is taking the whole of the Shamir plan seriously, partly perhaps in the hope that Shamir himself will do the same. For, as the Prime Minister of Israel never tires of repeating, the main items in his plan deal with peace with Arab states rather than the Palestinians. Hence the "two-track" approach of Mr. Baker.

How far this new approach will succeed remains to be seen. What is new in the present situation in the aftermath of the war is that the United States has more of an interest in working for a solution to the Palestinian problem than it had before the Gulf

crises, for reasons outlined above. It also has an interest in working towards a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict so that Israel may play a more vigorous and direct role in securing the stability of the regimes entrusted with the task of securing U.S. interests in the region. Again it remains to be seen if the present Administration has the political will to see such a project through, in so far as it involves exchanging land for peace. It will require of the United States to be much more than a "catalyst," the role assigned in public to it by Secretary Baker.

The position of the government of Israel regarding the "two-track" approach has so far been positive but cautious. The Prime Minister claims that the matter of exchanging land for peace has not been raised by the Secretary of State in their private meetings. Shamir in any case continues to emphasize the importance of progress in achieving peace with Arab governments, relegating the need to make peace with the Palestinians to a less important category.

While it might be difficult for the government of Israel to reject its own peace plan now that it has been sponsored by the United States, at least two options are open to the government, each consistent with its radical ideology. The first is stalling, an old tactic now to be pressed into the service of rejectionism. This option envisions Shamir giving a positive response, in principle, to the American initiative, while stalling at every turn over every conceivable issue of procedure or substance. The purpose would be to gain time and delay for a year or so until the U.S. Administration turns its attention to the election campaign.

The second envisions the government of Israel amenable to some accommodation of the regional interests of the United States, albeit at a high price to be exacted from the Arab countries, from the United States, and from the Palestinians. The virtual surrender of the Arab countries will be required, and Israel's economic, political, and military hegemony formally enshrined in "peace" treaties arrived at in one or more stages. Under the most optimistic

version of this option, Israel will accept to cede portions of the West Bank and Gaza in return for settling the Palestinian problem on its own terms. Relinquishing portions of the occupied territories will be made out to be a most dramatic and momentous occasion threatening to rend Israel apart, a trauma that will haunt Israel for years to come. This sacrifice will no doubt require adequate compensation, even though it may be difficult to conceive of a compensation commensurate with it.

Winners and Losers

In spite of the dire forebodings and the expectations of some that Palestinians will be among the main losers, Palestinians remain in the aftermath of the war a major political factor. It is true they have incurred losses. Their political leadership is being ostracized, at least temporarily. Their image has been tarnished, and at least 150 thousand have lost a haven and a place of work. Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe that these losses will not be more than temporary, in spite of Israel's attempt to make some of them permanent. For to the present government of Israel the essence of the Palestinian problem, as a political problem it is willing to deal with, is demographic: What is it to do about nearly two million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Large scale immigration from the Soviet Union will no doubt strengthen Israel in more than one way. But it will not solve the "demographic problem," it will only postpone it. It is recognized in Israel that every million immigrants will delay the demographic parity between Arab and Jew in "Eretz Yisrael" by a decade. If two million immigrants arrive from the Soviet Union in the next three years, twenty-three years hence we will be where we are now demographically, all else being equal.

To the government of Israel there is no Palestinian problem other than this one. Hence the focus of its vision on a segment of the Palestinian population, that under occupation, and not on land. This is how we can explain its attempts to find a "local leadership"

to talk to, a leadership not in any way affiliated with the PLO, since the PLO stands for the land and for the whole of the Palestinian people. And to the extent that the United States attempts to exclude the PLO from its "peace process," it would be supporting Israel's vision of the Palestinian problem, notwithstanding United Nations and Security Council resolutions.

The relevant question then in the present context is whether the present government of Israel with possible support from the United States will be able to impose its vision of what constitutes the Palestinian problem on Palestinians, on Arabs, and on the world community.

There is no reason to believe that Israel will be able to achieve this objective even with the support of the United States. To the extent that Israeli-Arab negotiations require Palestinian consent and Israeli-Palestinian peace requires Palestinian presence in the negotiations, the problem for Israel, the Bush administration, and some Arab regimes attracted by the idea of punishing the PLO is how to proceed without PLO support but with a Palestinian dispensation.

There is no solution to this problem. The nearest thing to a credible alternative in the occupied territories is the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). Even if its leadership accepted to replace the PLO, in an Arab delegation for instance, the popular base of Hamas would find it difficult to accept such a prospect. The political program upon which Hamas's constituency has been mobilized does not allow for an easy transition to the negotiating table.

The PLO and the Palestinians might not have enough strength to realize their vision of peace, but they have enough strength to prevent the relegation of the Palestinian cause to the status of a demographic problem. In the event the Bush administration proves to be serious in its determination to work towards a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict as its long-term interest demands, Palestinian

political leverage would have been ironically enhanced as a result of the war. The United States has more of a stake now in the resolution of this conflict than it used to before the war, and it cannot dispense with Palestinian approval. If on the other hand the Bush administration finds that it is not willing to pressure Israel to accept a role for the PLO in the negotiations that is acceptable to the Palestinian organization, it might decide to forsake the pursuit of a settlement in the Middle East.

From a Palestinian perspective this need not be the worst possible outcome. Shamir's autonomy plan as a final solution to the Palestinian problem is the continuation of occupation under a different guise. If in return for this the government of Israel hopes to have Arab States affix their seal of approval to peace arrangements ensuring Israel's hegemony in the region, an indefinite continuation of occupation might well be a more attractive option.



The Gulf Crisis and the Palestinian Economy New Tasks and Challenges

Samir Hulaileh

Following the 2nd of August 1990, the Gulf crisis brought about the reformulation of the economic structure and relations between the Occupied Territories and neighboring Arab countries, Israel, and even internally between north and south, Gaza Strip and the West Bank. This crisis was a turning point in the economic history of the region which will most certainly leave its marks on the features of the coming phase. This transformation was not the result of this crisis alone, but was a cumulative conclusion of the conditions of Palestinian political reality with years of occupation, including those of the Palestinian uprising. In this paper, I will present a review of economic development of the Palestinian people under occupation during the Intifada period. I will also try to outline some of the features of the coming phase in the ongoing political-economic struggle. The central focus of this paper will be the Gulf crisis, its results and implications, and the new Israeli policies adopted during and in the aftermath of the Gulf war.

The Palestinian economy has been a subject of heated discussion for the past twenty years, not only in the form of passing comments or condemnation of Israeli policies in the Occupied Territories, but in the context of the wide scale national discussion which took off in the mid-seventies concerning the roles and tasks of the Palestinian national movement represented then by the municipalities, charitable societies, and workers' unions. Added to that was the role of the joint Palestinian-Jordanian committee in the support and development of Palestinian political struggle in the Occupied Territories. The concentration of Palestinian national struggle in the Occupied Territories following 1973 (the formation of the national front), with the ensuing municipal elections and the formation of a number of youth, women, agricultural, and medical

grass-root organizations, has posed a number of important questions concerning what is required of the national movement in leading the Palestinian public in day-to-day life and not only on the political level. Following the Arab summit in Baghdad and the ratification of the budget for the Joint Palestinian-Jordanian committee in Amman in 1978, the PLO found itself confronted with a number of practical questions on how to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The response was spontaneous, void of any long-term planning and not linked to a specific direction for development. This was not alien to the PLO at that time which did not carry as one of its main tasks the responsibility of the Palestinian economy and society under occupation. The theory that everything is possible after liberation was still dominant, with the occupation seen as a passing phenomenon soon to disappear. Therefore efforts should not be wasted, it was thought, on development under the difficult conditions of occupation. And despite comprehensive discussions by a number of Palestinian economists in the early 80s on funding priorities and possibilities for development under occupation, the prevailing theory that development under occupation is non-existent destroyed any possibility of finding a specific and practical assessment of the people's needs and the possibilities of developing the resources of the Occupied Territories.

But the seeds for the new outlook in the economic field were nevertheless planted and they crystallized with the growth of grass-root organizations in various development areas, and their ability to expand and bring about important achievements even under occupation. These organizations posed a challenge to already existing institutions whether traditional or national. This challenge activated the competition and even struggle, at times, between these two institutional set-ups which differed in the nature of their social base and method of work, and even in their goals. However, the focus of this phase was activating the development process through internal autonomous mechanisms, political perhaps at times, geared towards serving the Palestinian population under occupation.

The end of the 80s witnessed a polarization and crystallization of specific outlooks on development which were adopted by a number of political and grass-root organizations in their dialogue with various institutions. These organizations even began to pick the fruit of their young experience with material results and lessons learnt. At the same time, traditional institutions braced themselves for this challenge and began looking for a position to suit their experience in the context of the current social-economic activity. The end of the 80s was the fulfillment of 10 years' experience for this new institutional experiment, in the funding of the Joint Committee, and in the sphere of extended contact with foreign PVOs working in the Occupied Territories, in addition to the occupation, its regulations, and how to side-track them. This phase was only the beginning and the basis for what was coming after the Intifada started at the end of 1987.

The Palestinian Intifada came concluding previous phases and bringing the focus on the Palestinian people inside the Occupied Territories, leading their struggle beneath the banner of the PLO. The Intifada showed creativity in linking the struggle against occupation with the various forms of self-preservation of social texture, economic and cultural frameworks and political identity. The most important contribution of the intifada was in the preservation of these aspects of Palestinian entity, soul, and identity.

The intifada was a historical chance for Palestinians inside the Occupied Territories and their historical leadership to identify the core of their vision and priorities in the interests of their day-to-day struggle under occupation based on the dynamic interaction between political and economic decision-making. The intifada terminated any discussions revolving around the question: can there be development under occupation? or is the only possibility one of political and economic perseverance? The Palestinian leadership found itself, for the first time, facing a new challenge. It was no longer only the political leadership of the Palestinian people in their struggle for political independence, but also, by necessity, their

leadership in daily life activities on the path towards building the infrastructure of the coming state. This is how the challenge was newly formulated. Does the PLO and its factions have the conceptual framework? Does it have a specific economic developmental vision able to direct the Palestinian public towards it? Does it have the necessary experienced cadre to lead the people towards this vision? Does it have the institutional base to fulfill this task?

The economic slogans of the Intifada, boycotting Israeli products, reducing rent, qualifying the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar, return to land and home economy, group and individual agreements between factory owners and labour unions, among others, crystallized a pioneering economic role for the PLO without any form of imposition of will, but through organizing popular initiatives. In this context, the possibility of real development even under occupation began to materialize, either on the basis of group cooperative work or within the context of household economy and return to the land and the weakening of market machinery. Another viewpoint claimed that it is better to leave the initiative in the hands of the private sector to take over development under the supervision, support, and direction of planning and funding sources. Regardless of the practical results up till now, one can say that the best aspect of this experience is its multiplicity and its democracy, where for the first time everyone was allowed to test their theories and ideas. I believe that all of these trends have led to basic and profound conclusions concerning their experience and that these will be incorporated in economic programmes in the near future or within the independent state.

Hence, when the gulf crisis occurred, the local Palestinian economic base was still in the experimental phase trying to survive despite difficulties and measures imposed by the Occupation. For in addition to the negative impact of the great number of general strike days on economic growth, there were the military orders in March 1988 forbidding and limiting money transfers to the Occupied Territories from or via Jordan. These orders had a great

impact on decreasing the amount of remittances from Palestinians in the Gulf and Jordan to the Occupied Territories by half to become only \$200 million.(1) Towards the end of that same year the Jordanian Dinar began to suffer a marked decrease which in early 1989 reached a level of 50% of its value compared to foreign currencies, especially the dollar. Since most savings are in the Jordanian dinar, the Occupied Territories lost \$300 million in currency exchange difference in its savings alone.(2) At the same time, and in early 1989, the Jordan valley and the north western plains suffered the worst case of frost which led to the destruction of thousands of agricultural dunams with a loss of \$50 million. In 1989, economic activity became more regular compared to the previous year since days of general strike were limited, factories were allowed to work 24 hours a day, and industrial areas were allowed to open until 3 pm every day, while Israeli measures became more lenient after all sides became used to the fact that the Intifada is a continuous event and not only a temporary passing state. In that year, in particular, it was noted that the economic boycott began to have a clear impact on the level of investment in the private sector in industry and animal husbandry, the two sectors profiting most from the boycott. There were also signs of marked improvement in the activity of building and tourism sectors.

In 1990, economic growth and investment activities continued to create the practical bases for self-sufficiency and boycott. However, Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union began unexpectedly and in unprecedented numbers. Due to this immigration and the increasing political tension in the Occupied Territories in light of the Aqsa massacre and the increase in killings by Palestinian labourers, especially towards the end of October 1990, a state of restlessness surfaced in Israeli circles. This was reflected in steps which allowed the Israeli authorities to prohibit the entry of 12000 workers to Israel on political bases (the green ID cards) in addition to the implementation of a one-year plan to reduce the number of Palestinian workers in Israel by half.

The Gulf crisis occurred at a time when these pressures and new conditions were at their maximum, accompanied by a drought which affected the Occupied Territories at the end of the same year. All of this aggravated the impact of the crisis to a level that the young economy of the OT could not bear. In a short outline of the situation in the OT prior to the Gulf crisis, one can list the following factors:

1. A retreat in the Gross national income of the Occupied Territories by \$200 million in 1988 and in 1989 due to Israeli measures concerning transfer of funds from or via Jordan. This amount makes up 10% of the gross national income.

2. A retreat in the GDP due to the decrease in hours of production during 1988 by 25% compared to the previous year,⁽³⁾ or the equivalent of \$300 million. This, in addition to the decrease in returns from work inside Israel due to the decrease in the total number of workers and working hours by 24%,⁽⁴⁾ which is the equivalent of approximately \$110 million. The retreat in the above mentioned sources of income meant a total decrease in the national income for 1988 of \$610 million, or 30% of the gross national product.

3. In 1989, there was marked improvement in some sectors, especially with the improvement of working hours by 3% compared to 1988,⁽⁵⁾ or a decrease of losses by \$ 27 million, in addition to the improvement of working hours in Israel by 11-14% ⁽⁶⁾ from the previous year. This is the equivalent of a \$50 million cut in losses. Transfer of funds retained the same level, while the agricultural sector retreated due to the weak olive season for the year. To sum up, 1989 witnessed a total loss in the national income of \$530 million, slightly lower than in the previous year, and reduced the percentage of total losses to 25% of the gross national income.

4. In 1990, a marked improvement in local produce was evident due to the launching of some investment projects in the agricultural and industrial sectors, in addition to the improvement in the tourism sector. The national income for that year could have returned to its original figure of 1987 if it wasn't for the Gulf crisis, the drought, and the decrease of number of workers in Israel or the

change of the nature of their work from regular to black labor, seasonal or part-time, factors which left their clear marks at the end of the year.

5. It was not possible under the circumstances to prevent a collapse in the economy of the Occupied Territories, if the Palestinian leadership in the Occupied Territories had not put pressure, with popular cooperation, to decrease the amount of unnecessary expenditures especially in the industrial sector. In Gaza this led to a decrease of industrial imports from Israel by 23% in the first year of the Intifada,(7) at the same time industrial exports to Israel decreased by 55% especially in clandestine contracts with Israeli companies.(8)

However, the unique and qualitative contribution of the Intifada in the economic sphere was on the human-institutional level. The diversion of the focus of international, Arab, and Palestinian interest into the Occupied Territories for this relatively long period of time and the concentration of work and struggle on all levels in this arena, resulted in profound changes in the field of day-to-day decision making and in the institutional development structures. At the same time as the Arab Thought Forum in Jerusalem and the Rural Studies Center in Al Najah University were active in the early eighties in the field of development, local credit institutions began activities in 86/87 and a number of new development research and training institutions began to grow during the Intifada (88-91) which gave a new dimension to discussions concerning development under occupation. Names like Bisan, Ma'an, Tamer, Institute for Applied Research, centers for Research on labour, women, etc ... in addition to various production committees, lectures, forums, seminars, and workshops in various fields were held during the years 1989 and 1990. This completed a new vital link in the chain of local Palestinian development, and new factors, forces, and outlooks on development appeared, in addition to Palestinian personalities and experts, who were actively committed to both drawing the policy and implementing it in the general economic sphere. Despite various attempts at creating frames for institutions in the economic sector,

these attempts failed because they were not truly representative of their constituencies. In many cases they were no more than an ornament for a frame that represents the four basic political forces. But the political will alone was not enough to represent the economic activity (others as well) without taking into consideration historical experiences of hundreds of industrialists, farmers, and merchants in the various sectors, their will, and their vision in their respective areas.

Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, new variables began to affect the economic structure in the Occupied Territories, and some began to take effect with clear verocity following the crisis. The first direct effect was the decrease in remittances from Kuwait and other gulf countries to the Occupied Territories, whether Palestinian, official, or non-governmental Gulf remittances, or indirect remittances via the PLO. In the same context there was a decrease or even a total halt in some Palestinian exports to some gulf countries and Jordan, and tourism took a total stop in the Occupied Territories and in the region as a whole. Some few thousands of Palestinians returned to the Occupied Territories forming a new burden on the narrow labour market here. The effects on the economy of the Occupied Territories can be summarized as follows:

1. The total amount of remittances from Palestinians in the Gulf, Jordan, and Kuwait decreased by 75% from the average remittances during the Intifada.(9) It became obvious that the new annual average of \$50 million represents 1/8 of the total of remittances before the Intifada.

2. Direct aid was stopped temporarily from non governmental Gulf institutions and in particular the Arab Fund in Kuwait, the Islamic Bank in Jeddah, the OPEC fund and the Gulf Fund. These institutions provided amounts reaching up to \$35 million annually to the health and education sectors, since the beginning of the Intifada.(10) And despite the official committment of these institutions to the continuation of support during this year, there

are serious doubts concerning the extent of their commitment in coming years.

3. Direct aid given by the Gulf countries to some religious institutions in the Occupied Territories and Zaka committees was stopped. And even though there are no clear estimates as to the amount of this aid, a number of sources point out that the sum was \$53 million during the years of the Intifada. As pointed out previously, the continued flow of these funds to the parties concerned is not certain and it raises a few political questions, as well.

4. The losses of the tourism sector during the year following the 2nd of August is equal to \$90 million which is the total annual profit of this sector. This loss also added thousands of unemployed to the labour market in the Occupied Territories.

5. Agricultural and industrial exports to Jordan, the Gulf, and Iraq suffered seriously in light of the events. It was originally moving slowly backwards from \$42 million worth of industrial exports in 1987 to \$16.6 million at the end of 1990.⁽¹¹⁾ Agricultural exports show a similar trend with similar percentages. The main victim in industrial exports were the quarries with a total halt of the export of stones and marble, following the Gulf crisis.

Without trying to limit the details of the losses one can generalize by saying that the Occupied Territories faced a decrease in the gross national income by 20% compared to 1987, equivalent to a minimum of \$400 million for one year starting from august 1990 until august 1991.

However, that was only a small part of what is to come. The Israeli authorities closed off the Occupied Territories and imposed a strict and total curfew starting from January 17, 1991 (the beginning of the Gulf War). This situation continued for a period of 40 days in the form of a total curfew, and subsequently as a part-time curfew, while restrictions continue on travel between cities, between villages and cities, between the West Bank and Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza and between Gaza and Jerusalem. At the same time, the Israeli authorities used this

opportunity to implement their previously declared programme of forbidding Palestinian workers from returning to work in Israel. Conditions were placed on Palestinians wishing to work in Israel, including a permit for the worker and the employer and the latter's full responsibility for the transfer of workers to and from their place of work. In addition, the number of workers was limited to a certain percentage according to political considerations of the civil administration. As of 12-3-1991, the authorities have allowed only 30,000 workers to return to work in Israel, which is less than 20% of the total number of workers before the war.

These measures were like a death blow to the possibilities of growth of the Palestinian economy on the basis of its achievements during the Intifada. These new restrictions caused losses amounting to \$200 million during the days of the curfew.⁽¹²⁾ All of this in addition to a condition of economic stagnation which is expected to continue for 6 months to a year. In the field of labour, the actual number of unemployed in various sectors is no less than half the Palestinian work force (about 150 thousand workers). This is a catastrophic percentage for a small and developing economy like that of the Occupied Territories. However, despite all these conditions, the Occupation forces have not saved any effort in increasing economic pressure for political ends. The tax-collection raids continue, forceful collection of last year police tickets, and insistence on the payment of water and electricity bills under the threat of cutting them off to cities and industrial areas despite the bad economic conditions. The pressure of the authorities towards taking away what is left of people's savings in taxes and bills is contrary to any economic principle concerned with pulling the economy from a case of recession and from the threat of famine in the Occupied Territories.

In a field survey conducted in the 5th week of the war in two villages north of Ramallah, a tremendous decrease in the nutritional level of food was noted due to the economic situation. The consumption of dairy products decreased by 70%, red meat by 80%, white meat by 40%, and fresh fruits and vegetables by 60%.

At the same time there was a noted increase in the consumption of rice, wheat, sugar, eggs and potatoes, food rich in carbohydrates but no relevant nutritional value, which may cause malnutrition for children in a few months. In the village x in the Ramallah district it was found that the number of families in debt to a grocer was 102 out of a total of 160 families in the village, and that there were 12 families suffering from starvation (that is they have no food at all except for oil, olives, and thyme).(13) The same phenomenon was registered in a nearby village.

What is needed at this point is an urgent relief policy which may last for a long time if no employment possibilities are provided for thousands of labourers. This might turn our people into a group of dependents waiting for aid. UNRWA estimates show that 80% of the families in the Occupied Territories (240 thousand families) are in need of urgent relief in basic necessities, and the reference is not to important nutritional food stuffs like proteins, vitamins, or fat. The prevention of an imminent collapse of the Palestinian economy is the most urgent mission at the present time. We cannot speak of development plans except if they can solve the urgent difficult problems that we are presently facing.

In this context, there arises the issue of post-war Israeli policies towards the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and the role they play in the formulation of the economic priorities and tasks. At the center of this policy lie the various measures concerning the movement of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and into Israel. And eventhough this policy was declared in a previous period (October-November 1990) by the Israeli economy minister Magen, it took new practical dimensions during and following the war. And eventhough the Israeli government is still (March 1991) studying this measure, its repercussions and limits, what has already been implemented of this policy is alone a dangerous development on the economy and on the social and political stability of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Israeli defence minister had formed, towards the end of 1990, a special economic committee to study the results of these measures on the Gaza Strip, while the government formed a special ministerial committee to present its recommendations on the topic to the government. In the post-war period, and following the failure to reach an agreement on this policy, whether in light of the recommendations of the special cabinet committee or the small cabinet, Shamir moved this issue to a committee comprising the ministries of defence and police to put down details and recommendations. Since the results reached by this committee have not been published yet it will suffice to review the actual measures of the Israeli authorities during the past five months and their direct results on the Palestinian economy.

The expulsion of Palestinian workers from Israel came as a result of three simultaneous measures: the first was a result of the decision of the Israeli defence ministry to distribute Green ID cards to between 10-12 thousand Palestinian youths in the West Bank, and issuing magnetic cards for the Gaza Strip workers. The second was the expulsion of workers from the private sector in Israel for security reasons, pressures from the right wing, the general tense atmosphere of the war, and the rush to employ new Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union in light of the special facilities provided by the government etc.... The third factor was the series of restrictive measures taken by the government concerning the work and stay of Arab workers in Israel, especially in the field of fighting black labor. It is clear that under this cover the government began the process of replacing Arab workers with soviet immigrants.

These measures gained momentum during the war when the Occupied Territories were completely closed off from Israel for more than a month. At the same time, the Israeli authorities began reorganizing labour conditions in Israel. Gradually, workers registered at labour offices were allowed back into Israel on the condition that the employer and the worker submit a request to that effect, and guarantees from the employer to transport the

workers to and from their place of work. Of course, approval of these requests was subject to a security check on the worker, his family and history, in addition to a limit on the number of workers from each area or from the Occupied Territories in general. In the context of the security check, the issue of work inside Israel became part of the stick and the carrot policy used in the Occupied Territories. Villages where the village council or Mukhtar has resigned due to the Intifada are deprived of permits under the pretext that there is no official local authority to recommend the request. Naturally, the complication of the procedures for employing Arab workers in Israel reduced the demand for them by Israeli employers, in conjunction with the facilities provided by the state for the employment of the new immigrants from the Soviet Union. However, the most important consequence of this "permit" system was the division of the Occupied Territories into four separate areas with travel restrictions between them, and not simply to Israel. This divided the market of the Occupied Territories into the markets of the North, Jerusalem, the South, and the Gaza Strip. In order to move to any one of them one must pass the security check based on the stick and carrot policy which necessitated the approval of the authorities of the producer, the driver, the area, the region, etc ..., all in the context of temporary permits which still require periodic renewal.

Even though this policy might lead to the revival of small local businesses and home economy, it destroys with an iron fist economic growth on the national level. Agricultural produce, based on specialization of certain areas in producing vegetables and others in producing fruits, is gradually being destroyed. Medium and large size industries which are the pillar of the industrial sector in its contribution to the national income, and the base for future industrial growth, are in great distress. As to the transport and services sectors, it is jeopardized by this policy due to the decrease in the number of commercial transports to and from Israel and to and from the Gaza Strip, and so on.

Naturally, a major part of economic, cultural, religious, and health services in Jerusalem are not accessible to the residents of the Occupied Territories. What is meant here is long term detrimental effects on the geographic-human-economic-service unity of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories, which is an old Israeli aim and the focus of the political struggle between the Palestinian people and the Israeli occupation.

On the economic level, employing only 40-50% of Palestinian workers in Israel, weakening the mechanisms of the local market and hence preventing investment in productive sectors, placing obstacles to economic relationships with the Israeli market in the absence of economic alternatives, all these are indications that the Israelis wish to subject the local economy to the danger of reversal and collapse and a long state of economic stagnation.

All of these new conditions place us in face of a real economic crisis and a unique case in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli struggle since 1967. What we find is a case of semi-total closure of work opportunities in the Gulf, Jordan, and Israel besides, wide-scale restriction on the perseverance and expansion of production sectors in the Occupied Territories, in addition to the subjective restrictions on the production sectors due to the Intifada. As much as Israel bears the responsibility of providing sources of income and work for the Palestinian people in its capacity as an occupying power, as much as the international community, mostly the US and the Soviet Union, bear the responsibility for the direct consequences of Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union on the conditions of work in the Occupied Territories. It is our duty to take charge, in this context, without depending on international political pressure and intervention. This challenge is one of the first that faces the Intifada and its leadership on such a large scale.

The Palestinian response to the new needs and dangers was quick. A number of local Palestinian institutions initiated studies of the crisis and its results and drew up a plan of action, in the context of Palestinian legitimacy, in order to coordinate efforts on

the local and international levels to serve the local vision and needs. These institutions fought a difficult struggle against the distribution of green ID cards, the restriction of movement of workers to Israel, the curfew and its effects during and after the war, licenses for factories, the establishment of a local Palestinian bank, directing emergency aid through acceptable international channels, etc Despite the fact that the elements of local coordination have not been completed yet, what has been accomplished up till now in various sectors is sufficient to provide a preliminary Palestinian response to the increasing needs. This wide positive movement of discussion and coordination and unification on the local Palestinian level creates changes in Palestinian institutions and sectors and awaits a positive Palestinian response from the outside. What is taking place here is not met by parallel action in the Palestinian institutions outside. The uniformity of work and vision between the Occupied Territories and the Palestinian diaspora is an important basis for the preservation of the unity of the Occupied Territories and their institutions and is liable to prevent any transgressions and attempts to bypass the vital and important role of the outside. It seems that the activation of discussion on the local Palestinian level requires an activation of the dialogue between inside and outside and a blood transfer to reactivate and stimulate the role of the outside as an active organizer of Palestinian activity everywhere.

And so, the features of the most important Palestinian economic achievement become more clear. It is not the achievement of a development plan under occupation, nor is it the marked progress during the Intifada in the productivity of some economic sectors, nor is it the partial separation from the Israeli market. It is in fact the Palestinian human and institutional economic build-up linked to the dynamics of Palestinian political resistance in the Occupied Territories. It is the linked texture of institutions with various visions and directions that are coordinated and working at paving their way in the economic field towards one unified aim. The aim is that of serving the current Palestinian struggle, prioritizing the perseverance and development of the

Palestinian individual and collectivity under occupation and preparing the infrastructure of the coming state, its institutions and its expertise in the economic developmental field.



Footnotes

1. This figure was deducted from unpublished official Jordanian figures on remittances to the O.T. in the years : 1984, 1985 and 1986. In addition to figures given to the researcher by Cairo-Amman Bank in Nablus for the year 1988.
2. Jordan Central Bank has declared on different occasions that 200 million J.D. were in the W.B. at that period. With the fact that the Dinar has devaluated from 3 U.S. dollars into 1.5 U.S. dollar, the estimate is that \$300 million was lost as a result of this devaluation.
3. Judea, Samaria and Gaza Areas Statistics, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. Vol. 19, 1989-1990. p. 191.
4. Ibid, p. 144.
5. Ibid, p. 146.
6. Ibid, p. 146.
7. Ibid, p. 41.
8. Ibid, p. 43.
9. These figures were given to the researcher by different money-changers in Nablus city, in addition to an interview with one of the officials in Cairo-Amman Bank for the period (August-October 1990).
10. Interview with officials in these organizations in Amman and the West Bank.
11. The information related to the industrial exports was collected directly from the factories by Muhammed Halayqa.
12. Different reports through the curfew has calculated the daily losses of the Palestinian economy by \$5.2.m. i.e. a total of \$200 m. for the period of almost 40 days.
13. Reem Mughrabi conducted this research at the end of the war period in the village of Attara. Her report was not published, but most of her findings were used in different reports published later about the effects of the curfew on the Palestinian economy in the O.T.

The Legal Dimension : The Impact of the Gulf Crisis on the Palestinian Cause

Ibrahim Shaban

War is a social phenomenon that affected humanity since ancient times. Its aim is to achieve different and varied goals of human communities. It stems from various causes. War has been a human predicament since creation and will probably continue to be so in the foreseeable future.

Despite the tragedies of this complicated phenomenon and its heavy human costs, some still think that it is a natural phenomenon or even a useful one that warrants no justification. They add that war is a means to settle disputes between nations. It is neither a crime nor a shame. But it is a conventional means to settle international differences and disputes.

Yet other jurists do not think that war is an inherent human condition; nor is it an evil trait acquired unknowingly and indiscriminately. It is the product of objective circumstances and ailments that plague the International Community because of economic and/or, social injustice, and/or exploitation, racial discrimination, manipulation and/or hegemony or otherwise.

Whatever the view of the war is, we can simply say that it is an armed struggle between two or more states, each trying to achieve victory over its enemies so that it might impose its will and conditions to bring about peace and security.

War has two sides : De Facto and De Jure. The former implies military operations and the latter implies severing peaceful and diplomatic relations, treating ships and planes according to the Law of War, and imposition of restrictions on trade with the enemy state and its subjects. Be it De Facto or De Jure, war is bound to end by the conciliation of the two warring parties.

Tremendous efforts have been expended to stop war, but to no avail. War remained a major means to settle international disputes. However, those efforts were revived after World War I through the League of Nations and were crowned with the Paris Pact of 1928 (Briand-Kellogg). They were confirmed by the United Nations Charter in 1945. Both agreements banned war. The ban on war was clear and blunt in Paragraph four of Article two of the UN charter which stipulates, that "all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations". Paragraph IV was but a confirmation and manifestation of Paragraph III of Article II, of the Charter, which stipulates that "all members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice, are not endangered".(1)

This total ban on war can only be abrogated or restricted in the case of legitimate self-defence which was endorsed by the Charter in Article 51 which stipulates that "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence, if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and Security. Measures taken by members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security".

Despite this ban, war broke out between UN members states. Each country had its own pretext for waging war. But the general justification was the legitimate self-defense. Examples of this can be found in the 1956 Suez War, the Vietnam War, the Indian-Pakistani War, the Arab-Israeli War, El Salvador, Cyprus, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and others. But one may notice that wars

between the big powers have receded and were replaced by regional and local wars.

Among these wars are : the June 1967 War between Israel on one side and Egypt, Syria and Jordan on the other and the August 1990 War between Iraq and Kuwait. The former resulted in the occupation of Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel. The latter ended with Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. But the causes, nature, essence and results of each of these two wars were different.

Israeli Occupation after twenty-four years is still holding on to the Arab territories except for Sinai. But Kuwait was liberated after less than eight months and it regained its independence and government.

As far as the Iraqi-Kuwaiti dispute is concerned, there is an abundance of UN Security Council resolutions. In less than five months the UN Security Council passed twelve resolutions, whereas on the Palestine question we have only one resolution, namely 242. Even this single resolution, in my view, deals more with the consequences of the 1967 War than with the Palestine question proper, its roots, causes and consequence.

When we examine the Security Council resolutions concerning the Gulf Crisis, we find that they have started on August 2nd, 1990, the day Iraq invaded Kuwait. The first resolution demanded Iraq's withdrawal unconditionally. On 6 August, the Council adopted resolutions 661 imposing strict trade embargo on Iraq. On 9 August resolution 662 declared Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, null and void. And on 25 August 1990, the Council adopted resolution 665 authorizing the use of limited naval force to ensure compliance with the economic blockade. On 25 September 1990, an air-blockade was imposed on Iraq. Finally on 29 November 1990, the Council adopted resolution 678 authorizing the use, against Iraq, of all the necessary means. In other words it authorized the use of force.

The UN Security Council resolutions concerning the Palestine question are very few or non-existent. It took the Council five and a half month to adopt resolution 242. As for resolution 338, it was irrelevant and dealt more with the cease-fire in the October 1973 War. I would like to point out here that I am referring to the Security Council resolutions rather than those of the General Assembly or any other Committees of the UN.

When the Gulf War was over, hopes were revived with respect to the Palestinian issue. Voices were raised demanding that international legitimacy be used as a basis to solve the Palestine question. There were calls for renouncing duality in implementing international law and for carrying out what had been endorsed by international consensus and conventions.

In this cursory study I am not going to present my perceptions for political solutions because this would carry the study beyond its boundary. But I am going to point out the main legal points that should be taken into consideration as a basis for a future solution. If these legal points are not considered, the solution will be deficient, incomplete and illegitimate. The Gulf Crisis will undoubtedly enhance these principles and reduce their disputability, or refutability or even treating them in a different manner than was the case in the Gulf Crisis. In the following paragraphs these considerations will be discussed with some detail.

The Inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force :

The contemporary international law, has rejected war as a means to settle international disputes. This principle had only been established after the formulation of the United Nations Charter, though it had been written in the Paris Pact of 1928. Accordingly, the outcome of war becomes illegal especially when it is a war of aggression.

However, international law had defined ways for acquiring title on a territory. Some of these ways are : geographical discovery, the occupation of res nullius or relinquished land, prescription, invasion, cession and annexation. All these means have been legal until recently.(2)

Since there is no territory left undiscovered nowadays, all these means have ceased to be valid. Even the Antarctic has been discovered. The conditions for prescription are so difficult that some jurists doubt its existence in reality. As for invasion, it is totally banned and is inconsistent with the United Nations Charter.

The only remaining means of legal territory acquisition is cession. It is a bilateral, rather than unilateral, act. In other words, it has to be agreed upon by two states. One cedes something and the other accepts it, that is, there has to be two elements : first, agreement between two states, and second, actual delivery.

This being the case, all these means for territory acquisition become invalid in the Arab-Israeli conflict. We are then left with the last form, namely, cession. This form should be ratified by an international treaty, without which Israel's hold over Arab and Palestinian territories remains illegal.

The UN Security Council resolution 242 was perhaps aware of this fact and this principle of international law, when it provided in its preamble to Resolution 242 that :

"The Security Council, expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

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,

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 ..."

It should be noted here that the truce agreements signed by each of Jordan, Egypt and Syria with Israel, do not constitute a source of sovereignty for any of them. Nor do they grant legal title to any one. They do not diminish the sovereignty of anyone either. A truce agreement is a legal act to cease hostilities between two or more parties until a peaceful settlement has been reached between the disputants. The agreement itself has explicitly stated that.

It should also be remarked that the omission of "the" from the English text concerning the territories makes no difference. For, the Security Council is neither authorized nor capable of revoking an established principle of International law regarding the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

The Inadmissibility of Annexation :

If war is banned, the acquisition of territory by invasion is illegal, or rather an international crime, then it is only logical and adequate to consider annexation null and void.

Whatever means and form annexation might assume, it is still banned. In other words, annexation, whether performed by the single volition of the occupier, or by the volition of the occupier together with the volition of a government of its making, and whether this annexation came in the form of a so-called unification, and consent of the inhabitants, even if a third country recognizes its legitimacy, and whatever the nature of the war leading to annexation, be it legitimate or illegitimate, all these factors, collectively or individually, do not legitimize annexation. It remains null and void.

It is well-established in the writings of jurists and in the workings of the judiciary that the annexation of occupied territories is inadmissible. The Nuremburg Court upheld that in 1946. This principle was also upheld in the deliberations of North and South

American politicians. Thus, the principle of Stimson which decides that annexation is null and void still prevailing.(3)

The International Community, represented by the UN Security Council did the same thing when it rejected Israel's annexation of Arab Jerusalem. It declared that this annexation was null and of no avail.(4) The same thing happened to Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. But there was a major difference between the two annexations. It took the Security Council more than two years to pass a resolution on Jerusalem's annexation, whereas in the case of Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, hardly a week had elapsed on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, then a resolution was passed on 9 August 1990, that is, just a day after Iraq had declared its decision to annex Kuwait. This clearly indicates a fault in UN mechanisms with their double-standard and colorful criteria. The principle, however, is one but the implementation varies.

Despite the nullity of annexation in the international law, the issue of Jerusalem is expected to be subject to acute controversy as Israel would refuse to withdraw. In return, the Arabs and Palestinians will be more adamant in their rejection of the annexation. They will go even further and make Jerusalem the capital of the independent Palestinian State. International legitimacy must stand up for its principles and elementary facts.

It is true that religious freedom is a basic one that all people should enjoy. But it does not, in any way, legitimize Israel's annexation of Jerusalem under the pretext that Jews should also observe their religious rites. They should abide in their observances, by the British Mandate Law of 1931. They should also restore the status quo to its pre-5 June 1967 condition, especially in the Magharbeh Quarter where more than 550 houses need to be restored and renovated in this Waqf property.

The issue of religious practices is not an insurmountable problem. Its solution is easy. It will not be difficult for the politicians to solve it especially when religious holidays are few.

The main issue, however, is Jerusalem and the West Bank settlements.

Settlement

UN resolutions 242 and 338 did not deal with the issue of settlement which has taken a considerable dimension under the prolonged Israeli occupation. However, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 dealt with this issue. The last paragraph of Article 49 stipulates that :

"The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies".

Israeli settlements is a morbid phenomenon that had spread in Palestine. It is not only an obstacle to peace, but it is also a violation of international law. So any solution consistent with international law must decide that settlements are illegal, that they should be vacated and the settlers sent to whence they came from without any commitment for compensation by the Palestinian side or the international community.

Settlements were basically established in accordance with the security theory. A series of settlements were created according to the Alon Plan. Moshe Dayan stated that these settlements create facts that would demarcate the new lines for security. Since Security in the new era and in accordance with the emerging world order is not based on military force, then settlement as a security pretext is null.

The settlement question in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip appears easy to resolve when compared with what happened in Sinai, specifically Yamit. But, the major problem lies in Arab Jerusalem, especially in the quarters constructed by Israel to encircle Arab Jerusalem.⁽⁵⁾

The international law, is indifferentiative : What is based on nullity is null. Aggression is fruitless. The United Nations strongly condemned the establishment of new settlements and considered it null and void. Hence, the conditions must be restored to their pre-War status. And the occupying power should pay for the damages incurred by the citizens as a result of settlement.

The Right to Self-Determination

Self-determination is a basic and binding right. It is not true that it is an ambiguous, or a political or a discrepant principle. Nor is it true that it leads to the destruction of the United Nations Charter. On the contrary, many jurists consider self-determination as legal defense because it is the defence of a people against violence, and repression. It leads to the freedom of the individual and to the fulfillment of human needs and rights for all.

Violation of the right of self-determination is an international crime. It is one of the Jus Cogens in international law. It is also a fundamental and primary condition for the achievement of all basic human rights, such as the right to life, opinion, conscience and others. It is sufficient to know that the first rules of the Convention on civil and political rights and the Convention on the social, cultural and economic rights provide for self-determination.

Jurists of international law consider violation of the right of self-determination in any form as void because it is inconsistent with Article 52 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the law of International Treaties and is inconsistent also with the Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations in 1970.⁽⁶⁾

To sum up, self-determination has been one of the well established principles in the international law. It is a legal as well as a political conception. Besides, it is a right for human

communities that has been practiced by all peoples except the Palestinian people.⁽⁷⁾ The omission of any mention of this right in UN Security Council resolution 242 makes no difference at all. It would have been better, if this right had been laid down in the SC resolutions.

I am not going to delve into the historical characteristics of the Palestinian people, either the distant past or the present. It is enough to recall the 1969 UN General Assembly resolution which recognized the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. I would like also to recall the UN General Assembly resolution recognizing that the Palestinian people is entitled to equal rights and the right of self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and that it fully recognizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to independence as an essential element for establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Right of Return

The right of return is something legitimate and is practised by states and individuals. No one has ever doubted its legality. Therefore, no one has thought of laying it down in an international bill. Historically, this right has not caused much controversy. Most probably, it was the denial of this right to the Palestinians since 1947 and 1967 that had aroused this controversy.

If we are to respect international law, then we must respect human rights and the humanitarian international law. It follows then that the Palestinians' right of return is honored. Count Bernadotte referred to this right in his report in 1948. The UN accepted his recommendation and affirmed the right of the refugees either to return, or to adequate compensation

The UN General Assembly passed many and successive resolutions concerning the right of return. The GA went further and described this right as untransferable and cannot be ceded.

This right includes pre partition, post-partition and post-1967 territories.⁽⁸⁾

It may be argued that the right of return may change the Jewish character of the Israeli State. To this argument we reply by saying that this "Jewish Character" claim is only an extenuation of the racial discrimination practised by the Israeli State. Moshe Dayan stated that "We can absorb the refugees economically. But I think that their absorption does not conform with our future goals. For, Israel might be turned into a bi-national state instead of being a Jewish State. We want a Jewish State. We can absorb them but the State will no longer be the same State".

To put the matter simply, we might say that despite the fact that the Security Council resolution "affirms the need for an urgent settlement of the refugee problem" and despite the flexibility of this wording, I believe that it meant the right of return. Otherwise, the laid down principles of international law would fit cases selectively. Then we would fall into a double-standard system and into the same loopholes that impaired international law and called its credibility into question.

The Mechanism of Implementation

The above-mentioned principles are undoubtedly, well-established in international law. But Israel has never honored them. It always believed that it would get away with this. So, it jettisoned all the principles of international law and the resolutions of its organs. Since the Gulf Crisis has turned over a new leaf in international law, how can these principles and resolutions be enforced to the question of Palestine ?

The question is : Shall we follow the text of Paragraph 3 of resolution 242 ? Is the provision of 242 a must and binding ? In other words, was the failure of Gunnar Jarring - the envoy of the UN - Secretary General - in 1968, the end of the round, with no

need to renew this mission ? Or, must the Secretary General send a representative to the Middle East to make contacts with the concerned states to help in the efforts to bring about a peaceful and acceptable settlements based on the provisions and principles of this resolution ?

The envoy of the UN Secretary General has failed to implement Secretary Council Resolution 242. Does this deter the Secretary General from trying again ? Is it rational to abandon peace efforts because one or more persons have failed ? The question is : Is this the only way to achieve peace ? Or are there other ways not provided for in 242 or 338 ?

Does the mechanism of implementing international law mean just convening an International Conference ? And what kind of Conference will it be ? Is it similar to Geneva Conference of 1973 ? Or is it a conference sponsored by the United Nations ? Or will it be sponsored by the two super powers ? Or is it to be a regional conference with US presence ? Or is it a mixture of all those proposals ? Or is it still too early to convene such a conference which has to be well-structured and to take place at the appropriate time so that it may be fruitful, as the US claims ?

Israel discarded the first two proposals. It demanded direct negotiations with some Arab countries without pre-conditions. It also prefers to conduct those negotiations with countries which have no common borders with it, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The second part of this Israeli plan calls for elections in the O.T. with whom it will negotiate over self-government provided that it declares its detachment from the PLO.

It is my opinion that the United Nations which played a decisive role - albeit ostensibly - in the Gulf Crisis is requested to play the same role in the Arab-Israeli dispute. It should cease to be discriminative in international disputes. For aggression is the same. And occupation is occupation everywhere. And peace is peace.

United Nations, the established principles of International Law, only resort to the Palestinian people has to be the charter of the
Always, in light of what had happened in the Gulf Crisis, the

and resolutions after such a long time ;
resolution of this sort was adopted. Can one conceive such cases
established since Israel occupied the Arab territory, and not a single
no hope for such hypothesis. More than twenty three years have
such resolutions. Even in the aftermath of the Gulf Crisis, there is
I very much doubt that the Security Council would adopt any

territory, unless Israel withdrew from it unconditionally ;
authorizing the use of all possible means to liberate the Palestinian
Council, just as it did in resolution 678, adopted in resolution
Even if Israel rejected all these resolutions, would the Security

sea or land forces of members of the United Nations, ;
may include demonstrations, blockade and other operations, by air,
maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action
such action by air, sea or land forces as may be necessary to
would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate, it may take
Security Council consider that measures provided for in Article 41
accordance with Article 42 which stipulates that "Should the
blockade as it did in resolution 670 ; All that was done in
of resolution 662 ; Will it also couple the sea blockade with an air
enforce a naval blockade against it as it did against Iraq by virtue
If Israel rejected those sanctions, would the Security Council

diplomatic relations with Israel ;
with Israel ; Will it also ask those member states to cut off their
hosted, air, cable and wireless communications, totally or partially
UN member states to sever their economic relations, their sea,
UN Charter ; In other words, will the Security Council ask the
Security Council invoke Article 41 of the seventh chapter of the
forces unconditionally ; Should Israel fail to comply, will the
the Israeli aggression, and demand the withdrawal of the Israeli
To put it in simple terms : Will the Security Council denounce

and the resolutions and declarations of the United Nations and its various organs. To reactivate these organs and set them to work, I suggest the following.

International Peace and Security An International Organization, and Guaranteeing

A real peace in the Middle East is inconceivable with the absence of law. This requires the establishment of an international authority that ensures for international law the necessary and effective sanctions valid to all nations and crises. There is no argument that the best way to ensure the respect and implementation of this law of nations is to set up an international organization based on the principle of cooperation. This organization should rely on the world public opinion and, if need be, on military strength to deter aggression and stop it.

War should be renounced by the international community. Legal rules have to be crystal clear, with implied sanctions. Aggression, legitimate defense and the use of armed force have also to be defined. This international organization is to be concerned with mediation, enquiry and conciliation in the international disputes. It should lay down peaceful solutions to these disputes in such a way as to prevent the use of force or the threat of force in international relations. All states should comply with the conditions of settling disputes as drawn out by the various organs of this new international organization or the existing United Nations organization.

The Establishment of an International Judicial Organ

The International Court of Justice in the Hague is the successor of the Permanent Court of International Justice after World War II. It has its own basic statute that governs the work of

obligations. few - have no compulsory character. They are no more than moral obligations. But, in actuality, it had been demonstrated that the judgments of this court - though very its judges, its functions and its decisions.

international disputes.^(e) However, it is my opinion that this respectable judicial organ should be preserved, with an attempt to amend its basic statute to endow it with more credibility than it enjoys now concerning

In the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict we may turn to the International Court of Justice for advisory opinion of any disputed issue that is shrouded with ambiguity in the mind of any party to the conflict such as self-determination, settlements and sovereignty.

Creation of Permanent International Forces

All states have expressed their desire to have an effective United Nations. So, they have entrusted the Security Council with the main task of keeping international peace and security. To carry out its task, the Security Council has set up a staff committee to help it handle all forms of military operations. But I think that the formation of a permanent international force that would repress all forms of illegal use of force, and would deter any state seeking to attain unjust goals inconsistent with the UN Charter or the principles of international law, is the only means to compel such states to seek peaceful solutions to their disputes.

I am certainly not talking about UN forces to supervise a cease fire between two states, or forces to disengage warring parties, or peace keeping forces. I am talking about international forces in the precise sense of the term. Forces that would repress all forms of aggression. This does not mean the abolishment of all types of UN Peace-Keeping forces. Both are complementary.

assistance to achieve economic prosperity for all countries in the regional or international economic funds to offer economic

Therefore, it is obvious that what is required is the creation of

racial superiority or a mixture of all the above-mentioned.

They economic exploitation, foreign occupation, narrow regionalism,

Narrowing this gap is vital and urgent regardless of its causes, be

would remain a source of unrest and instability in the region.

greatest possible degree. Should this gap be allowed to persist, it

gap separating the peoples of the region should be narrowed to the

One of the lessons drawn from the Gulf Crisis is that the deep

Social and Economic Welfare

friendly relations among the warring parties.

Middle East will remove fear and will lead to a new era of

weapons. The elimination or reduction of all these weapons in the

of mass destruction such as nuclear, biological and chemical

is important, yet it is much more important to eliminate weapons

Though the elimination or reduction of conventional weapons

decisions of the international body.

organ and will remarkably bolster the degree of obligation in the

of the permanent International Forces, the international judicial

substantial reduction of these weapons will enhance the efficiency

international peace and security. This total disarmament or even a

East is vital to guarantee the ban of wars and to achieve

The elimination of all conventional weapons from the Middle

Total Disarmament

have lasted for so long.

occupation of Palestinian or other territories. Nor would occupation

such forces, been created, there would have been no Israeli

I do not think it needs a strong imagination to affirm that had

East. The spirit of doubt and fear will be removed and will be co-existence between the various systems and peoples of the Middle and human spheres' is the way for bringing about peacefully achieve international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural security' to promote friendly relations between nations' and to

We must state that the way to achieve international peace and proposals be considered and' properly' enforced. (10) current conditions prevailing in the region require that these romantic dream of hopes that may or may not be realized. But the these principles' in the wake of the Gulf Crisis' is no more than a international law or the context of the mechanism of implementing After all, what we have suggested, whether in the context of

fairness and the principles of international law. international disputes peacefully and in accordance with justice' empowered to maintain international peace and security' to settle Palestine cause. It is my opinion that the General Assembly be determinative finally in the international community and the the UN General Assembly and to give its resolutions a binding and Charter of the United Nations be amended to give more power to members of the Security Council. I therefore, suggest that the international peace and security' namely the five permanent may hinder the work of the international community for In view of the special nature of the Security Council which

Enhancing the Power of the General Assembly

might prevent or at least reduce international disputes. to the region would, at the same time, provide fertile ground that mechanisms that would bring about economic or social prosperity employers. Such funds or any other effective international of work or the rights of workers, their duties and the obligations of working class or in the context of social security or the conditions such funds will certainly have a tremendous social impact on the region and to help them out of their deprivations. The creation of

replaced by a spirit of cooperation if the proposals outlined here
are applied. Peoples should move away from war, and the weapons
of mass destruction. They should concentrate their efforts on
peaceful means to solve their problems and to honor the principles
of the international law.



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three-year-old Intifada locally, regionally and in the international and symbol Yasir Arafat, and also to most achievements of the 1991, founded the death-knell, or so it seems, to the PLO, its leader of Kufawi, and the war against Iraq in January and February

The Gulf crisis starting on August 2, 1990 with Iraq's invasion

1988/89.

symbol of modern (i.e. post-48) Palestinian nationalism since President of the State of Palestine. Arafat had in fact been the of the chairman of the PLO, Yasir Arafat, who was to become military defeat in Lebanon in 1985, was symbolized in the person Intifada against the Israeli occupation and organizing the PLO's

The new strength of the PLO, coming after only one year of

dialogue with the PLO.

supported Israel's rejectionist position saw itself ready to take up a Israel. Even the USA which up to that moment had shared and by the international community with the notable exception of both inside the Occupied Territories and in the Diaspora, as well as PLO's overwhelming legitimacy granted to it by Palestinian society

This compromise had only been possible on the basis of the

Middle East, created in 1948.

of Palestine and the recognition of Israel, the newcomer state in the 191 from November 1947, i.e. the renunciation of the larger part historical compromise: the acceptance of UN Partition Resolution state, the PLO had in fact shown itself ready for and capable of a peaceful coexistence with Israel. With the proclamation of this program, the establishment of a Palestinian state next to and in

In November 1988, the PLO came forth with a historical new

Dr. Helga Baumgarten

The PLO's Political Program and the Gulf Crisis

arens. Before trying to assess the room for political maneuver of the PLO in the post-war era, I shall take a closer look at the PLO's role during the months from August 1990 until February 1991, in order to establish the material basis for the PLO's loss of legitimacy regionally and internationally.

The PLO During the Gulf Crisis

From the very first day of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, the PLO embarked on the road of mediation :

"Since the outbreak of the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait in the Gulf region, the Palestinian leadership has been seeking to nip it in the bud ... The Palestinian leadership sought to contain and resolve this crisis through fraternal dialogue ... embarked on efforts with Arab leaders to find an urgent solution within the Arab framework ... and avert the danger of foreign intervention".¹

President Yasser Arafat, not less than Jordan's King Hussein, did not tire in his efforts to get the warring factions solve their differences peacefully. Still, the shuttle-diplomacy centered on Baghdad, Alexandria\Cairo, and Jeddah, did not achieve the desired results. King Hussein's so carefully orchestrated mini-summit in Jeddah, planned for August 4, failed just as badly as the desperate peace-making efforts of Yasser Arafat based on a proposed high-level Arab delegation to go to Baghdad for negotiations with Saddam Hussein.²

In spite of Egyptian assurances to refrain from an Arab condemnation of Saddam's attack against Kuwait (along the lines of the UN Security Council) until after the Jeddah-mini-summit, the Arab League meeting of foreign ministers in Cairo went ahead already on August 3 with its condemnation of Iraq's aggression and "asked Iraq for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces".³ The resolution was accepted with 14 votes in favor and 6 abstentions and rejections among them Palestine\PLO and Jordan.

The Arab Summit Conference, which convened in Cairo, after the Jeddah meeting failed to materialize, repeated on August 10 the condemnation of Iraq, confirmed all UN Security Council Resolutions taken so far (660, 661, and 662) and asked for an immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. According to the official Egyptian news agency MENA, the resolution was approved by a majority of 12 votes, two abstained (Algeria and Yemen), 3 voted against (Libya, Iraq, Palestine), and 3 expressed reservations (among them Jordan), while Tunisia did not attend the session.

What were the reasons for the failure of the mediation attempts of both the PLO's Yasir Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein? Obviously, at this point, with no access to official documents for quite some time to come, only informed guesses and tentative interpretations can be put forward, based on the most plausible conclusions drawn from the facts available so far. Published interviews with King Hussein on the one hand, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on the other, show that the two statesmen present rather contradictory accounts concerning the failure of the proposed mini-summit in Jeddah.

King Hussein had apparently gone to Baghdad on the understanding that a summit was to be held in Jeddah with President Mubarak, King Fahd, himself and -hopefully- President Saddam Hussein - whose approval to go to Jeddah King Hussein did get in fact during his talks in the Iraqi capital! - in order to solve the Kuwait-question peacefully. After having completed his mission in Baghdad, Hussein left Baghdad with the understanding that Saddam had "committed himself to a withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait". In fact, Saddam did announce an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait upon King Hussein's departure from Baghdad.

In the meanwhile, however, Egypt had on August 3 given the go-ahead to the official Arab League condemnation of Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. In the words of the Hashemite monarch:

for the two Arab League decisions from August 3 and 10, and the Mubarak, and later on King Fahd. This then was to be the basis extremely heavy US-pressure brought to bear first on Husain Fahem in their book on the Gulf Crisis, who report about his the account of events given by Pierre Salinger and Eric "an unfortunate premise" or "hasty decision". This, incidentally, mentions intimidations and pressures) and calls the Cairo-resolution when he refers to outside, i.e. above all US interference (he King Hussein himself gives the clue to a plausible explanation

reasons for the sudden Egyptian change of heart. seems to be a rather thinly veiled attempt to conceal the underlying Mubarak's presentation of the chain of events in early August the most important achievement of his mission in Baghdad. Rather, Mubarak of Saddam Hussein's readiness to withdraw from Kuwait.

It is as hard to think that King Hussein had failed to inform Mubarak concerning the mini-summit in Jordan.

would have misunderstood the agreements reached with President statesman and politician and it is therefore hard to imagine that he

Nobody can deny that King Hussein is an experienced

statement of August 3.

and consequently gave the green light to the Arab League Mubarak, considered the idea of the mini-summit to have failed agreement on principles on which to base this summit. Therefore, received Saddam's acceptance of the idea of a summit with no

Also, Mubarak wants us to believe that King Hussein had only summit? I was holding talks with a view to holding a summit".¹

newspapers rumored that Egypt had thwarted the summit. What between me and our brother His Majesty King Hussein ... some "there was absolutely no agreed-upon summit. It was simply talk

According to President Mubarak, however,

mini-summit".²

believe that this has probably destroyed the chance for a summit or a "Unfortunately, this resolution was forthcoming yesterday, and I

call by Saudi Arabia for US military assistance against a possible Iraqi invasion of Saudi Arabia.

If King Hussein was cornered badly by Mubarak's "stab in the back", things turned out even worse for PLO leader Yasser Arafat. After the first meeting between Arafat and Mubarak at the start of the PLO leader's attempted turn of "shuttle diplomacy" on August 4, i.e. even after the first Arab League statement of condemnation, both politicians agreed upon the need "to reach compromise solutions for the problem". Also, there was agreement not to "ask for any foreign intervention. The Arab leaders can find a solution to this problem without any foreign intervention".

At that time, this position was also supported in the Egyptian press where we find, as an example, the following commentary:

"The question ... is not one of condemnation or supporting one party against the other. Rather, it is an issue of fighting between two brothers ... therefore, it is necessary to wait so that the differences within the same family would not deepen ...".¹⁰

However, a first change in the Egyptian attitude towards the Palestinians is discernible, when the Cairo paper al-Akhdhar begins to attack "certain Palestinian elements, who gave their blessing to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait", referring to an alleged telegram sent to Saddam by the UNL¹¹ (United National Leadership of the Intifada).

On August 11, finally, Algiers Voice of Palestine reports on Arafat's proposal submitted to the Arab summit in Cairo, which, however, was apparently not put to a vote. Again, the PLO reaffirmed its position of an "honest broker":

"In its dealings and movements throughout this current grave crisis the PLO has been acting on the basis of the importance of safeguarding the unity of the Arab stance, Arab solidarity, and the achievement of an honorable solution that would safeguard the dignity of all and the rights of all parties, and not on the basis of alignment with one side at the expense of the other".¹²

According to Egyptian press reports after the summit, Arafat's proposal was rejected by the summit. Some papers at that point obviously felt justified to make a fool of the Palestinian leader. President Mubarak himself ridiculed Arafat when he dealt with the Palestinian proposal to the Cairo summit saying sarcastically: "How could Mr. Arafat's initiative be put to the vote when he took the floor and the next thing we heard him talking about was mediation in Afghanistan and Kashmir? ...".¹²

Mubarak obviously did not want to take Arafat and his diplomatic efforts seriously and even insinuated that the Palestinian leader had only wanted to delay a summit resolution.

The Egyptian stance in the Gulf Crisis seems to reflect a new division of the Arab world between a pro-American (Egypt, Gulf States, and - surprisingly - Syria) and an anti-American and allegedly pro-Israeli camp (Jordan, Yemen, Sudan and Palestine/PIO). Without being able in this paper to go into the details of US-policy in the Middle East, a few points are necessary in order to put the PIO's position, as well as that of Jordan, into perspective. If we follow the interpretation of Salinger and Laurent, the US from the very start of the Gulf Crisis took a very determined and aggressive stance against Iraq. This new interventionist policy in the Gulf region seems to stem from several roots and considerations, the most relevant of which should be listed briefly:

- A new US strategy directed against emerging regional powers most succinctly analyzed by Michael Klare.¹⁴
- The possibility to apply this strategy under the new post-cold-war conditions in the international arena, which gave the now uncontested superpower much more leverage and freedom of movement than before.
- An ever increasing US dependence on Middle Eastern oil coupled with a concern for a price-level in harmony with the requirements of the struggling US economy.¹⁵
- A very strong personal need on the part of President George

Bush and his entourage - very much related to the generation they belong to ! - to make up for the "disaster" in Vietnam and thus regain lost American confidence in its military strength and ability. - And last but not least a heightened sensitivity to Israeli apprehensions about the threat from the Iraqi military machine which had been communicated to Washington since the end of the Iraq-Iran war.

The US needed a maximum amount of support in the Arab world in order to go ahead with sending the Rapid Deployment Force into the region. Saudi Arabia had to be won over to allow the stationing of US troops; a counter-force to the ever more dominating power of Iraq had to be found and materialized with Mubarak's Egypt, to which the US could also add the arch-enemy of Saddam's Iraq, President Assad of Syria.

So far, hardly anything is known about the way in which Assad had been induced to switch sides over to the US. He probably reassessed the new international balance of power and calculated that for him more was to be gained from the US, and he arrived at this conclusion at the very moment when the US was very much in need of his support. Assad probably already gained control of Lebanon, and is now waiting to get the Golan from Israel as a reward for his position in the Gulf-War.

Where does all this leave the PLO, and also the Kingdom of Jordan? It seems safe to conclude that the US thought that it could dispense with both of them in the emerging confrontation with Iraq. Strategically, the US was not in need of them as it was of Egypt (Suez-Canal) and Saudi Arabia (land base). As to post-war settlements, it would not suit US interests to be indebted to the PLO and Jordan, possibly having to repay them with a Palestinian state, confederated with Jordan. King Hussein probably had to find out that much when he tried to negotiate with President Bush during his tour to the US in August 1990. And where the Hashemite monarch, the erstwhile staunch ally of the West had

Hardly !
failed, was there any chance for the "terrorist" Yasir Arafat ?

But before continuing in our assessment of the foreign-policy alternatives open to either Arafat or King Hussein in the summer and fall of 1990, it seems necessary to take a closer look at the months preceding the outbreak of the crisis in order to try and detect lines of development leading up to the realignment of forces in the Middle East after August 2, 1990.

Two events stand out in the first half of 1990 : The Arab Summit in Baghdad in May and the suspension by the US of its dialogue with the PLO in June. Both are closely related to the US-position in the Middle East conflict, towards Israel and towards the PLO, as well as towards Iraq and its growing military strength. Also, both witness Iraq's Saddam Hussein as a central player on the stage of the Palestine Question.

The summit had been called jointly by Saddam Hussein and Yasir Arafat, in order to :

- Deal with the intensifying Western attacks against Iraq and its build-up of military power.
- Discuss the Jewish mass emigration from the Soviet Union and into Israel.

The Bush Administration took the unprecedented step to send a message to the Arab Summit in which it urged the participants to behave and act in ways considered "appropriate" by the US government :

"We hope the leaders will avoid excessively ardent language and urge them instead to adopt a constructive approach which would reinforce the prospects for real progress toward peace. For example, we hope the Arab leaders will do the following : Express full support for the efforts of Palestinians and Egypt to hold an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo. Go beyond the positions adopted at the last summit in Casablanca (May 1989) by endorsing the concept of peace with Israel through negotiations".

present policy ... Regarding the threats against Iraq, the Arab states persuaded the whole world that the United States backs it in its international law have enabled Israel to persist in its attitude and states, and the independence of US efforts to make Israel respect and as well as political support which Israel receives from the United States and the United States, the amount of military and economic ... The Arab states are convinced that the strategic alliance between and their concern at the American viewpoint on a number of issues expressed their astonishment at the style in which it was formulated Secretary-General of the Arab League on 17 May 1980 and "Arab officials examined the American position communicated to the in polite but determined language :

the summit, the response of the Arab League on May 30 was kept heated arguments between "moderate" and "radical" participants of referring to it by name, would come forth from the summit. After

To end with, the US hoped that no direct criticism of its policy,

weapons".11

bacteriological weapons, and the 1962 protocol on chemical Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the 1975 agreements on "about the extent of Iraq's respect for its commitments under the

Also, US doubts were communicated

presence in the Gulf in support of our friends".

use of missiles and chemical weapons and its criticism of our peaceful "legitimate concerns about Iraq's ... irresponsible statements on the

However, the US raised

future Israeli attack" was qualified as "a meaningless charge".

and of launching a media campaign against Iraq in support of a the Middle East as a result of the reduced Soviet role in the region,

Finally, Iraq's accusation of the US "seeking hegemony over

emigrate from the Soviet Union and go to Israel.

US but also supporting the "basic human right" of Soviet Jews to Soviet Jews were free to migrate in "significant numbers" to the criticism of the role it had played in this issue, maintaining that

Concerning Jewish immigration into Israel the US rejected all

do not subscribe to the American view on this issue. Iraq is acting within the limits of its sovereignty and with a concern to enhance peace in the region ... The Arab states are astonished at the attitude of the United States - the first power to have used nuclear weapons during the Second World War - and its refusal to recognize Iraq's right to declare that it could use the weapons it possesses to respond to any new attack by Israel - which has acquired all types of destructive weapons, thanks to the direct assistance extended by Western States".¹⁸

The suspension of the dialogue between the US and the PLO in June 1990 came as a direct US response to a foiled guerrilla operation by the Iraqi sponsored Palestine Liberation Front led by Abu'l Abbas. In the eyes of the US administration, the PLO under Arafat had failed to meet its requirements of "condemning the operation, disassociating itself from it, and by also beginning to take steps to discipline Abu'l Abbas".¹⁹

Two patterns emerge from the two events :

1. The US was trying to impose its line of policy in a very direct way on the major Arab actor in the Middle East, from the PLO via Iraq to the Arab League as a whole.
2. Both, the PLO and Iraq, emerge as the two principal scapegoats in Middle Eastern politics - this despite the fact of Secretary Baker's strongly worded criticism of Israel only days before the suspension of dialogue with the PLO. It seems appropriate to remind the reader of Baker's position on the state of the peace process in the Middle East and the attributing of responsibilities for its stalemate. Apart from criticism of the PLO (guerrilla attack of May 30) and the Arab States (the positions held at the Arab Summit in Baghdad), it emerges clearly that Baker places the major responsibility for the failure of getting together a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians on the Israeli Government of Yitzhak Shamir :

"It's really very hard for us to understand, in the face, as well, of the fact that Palestinians from the territories ... are prepared to come to

other hand.

manifested in the Occupied Territories as well as in Jordan, on the mass-support for Saddam Hussein as the new Arab nationalist hero, and himself as a political leader on the one hand, and the growing meanness of press-attacks emanating from Egypt against the PLO further pushed in this direction by the growing militancy as well as

This challenge, so it seems, Arafat tried to exploit. He was

Saddam offered a challenge to both the US and Egypt."³³

to use his power, it seemed, to support the Palestinian cause ... powerfully new player in the regional balance of power, and ready security. And in recent months Saddam had been emerging as a "had become very dependent on Iraq for money, training and

This, in the words of Middle East analyst David Hirst, Arafat

to give this support sufficient weight in international politics.

to support the Palestinian position and capable and strong enough

chairman, Saddam Hussein emerged as the only Arab leader ready

Considering the enmity of Syria's Assad to the PLO and its

support to the Palestinians, countering US and/or Israeli pressure.

Arafat did not seem to be capable of or willing to give sufficient

PLO, spoke all favored and strongly defended by Chairman

moment in Middle East history. Egypt, the long-time patron of the

suspended its dialogue with the Palestinians at a highly critical

December 1988, had not said of. On the contrary, the US

Israel just formulated in a powerful way in November and

The PLO's readiness for peace, coexistence, and dialogue with

For the PLO, several conclusions seemed to impose themselves:

1-203-426-1414. When you're serious about peace, call us."³⁴

"Everybody over there should know that the telephone-number is however, widely forgotten sentence :

Baker concluded his remarks with the then classic, by now,

answer."³⁵

elections, it's hard for us to understand why we didn't get a "Yes,"

the table, and they were prepared to talk with Israelis about

What role did popular opinion in the Occupied Territories play in the formulation of PLO-policy ?

During the first days of the Gulf Crisis, a clear difference could be perceived between the official PLO position as honest broker, and popular opinion on the streets, where "Saddamania" was running high. Possibly, it is the telegram in support of Saddam sent to Iraq in the name of the UNLI, which best highlights these contrasting approaches to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Interestingly, the Egyptian press used this telegram (it has been impossible to determine how genuine it was or from which faction inside the UNLI it emanated) in order to start a vicious campaign against the PLO leadership whose actual position cannot have been a secret to them. Thus, it was Arafat and the PLO who had to take the blame for this telegram and were as a result accused of having taken sides in the conflict and of having betrayed the PLO's staunchest and most faithful supporters, with the Kuwaiti ruling family first in line.²⁴

No clear attempt of clarification on the part of the PLO was forthcoming, although the pro-PLO Jerusalem daily al-Fajr tried to explain the PLO's role of mediator and although Palestinian personalities in the Occupied Territories voiced their opposition in principle to any occupation.

It was to be Saddam's linkage-proposal, that proved the watershed in the Palestinian position in the Gulf Crisis. It seems therefore worthwhile to take a closer look at the text of this proposal which was broadcast on Radio Baghdad on August 12, 1990 :

"I propose that all issues of occupation, or the issues that have been depicted as occupation in the entire region, be resolved in accordance with the same bases, principles, and premises to be set by the UN Security Council, as follows :

First, the preparation of withdrawal arrangements in accordance with the same principles for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Occupied Arab Territories in Palestine, Syria, and

Lebanon, Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon, a withdrawal between
Iraq and Iran, the formulation of arrangements for the situation in
Kuwait, and that the timing of the military arrangements and related
political arrangements which must apply to all cases and in accordance
with the same bases, principles, and premises, taking into consideration
the historical rights in its territory and the Kuwaiti people's choice,
provided the implementation begins with the oldest occupation ...

Second, ... we propose the immediate withdrawal from Saudi Arabia
of U.S. Forces and the other forces that responded to its conspiracy -
they will be replaced by Arab forces whose number, nationality,
duties and location will be defined by the UN Security Council,
assisted by the UN secretary general. The nationality of the military
forces between Iraq and Saudi Arabia will also be agreed upon, on
the condition that the forces of the Government of Egypt, which the
United States used in carrying out its plot against the Arab nation,
be excluded ...".25

An overview of the reaction of the political spokespersons of
Palestinians in the Occupied Territories is revealing :

Fayyaz al-Husseini : "On the first day of the events we said that
we are against any occupation. We now believe Saddam Hussein has
placed the issue in the right context. It is not about Kuwait or
al-Sabah. People are now looking to him not just as a strongman
using his army but as a politician, using his strength in a positive
way".

Sa'ib Idrat : "I think it will be very difficult for any Arab leader
to reject this plan. Nobody can argue against it. It will certainly rally
the people as a whole now".26

With this last assessment, Idrat was to be proved unfailing :
There was practically no dissenting voice to be heard publicly in
the Occupied Territories. From the far right to the far left,
secularists and religious fundamentalists alike, all shared their
unflinching support for Saddam's "linkage". The Iraqi challenge of
the US, the traditional arch-enemy of Palestinians, only increased
this support. And without doubt, the American move of deploying

hundreds of thousands of US forces in Saudi Arabia left the PLO leadership little room for maneuver. In the words of David Hirst:

"What was just possible for Assad (i.e. "reneging on all that he had stood for hitherto, he threw in his lot with the Saudi Arabians and the Americans") has proved impossible for Arafat. Like King Hussein, whose fundamental predicament he shares, he has tried instead to seek an impossible middle ground."²⁷

Still, voices of warning were being raised by Palestinians in the Gulf, like PNF chairman Jawad Ghussein:

"It is not in the interests of the Palestinian people to stand with any Arab state against any other Arab state."²⁸

And the PLO leadership, in spite of overwhelming popular support for Saddam Hussein, pursued consciously and carefully its course of mediation and Arab reconciliation, as impossible as it appeared at times. But as King Hussein had predicted already in August, the extreme toughness and the uncompromising nature of the American challenge to Iraq proved fateful and led all involved down the road toward military confrontation.

It was to be the PLO's second in command, Abu Iyad, who tried to disentangle the PLO from impending disaster. According to Hirst, Abu Iyad feared already in the crisis that it was not Arafat who was exploiting Saddam Hussein, but rather Saddam who "was exploiting Arafat, and locking him into an embrace he would later come to regret."²⁹ Abu Iyad explained most forcefully the difficult Palestinian position in this crisis in an interview on September 11 with the Revue d'Etudes Palestiniennes. Finally, if we follow the argument of Pierre Salinger, it was Abu Iyad who provoked the first and probably only Palestinian confrontation with and challenge to Saddam's course in the Gulf Crisis: On November 16, Abu Iyad exploded against Saddam:-

"You say you want to help the Palestinian movement. You are destroying the Palestinian movement in Kuwait. You are destroying my family in Kuwait. They have all lost their jobs and are having difficulty in living". Saddam was outraged and had Abu Iyad taken

out of the office. He even wanted to throw him in prison but Arafat convinced him that that would be a mistake. The two men left Baghdad..."³⁰

On January 15, the day the UN ultimatum asking for Saddam's retreat from Kuwait expired, just one day before the US started its devastating war against Iraq, Abu Iyad was assassinated in Tunis, together with Abu Hui, another historical Fatah leader, and a third PLO official. And it was their death, that reunited PLO chairman Yasser Arafat and all remaining PLO leaders in the Tunisian capital, far away from the latest Middle Eastern battlefield.

Although the PLO undoubtedly had played a role in Saddam's decision to finally release foreign hostages held in Iraq until late in 1990, and although Arafat had seemed to see an imminent breakthrough in the crisis until the very last moment, the American-led attack of the anti-Saddam coalition against Iraq made PLO-diplomacy break down in shambles.

Palestinians driven to utter despair by an ever more oppressive Israeli occupation, inspired by their unrelenting struggle for independence, cheered Iraqi missiles fired against Israel; and PLO leader Yasser Arafat "asserted that Palestine and Iraq were standing in the same trench to regain Arab rights."³¹

In mid-February Arafat got carried away to defy all common sense when he posted in an interview on Jordan TV: "By Allah (i.e. I tell you that the day when I and my brother Abu Uday (i.e. Saddam Hussein) and Abu Abdallah (i.e. King Hussein) will pray at al-Aqsa is very soon." As already a year before, Arafat, on the occasion of Iraq's Army Day celebrations, had assured Saddam that "we shall enter Jerusalem with you".

It seems appropriate to recall David Hirt's interpretation of this scene from January 1990:

"It was pure Arafat. There is seemingly no limit to the lengths to which the man will go to ingratiate himself with Arab leaders, to play on their particular foibles - outright megalomania in this instance. With Arafat, of course, one should not confuse show

Sadham" as an illustration of how far he had thrown in his lot with business with substance. Nevertheless, in its extravagance, this

Still, it should be remembered that all through the war Arafat categorically refused to respond to Sadham Hussein's call on Palestinians to engage in terrorist operations against US-interests all over the world. Instead, he abided by his 1988 commitment to renounce terrorism, thus drawing upon himself Sadham's wrath and the accusation of having become a deserter in the face of US aggression.

The PLO After the War

At this point we should go back to the questions posed at the beginning of this paper. How critical has been the loss of the PLO's and above all of its chairman's legitimacy? What is the post-war room for manoeuvre for the PLO? Can peace be won for the Palestinians led by the PLO? Without doubt, the PLO's legitimacy has never been stronger within Palestinian society. Also, it can be safely assumed, that in spite of all Arab criticism of the PLO, its regional legitimacy has been more or less retained, although Arafat's prestige has been severely damaged - I doubt, however, if for good. After all, the PLO leader's resilience has become proverbial. And too many have already waved their good-bye to Arafat, only to negotiate shortly after with him as the irrepressible symbol of Palestinian nationalism.

Europe and the US will be the most difficult nut to crack in this respect. Nevertheless, both Europe and the US have not closed the door for good in front of the PLO. After all, US Secretary of State James Baker was interested in receiving a Palestinian delegation made up of supporters of the PLO and its present leadership during his post-war tour of the Middle East.

Still, some nagging questions remain to be faced and answered by Palestinians and their leadership. It has all along been the PLO's - and above all Fateh's - main principle not to get involved in inter-Arab or regional conflict, not to interfere and to ward off interference by others, to rely on the Palestinians' own strength and not to fall in the trap of Arab nationalism with its hollow ideology of Arab solidarity and support for the Palestinian cause. Fateh was historically the first Palestinian political organization not to have fallen hostage to Nasser's Arab nationalism and its empty promises. Instead, Fateh, led by Yasir Arafat, mobilized Palestinians around the slogan that they had to take their fate in their own hand. Undoubtedly, the Intifada proved the climax of this political course of self-reliance and independence, by then supported by all other Palestinian organizations.

However, paradoxically it might have been the Intifada with its unfulfilled hopes that Palestinians would be able to finally shake off occupation on their own, which opened the way once again, if only for a short period, for an irrational longing for a "miracle" from the outside, this time represented by Saddam Hussein and his "improved Scud rockets". Arafat, the most sensitive among Palestinian leaders to the dominant popular feelings of the masses in the streets, but their nightly cheers on the roofs in his own bombastic words.

The morning after turned out all the more bitter. Time has come, though, to get down to the stony ground of political realities which have to be faced sooner rather than later. Palestinians, wherever they are, do have to ward off the attacks against the political achievements they have made in the last twenty years. They have to defend their political entity (kiyan) represented and led by the PLO against attempts to have this very entity destroyed and done away with. They should recall their basic political program, their demand for a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel, and they should remind their present critics that it was the very leadership, now vilified from all sides, that has worked consistently since the early seventies to achieve precisely this goal.

At the same time, some tough questions should be asked - preferably behind closed doors - as to how the PLO-leadership's public image could be improved substantively, not only in form. Also, the loss of lives in the top echelon of the PLO-leadership seems to make some restructuring on the leadership level unavoidable. Among other things, it seems necessary to remodel the "institution" of "political advisor to Yasir Arafat" by giving the respective politicians both more rights and duties, but above all more responsibility as well as accountability.

Finally, while it seems safe to count on an impending series of Israeli political blunders which will not fail to come and gamble away a lot of the credit won by the Israeli state during the Gulf War - all, of course, to the detriment of the Palestinians under occupation! - no sound political strategy can be built on this. The PLO must present a new, step-by-step strategy to achieve its main goal of independent statehood. To stress today more than ever the need for UN-protection and an ever increasing role for the UN to play in the safeguarding of Palestinian rights and lives - a demand raised from the very first days of the Intifada - seems the most promising thing to do. (This should, incidentally, include the Palestinians in Lebanon, who seem to be under an immediate threat just now).

Finally, the proposals put forth by a number of Palestinians both here and abroad, to form a Palestinian government, should be examined very carefully. This might be one way to take some pressure off Arafat while at the same time to give more authority coupled with real accountability to other Palestinian "personalities" or "spokespersons", who until now have been largely reduced to official or half-official press-spokespersons.

Can peace be won after a lost war? Certainly, the chances for peace are here, the pressures to strive for it are more urgent than ever. The US and the coalition led by it obviously have not brought peace to the Gulf region, although they won a quick war. Palestinians, led by the PLO, certainly have lost a lot in the crisis

and the war, whereas their struggle to gain peace and independence
might just now have a realistic chance to get off the ground.



Footnotes

1. PLO statement on Gulf Crisis, August 19, 1990, quoted from: Journal of Palestine Studies (JPS) 19, p. 165.
2. cf. NBC Interview with King Hussein on Jordan TV, August 2, 1990, as well as CBS Interview with him, Jordan TV, August 6, quoted from Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) August 7, p. 32 ff. cf. Algiers Voice of Palestine, August 11, 1990, quoted from FBIS August 13, p. 6. cf. also the presentation by Salinger, in: Pierre Salinger and Eric Laurent: Guerre du Golfe : Le Dossier Secret, Paris, Editions Olivier Orban, 1991.
3. MENA, August 3, 1990, quoted from: FBIS August 6, p. 1.
4. FBIS August 13, p. 2.
5. cf. footnote 2. Press conference of President Mubarak, cf. FBIS August 8, 1990, p. 6ff.
6. FBIS August 7, p. 39, also 32.
7. FBIS August 8, 1990, p. 9.
8. Salinger/Laurent 1991, p. 124.
9. FBIS August 6, 1990, p. 18.
10. Ibid. p. 19, Cairo Radio, August 4.
11. FBIS August 6, p. 21.
12. Algiers Voice of Palestine, August 11, 1990, quoted from FBIS August 13, 1990, p. 6.
13. MENA August 11, quoted from FBIS August 13, 1990, p. 14. For press, cf. FBIS August 13, 1990, p. 7.
14. Michael Klar: Le Golfe, banc d'essai des guerres de demain, in: Le Monde Diplomatique No. 442, Janvier 1991, p. 1 and 18.
15. Hanns Mault: Alliance cooperation and conflict in the Middle East: The Gulf experience, in: Hanns Mault and Otto Pick: The Gulf War : Regional and International Dimensions, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989, p. 122-169.
16. Quoted from: JPS 19, p. 182.
17. Ibid. p. 183.
18. Ibid. p. 149-151.
19. Ibid. p. 186 ff.
20. Ibid. p. 184 ff.
21. Ibid.

22. David Hirst: Arafat damaged by his dance with the devil, in : Guardian Weekly, September 2, 1990, p. 9.
23. cf. FBI's August 6, 1990, p. 21 and Ibid. p. 40.
24. Ibid. p. 21.
25. FBI's August 13, 1990, p. 48-49.
26. Jerusalem Post, August 13, 1990, p. 1 and 8.
27. Guardian Weekly, September 2, 1990, p. 9.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid. cf. Abou Iyad: La position palestinienne, in: Revue d'Etudes Palestiniennes 37 (automne 1990), p. 2-10.
30. Pierre Salinger: Faltering steps in the sand, in: The Guardian, February 4, 1991.
31. Baghdad INA, January 14, 1991, quoted from FBI's January 12, p. 24-25.
32. Jerusalem Report, March 14, 1991, p. 26.
33. Guardian Weekly, September 2, 1990, p. 9.
34. Alain Gresh : Les Palestiniens dans le grand jeu, in : Le Monde Diplomatique No. 442, Avril 1991, p. 1 and 16-17.

Post-Gulf War Prospects: Assessing The Positions

Dr. Bernard Sabella

Introduction :

An examination of post-war prospects for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is in fact an assessment of the Palestinian position and its possibilities and constraints. In order to engage in such an assessment there is a need to consider the positions and interests of the various members of the American-led coalition as well as the positions of other key actors in the Middle East. Such consideration is essential in order to evaluate how these positions affect the Palestinian position.

It is expected that in the post-Gulf war era, the Palestinians will continue to adhere to the constants which have shaped their politics since 1967, and more specifically since December 1987 with the outbreak of the Intifada. These constants, based among other things on various UN resolutions, call for an end to Israeli occupation, the right to self-determination and a two-state solution. The Palestinian constants have been best formulated by the decisions of the Palestine National Council which convened in Algiers in November 1988.

Palestinian constants are not likely to change as a result of the Gulf conflict. But the Gulf conflict has had its repercussions on the practical preoccupations of Palestinians as well as on the means and methods of realizing their political constants in a changing Middle East.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the various positions, it is appropriate to note two points on the possible impact of the Gulf conflict on the Palestinian problem and the Arab world, in general.

many complicated matters, could perhaps guarantee that Palestinian position on the Gulf issue. This divergence of positions while the Arab-Israeli conflict are not likely to be as uniform as their. Besides, the positions of the various coalition partners, on the Palestinian people and their rights, for the past forty-three years, forum that has repeatedly passed resolutions in favor of the Council resolutions on Kuwait. This is the same international coalition received legitimization for its actions from UN Security from a Palestinian perspective, in the long run. The American-led overall post-Gulf war outlook may indeed prove more optimistic.

While these two general points tend to the pessimistic, the and its advancement.

not solve the urgency with which the Palestinians view their cause some time to come. If this state of affairs holds, it will certainly continue to be affected by the aftershocks of the Gulf conflict for the Gulf war. Accordingly, internal and inter-Arab politics may well need longer time to accommodate themselves to the outcome of Arab governments may learn to quickly close ranks, Arab masses the Arab world will suffer the consequences of this division. While stand. While this rift will eventually be healed, in the short run, coalition and those who have opposed it or adopted a neutral world between those who took active part in the American-led

second, the Gulf crisis has led to the division of the Arab

Arab-Israeli conflict.

regimes have taken precedence over their long standing role in the oil-rich regimes and the Realpolitik of the Egyptian and Syrian particular of that of Egypt and Syria, but that self-interest of the conflict is no longer on the political agendas of these states, in involvement in the Palestinian issue. Not that the Arab-Israeli immediate and vital interests that supersede their traditional oil-rich Arab regimes, as well as for Egypt and Syria, there are major one. The crisis and the war in the Gulf prove that for problem is one of the problems in the Middle East and not the

First, the Gulf conflict has confirmed that the Palestinian

rights and aspirations remain high on the agenda of the international community.

The positions of the various actors in the Middle East post-Gulf conflict serve as a context within which the Palestinian position can be freshly assessed and evaluated. Following then, are assessments of positions likely to affect the Palestinian position and its future prospects.

The American Position

US involvement in the Gulf is geo-political and strategic and not simply based on the desire to safeguard international legitimacy by implementing Security Council resolutions on Kuwait. The liberation of Kuwait is apparently a primary motive but as important is US determination to destroy Iraqi military capabilities and the threats that these pose to the oil-rich Arab regimes, to Israel and consequently to American interests.

The US military involvement in the Gulf will only partially achieve its goals if it is not supplemented by a political program to ensure vital American interests. This political program or "new order," as the Americans call it, would aim at maintaining the stability of the oil-rich Arab countries, and at the reconstruction of Kuwait and Iraq, post Saddam Hussein. James Baker, the US Secretary of State, has volunteered the funds of the oil-rich countries for the purpose of reconstructing the war-torn region. The American "new order" would also act, or so the Americans hope, to absorb anti-American sentiments among Arab and Moslem masses by proving that the US has no sinister intentions against the peoples of the region and that it acted on principles of international legitimacy.

While some segments of the Gulf masses, especially in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, may respond positively to American reconstruction overtures, it is hard to envision that the majority of

political, to make such search for peace feasible. as well the will of Israel to offer concessions, territorial and depend solely on the will of Arab states to make peace, it involves resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But such search does not clientele, in particular Egypt and Syria, in the search for a peaceful followed by the American policy makers is to involve their Arab nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. One approach likely to be to be supplemented by parallel arrangements of a comprehensive maintaining the new political arrangements in the Gulf will have policy makers, however, know well that, in the long run, consequences of the post-war situation in the Gulf. The American American policy makers' efforts will be taken up by the political will proceed according to their designs. Thus, in the short run, preoccupied to see that the political settlement in the Gulf region conflict. In the short and medium range, the Americans will be is likely to be constrained by countervailing currents, both the Gulf

Official US policy on the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict

economic and military aid amounting to billions of dollars. the US has been rewarding Israel, over the years, with substantial and without the US raising serious objections against it. In fact, resolutions on the Palestinian problem. It continues to occupy Arab implemented even one of the numerous UN Security Council standard is that with which Israel is favored. Israel has not support to wage a merciless war on an Arab country. The second Council resolutions is pursued through garnering international Moslems, in which immediate implementation of UN Security US for adopting a double standard: one, for Iraq and Arabs and region, on the other. The Arab masses will not easily forgive the hand, and to protect Israel and maintain its strategic edge in the maintain the Arab clientele of Washington in power, on the one involvement in the Gulf as a war waged against Iraq in order to

The Arab masses, throughout the region, will, for long, see US

the Gulf.

Arab masses will easily forget and forgive the US military role in

and Palestinians affiliated with it. Therefore, is likely to succeed without the involvement of the PLO as their sole legitimate representative. No peace initiative, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and elsewhere consider the pro-PLO. American policy makers know well that the institutions in the Occupied Territories even with those known to would continue to maintain links with Palestinians and their the eventuality of peace talks. At the same time, the Americans partners, may start looking for acceptable Palestinians to groom for American policy makers, with the help of their Arab coalition foreseeable future, not to engage in direct dialogue with the PLO.

The US Administration is determined, at least for the peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

need to apply more pressure on Israel in order to push for a viable war, could respond to these tactics by convincing Congress of the given the expected rise in President Bush's popularity, post-Cold political plan on the Palestinian question. The US Administration, delaying tactics, as they have done in the past to torpedo their own ally to oblige the US Administration and they may resort to neighbors. It is doubtful, however, that the Israelis will be in a war, to show flexibility on starting a peace process with their Arab policy makers who should use the opportunity presented, post-Cold by the Iraqi Scud missiles. This should be appreciated by Israeli saved Israel from worse consequences than the destruction inflicted Administration can argue that the war waged in the Cold war it is likely to apply on Israel. On the other hand, the US Administration will likely be constrained in the extent of pressure activities of pro-Israel supporters on Capitol Hill, the American Because of Israel's strong support in Congress and the lobbying shown restraint on retaining the Iraqi missile attacks on it, account of American internal political considerations and of Israel's political stand needed to start a serious peace process. This, on required political pressure on Israel to come up with the desired American policy makers, however, may not be able to put the

The US may consider involving Jordan in the peace process in spite of its anti-coalition stand in the Gulf conflict. Jordan, because of its past administrative and other links with the Occupied Territories could prove to be essential for the success of intermediate arrangements agreed upon in negotiations. In addition, King Hussein has taken a stand in the Gulf war that is in conformity with that of the Palestinians and other Arab masses. The US thus would attempt to cash on the political credit that the King has earned with the Palestinians. The American policy makers, however, know that any involvement of Jordan in the peace process would have to involve the Palestinians, and in specific the PLO, as well. Jordan cannot act alone in matters that touch on the Palestinians and their future, regardless of the kind of pressure that Washington may bring to bear on the King and on Jordan.

The Soviet Position

While the US posits itself as the key player, for good or for bad, in the Middle East, the Soviet Union is not altogether out of the political game following the failure of the Gorbachev cease fire and peace initiative in the Gulf. In spite of the disappointment in the overall Soviet stand in the Gulf crisis, the Arab countries can still look for the Soviet Union to support Arab causes and, in particular, the Palestinian cause. The internal political debate in the Soviet Union is likely to lead to increased Soviet interest and involvement in the Middle East region, if for no other reason than for the containment of conservative politicians and the military establishment by President Gorbachev. Soviet policy, post the Gulf war, is likely to stress the Soviet position on comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement and the implementation of UN resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Occupied Territories. The demand for holding an international peace conference could be renewed by the Soviet Union which has, for long advocated such a step.

The Soviet position is closer to the positions held by some Western European countries such as France and Italy, and diverges from the position held by Washington. Because of the need in Washington to bolster Gorbachev's position in the Soviet Union, the US Administration is likely to take the Soviet position on the Arab-Israeli conflict in serious consideration when planning the peace process. If no peace process takes place between Israel and the Arabs and if the Soviet Union is not involved, the likelihood that the Soviet Union would go back to its patron-client relationships with Arab states will increase. Soviet influence can thus be expected to be direct and indirect on the political developments in the Middle East post the Gulf war. For these reasons, the Soviet Union should not be discounted as an important factor in the new Middle East emerging after the settlement of the Gulf conflict.

The Position of the Arab Oil-Rich Countries :

The oil-rich countries and, in particular Saudi Arabia, would like to prove that their stand on the Gulf crisis and war was directed neither at the Iraqi nor at the Palestinian people. Their stand stems from self-interest and from the need to see legitimacy restored in Kuwait. The Saudis, like the Kuwaitis and other oil-rich countries, will not easily forget what they perceive to be the totally pro-Iraqi stance of the PLO. They are, therefore, predisposed to make any future financial support to the Palestinians contingent on changes in the Palestinian leadership or a dramatic turnaround in the policies of the PLO to suit Saudi interests and those of the oil-rich countries. They would certainly insist on atonement by the Palestinians for their stand on the Gulf conflict. But atonement by itself, will not be satisfactory as they will adopt punitive measures against the Palestinians residing in their countries. These may include massive deportations, imprisonment and stiff restrictions on the social and economic activities of Palestinians. The Gulf countries will also cease their unconditional financial support to Palestinians.

will be made selectively to encourage those elements which are possible. These incentives will be given with strings attached and Syrians, Palestinians and Jordanians to make a negotiated solution negotiations with Israel. They may, however, offer incentives to the is started, it is unlikely that they will themselves sit on the table of with the Palestinian problem. Even if a formal negotiation process

At present, the oil-rich Arab regimes are not overtly concerned

to openly normalize their relations with Israel.

political factors, the oil-rich states would not need much convincing conflict. If it were not for the religious factor and for internal the fact that the Palestinians had sided with Iraq during the Gulf may be reinforced in this favorable disposition towards Israel by publicly then in private. The Saudis, and the other oil-rich Arabs would be disposed to adopt a favorable stand towards Israel if not coalition partners by attacking Iraq, the Arab oil-rich regimes American-led coalition and that it did not embarrass the Arab

Given, however, that Israel was on the side of the

reigning dynasties in the Gulf region.

likely to create problems for the Saudi Dynasty as well as for other religiosity with Israel without a comprehensive settlement is King Fahd's peace plan of 1985. According to end the state of been strongly tied to the religious factor as is well illustrated in occupation of Jerusalem and the rest of the Arab territories has occupation of Islam's third holiest shrine. The Saudi policy on the that would implicitly or explicitly condone the continued Israeli holiest shrines may be questioned if they undertake political steps Mecca and Medina. Their credibility as the guardians of Islam's This is because the Saudis are the guardians of the Holy Places in the Palestinian cause or openly engage in peace talks with Israel. al-Haram al-Sharif compound in Jerusalem, cannot altogether drop than its service but the Saudis, as long as Israel occupies the problem. This interest may not amount, post-Gulf war, to more they need to continue and show apparent interest in the Palestinian order to bolster their positions, both internally and in the region.

But the Saudis and other Gulf states understand well that in

openly supportive of Saudi policies in the Gulf region and elsewhere in the Arab world.

The Palestinians therefore must not rely in any futuristic solution or political process, on the regimes of the oil-rich countries. While financially, Palestinians may continue to need the help of the oil-rich Arab countries, it must be remembered that these countries themselves need the political and religious support provided by their backing of the Palestinian cause. But clearly, the oil-rich countries need such support to a lesser extent now than was the case in the distant and immediate past.

The Israeli Position

The Gulf crisis brought to a halt the efforts of the Israeli Left at working out a political dialogue with the Palestinians. These efforts were intensified after the outbreak of the Intifada in December 1987 and the adoption by the PNC of its decisions of November 1988 favoring a two-state solution. The disappointment of the Israeli Left with the Palestinian position on the Israeli invasion of Kuwait and with the Palestinian sympathies in the Gulf war, cannot explain, by itself, the failure of the Israeli Left in producing tangible results for its dialogue with the Palestinians. The failure of the Israeli Left stems from a number of reasons: First, the limited support it has within Israel which translates into minimal influence on decision-making processes in the Israeli body politic. Second, the Israeli Left believed in dialogue with the Palestinians in order to :

a) Draw the Palestinians into accepting Israel's existence and encourage them to adopt a political platform in line with such an acceptance;

b) Signal to the Palestinians the willingness of the Israeli Left to acknowledge Palestinian rights within the framework of a peaceful settlement acceptable to the two peoples;

c) Use their dialogue with the Palestinians for internal political purposes as well as for enhancing their relations with West European and North American peace movements, given the Israeli government harsh policies in the Occupied Territories and

d) Attempt and influence the Israeli public and consequently the decision-making process into accepting the idea of a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians.

But the Israeli Left, similarly to Palestinians engaged in "small talk", overestimated dialogue as a tool to advance the peace process or to score political and other gains. Some Israeli leftists mistakenly thought that the fact that dialogue was going on would bring Palestinians to a more or less similar political outlook as that of the Israeli Left. These Israelis were naive to assume that the mere act of dialogue would erase the effects of decades of hostility between Israelis and Palestinians or that it would lead the Palestinians to dramatically reorient their political identifications with the Arab world.

The Gulf crisis and war proved that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict cannot be solved without considering its regional and international contexts. It would, however, be unfortunate if the Israeli Left now adopts the position that a regional settlement between Israel and neighbouring Arab states can, by itself, solve the Palestinian problem or necessarily advance Palestinian-Israeli peaceful co-existence.

An important component of the Arab-Israeli conflict remains the Palestinian predicament that is a direct product of Israeli occupation and policies. Electing to neglect the Palestinians and advising them not to call, as some Israeli leftists have done, can best be understood as an emotional reaction, not so much different from the emotional reactions of the Palestinians during the Gulf War. While emotions, both on the personal and societal levels, can be the basis for adopting and examining political stands, they can

never provide solid grounds for formulating policies that could withstand the challenge of transient developments or events.

The Israeli Left is likely to reevaluate its stand once the Gulf episode is settled. But this reevaluation would probably focus on internal Israeli factors and on new regional developments rather than on Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, as such. The Palestinian component of the conflict will be considered, but it is doubtful that this consideration would lead to a serious renewal of dialogue between the Israeli Left and the Palestinians.

In the broader Israeli political and military context, there was acknowledgement by numerous Israeli public figures that the American-led coalition has taken on the job that Israel may have had to undertake by itself in some years to come. In addition, there was the grim realization that Israel's future wars would be quite different from past wars due primarily to the technology of missiles and other sophisticated weaponry. The conclusion, in this regard, is that future wars would not spare the home front and that the civilian population would be directly exposed to the brunt of war. Besides the fact that Jews, who have gone through the horrifying experience of the holocaust, had to be exposed once again to the threat of possible chemical attacks in Israel itself has had socio-psychological effects on the Israeli public. While these developments could lead to the strengthening of a pragmatic political position which Israel could adopt, they could also lead to intensification of war-related preparations to absorb and develop ever more sophisticated weaponry. In this latter case, the hardline politicians would feel comfortable in continuing with their unyielding policies knowing that adequate preparations are being made for Israel's future wars.

The initial conclusions drawn from the Gulf war by Labour and Likud politicians differ substantially from each other. In fact, leading personalities in both parties find that the Gulf conflict had reinforced their previous positions on the peace process. Shimon Peres and Itzhak Rabin of Labour expressed views that stressed the

need for the initiation of a peace process with the Arab countries and with the Palestinians after the Gulf war. Pines, on his part, mentioned the role that Jordan could play in a peace process and the arrangements accompanying it in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Pines went as far as expressing the view that some Israeli territorial concessions are called for and that Palestinians and Arabs would have to reciprocate by offering concessions, on their part. The Gulf crisis and war thus seems to reinforce the assumptions upon which the Labour leadership has based its political view, especially since the mid-eighties, on the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although no specific mention was made of involving the PLO in the peace process, one can assume that the Labour Party will be ready to include Palestinians, acceptable to the PLO, in future negotiations. In adopting this stand, Labour shows political realism since there is no alternative leadership to the PLO in the Occupied Territories. But it is too much to presume that Labour is in a position, now, to agree to direct talks with the PLO or that it would go out of its way to accommodate the PLO, as an equal partner, in future peace talks.

The position of the Likud can be deduced from statements made by Itzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister. He has reiterated that Israel is willing to enter into negotiations with Arab states without prior conditions. However, Shamir expressed strong hardline position on the issue of the territories when he voiced rejection of any territorial compromise and vowed not to allow the opposition Labour party to be in a position to run Israel's foreign policy, post Gulf conflict. Shamir's vision for a peaceful settlement involves signing peace agreements with the Arab states while at the same time offering administrative arrangements in the Occupied Territories that will not acknowledge Palestinian political rights. This vision is shared by the dominant faction of the Likud with possible dissent by some members close to the political center and with strong opposition by the more right-wing members of both the Likud party and the government coalition.

The Foreign Minister, David Levy, seems to stick to the Israeli government election proposal of May 14, 1989. Like Shamir, he is willing to hold peace talks with all Arab states together with a delegation of West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians, unaffiliated with the PLO. Levy even entertained the idea that if Palestinian delegates are found who do not favor holding elections in the Occupied Territories then Israel would be willing to oblige them. This is one way in which Levy thinks of disposing of the election proposal since he knows well that elections in the Occupied Territories will result in the success of pro-PLO Palestinians. Levy, surprisingly, took on Ariel Sharon, the Minister of Housing who had argued for the outright annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in response to Palestinian identification with Israel. The more right-wing members of the Likud and government coalition have criticized Levy for wanting to renew the government's election proposal of 1989. They consider Levy's position as given the Palestinians another chance that they do not deserve.

Moshe Arens, the Defence Minister, identifies with Shamir's vision of future peace talks and like Levy, he would like to see local acceptable Palestinians in these peace talks. It seems that the Likud leadership believes that post-Gulf war, peace with the Arab states may be more possible. But the political position adopted by key Likud personalities indicates that they will not come up with pragmatic inducements to Arab states for these to seriously consider getting engaged in peace talks. Likud bases its future vision on ideological grounds that are not likely to be compromised especially if the prospects for a real peace rest primarily on some territorial concessions. The inclusion of Rehavam Zeevi of the transferist Mokedet party in the Israeli cabinet in February 1991 can thus be seen as a reinforcement of Shamir's position on possible peace talks with the Arabs. While the Israeli government will not adopt Zeevi's transferist policy, his presence in the cabinet will ensure that Shamir has enough votes in the Knesset to block any eventual peace plan that would require some sort of territorial compromise.

The Israeli government and the military authorities in the Occupied Territories are likely to use the harsh economic realities of 1991 to try and stop the Intifada and to find and groom acceptable Palestinians with whom to negotiate. Both Intifada-related incidents within Israel and Soviet Jewish immigration in 1990, have started the process of limiting the numbers of Palestinians employed in Israel. With the start of the Gulf war, the Israeli authorities deemed it opportune to initiate new measures such as total curfew on the Occupied Territories and the apparently permanent checkpoints on the northern and southern entrances of East Jerusalem, in addition to the Erez checkpoint in Gaza, to restrict the movement of the Palestinian population into Israel. The Israeli authorities, aware of the negative consequences that the absence of Palestinian workers had had on Israeli economic sectors, especially construction, adopted a new policy of granting work permits to Palestinians whose Israeli employer asks for them and provides their transportation back and forth to their workplace. This is at best a selective process which aims at restricting the number of Palestinians employed in Israel, at limiting their movement inside Israel and at giving an upper hand to the Israeli authorities in the Occupied Territories to issue work permits. It is expected that less than one-third of the Palestinian labour force of close to 120,000 that used to work in Israel will eventually be given work permits. The Israeli authorities have also granted licenses for a number of new Palestinian factories with the hope that these could absorb some of the workers not permitted to work in Israel. But the granting of licenses to factories has also a political dimension: preparing the ground, through economic "carrot and stick" measures, for the hoped for change in political orientation of some segments of the Palestinian population. The new Israeli economic policy in the Occupied Territories will, however, not succeed in quickly overcoming or erasing the obstacles with which the Israeli authorities have checked the development of the Palestinian economic infrastructure since June 1967. The Israelis may be too optimistic to think that their change of mind on economic matters would readily produce political results in line with their designs for the future of the Occupied Territories.

The Gulf war has confirmed both the Labour and Likud leaderships in their pre-war positions. What has changed, however, is the regional and international contexts within which both Israel and the Palestinians find themselves after the Gulf war. American-led coalition partners, or some of them at least, may now want to introduce new rules to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the peaceful implementation of UN resolutions pertinent to this ongoing conflict. US pressure on Israel may occur given that the US had practically saved Israel from the hazards of waging its own war against Iraq and a potential coalition of other Arab countries. On the other hand, the "good behavior" of Israel in not getting involved in the Gulf war is a point of leverage in favor of Israeli hardliners who would argue that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict should be based primarily on Israel's security and territorial integrity; i.e., no withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. The US will certainly not use force, or form a war coalition, in order to force Israel to comply with UN Security Council resolutions on the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It is unlikely, therefore, that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict would be addressed by the Americans with the same immediacy and urgency that they have shown towards the Iraq-Kuwait conflict. Israel, for the time being, will not come under immediate pressure from the US to move towards a comprehensive political settlement with its Arab neighbours and with the Palestinians. There will be a period of few months, at least, before serious efforts towards a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict would be started. This is enough to provide Israel with valuable time to formalize its harsh and calculated policies against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. This time of waiting will be used by Israel to try and lay the ground for the emergence of an acceptable local leadership that would be willing to sit with the Israelis at the negotiations table.

level as intermediary. The expectation, then, is that while men among the Palestinians in order to increase its political base. Post the Gulf war, however, Egypt may like to groom its own intermediary between Palestinians and Israel as it has done in the US and on Saudi Arabia. Egypt, however, can play the role of the Palestinian problem because of its dependence relationship on the Israel, it remains however to engineer, by itself, a solution to the impasse of the fact that Egypt has diplomatic relations with

maintained by its relationships with the US and the Gulf states. sticking to principles in all regional conflicts and is not simply Palestinian stand on the Gulf, the Egyptian government is indeed normalize relations with the PLO by showing that, impasse of the then one of the steps to contain them would be to directly developments in Egypt itself. If internal protest movements spread Egyptian position towards the PLO may be affected by internal movement to the Palestinian stand during the war. But this transition in PLO politics to suit the post Gulf war era as emerges in the leadership of the PLO and it not, a dramatic open with the Palestinians but they are likely to view favorably Egyptians are in a position to keep channels of communication the Saudis and the Americans with respect to the PLO. The dependence relationships, are not likely to dramatically differ from Egyptians, however, while sticking to principles and, given their the region and in specific to the Palestinian problem. The as one based on principles that apply equally to other conflicts in let the Egyptians tried to rationalize their stand on the Gulf crisis political (and economic) dependence on the US, on the other. And Egypt finds itself on the Gulf states, on the one hand and the directed against Saddam reflect the economic dependence in which Arab officials in the Gulf. These public stands while specifically partner, at times, than pronouncements made by Saudi and other pronouncements of Egyptian officials were often harsh and in fact during the whole of the Gulf crisis and war. The public

The Egyptian regime has adopted a strong anti-Saddam stand

Egypt's Position :

Egypt continues to maintain contact with the PLO it would want to create its own sphere of influence among the Palestinians whether within the PLO itself or in the Occupied Territories.

Jordan's Position

Jordan's stand on the Gulf crisis and war was based from the beginning on seeking an Arab solution that would ensure Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait through peaceful means. Together with this stand, it was clear that Jordan, its king, government and people, identified with Iraq and perceived US intentions as centered more on a military rather a political solution to the problem. The Jordanian stand was not received favorably neither by the US nor by some Arab members of the coalition, particularly Saudi Arabia. As a result, Jordan suffered from aid cuts and other direct economic sanctions applied to it both by the US and by the oil-rich Arab countries. In addition, the Jordanian economy suffered in its trade relations and oil imports as a result of UN sanctions applied on Iraq. Besides, the Gulf crisis denied Jordan vital remittances by Jordanian expatriates who used to work in Kuwait and other countries of the Gulf region.

Secretary of State Baker signalled in a statement to Congress that there was no alternative in Jordan to King Hussein in spite of US strong displeasure with Jordan's stand in the Gulf crisis. In Israel, concern was repeatedly expressed by leading government officials on developments in Jordan. At the same time, however, voices from within the Israeli government and the opposition Labour party have not excluded Jordan as a potential partner in any future peace settlement.

Given Jordan's difficult economic conditions and its relative political isolation in a post-Gulf war Middle East, it is likely that the Jordanian government would adopt a pragmatic and reconciliatory approach in the new politics of the region. This approach, however, would not be without its cost particularly in

the issue of peace talks with Israel. Jordanian-Palestinian stand, and if possible a pan-Arab stand, on of King Hussein would tend to favor a coordinated involved, on their own, in the peace process, the political acumen months. While the Jordanians will come under pressure to get with the PLO to take into consideration the developments of recent region, the Jordanian government may renew its 1982 agreement be far-fetched to suggest that, given the present realities of the especially Syria and Egypt, and with the PLO, as well. It may not but it will do this through coordination with other Arab countries, willing to play a more active role in the search for a peace process political terms. The Jordanian government, therefore, would be

The Position of Syria

possible talks with Israel and for internal and ideological political and elsewhere. It is, therefore, possible that the Syrians may want wide support among the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories present to formulate a Syrian-Palestinian position that will enjoy political stand. It is doubtful that Syria, by itself, will be able, at other Arab states and the PLO in order to come up with a joint for a peace conference, could coordinate its position with Jordan, solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Syria, however, in preparation of the Palestinians will advance the efforts to find a comprehensive Israel have suggested, to be one of the Arab Charges d' Affaires influence among certain Palestinian groups. Inviting Syria, as some respect to Syrian-Palestinian relations, the Syrians continue to have despite of American and Saudi enticements for them to do so. With inducements, the Syrians are unlikely to engage in a peace process, Israel. Unless the Israelis are willing to consider offering such in order to justify its willingness to engage in peace talks with want strong inducements such as the return of the Golan Heights, talks. But Syria, for internal political and ideological reasons would manner, the prospects of getting engaged in Arab-Israeli peace Syria, for once, may be in a position to consider, in a serious

into adopting positions that would help to advance peace talks with it is likely, therefore, that it will be used to press the Palestinians other help to the Palestinians. This help is politically motivated and will center on their continuing policy of offering financial aid and case of France and Italy. The role of the EC countries, however, Germany and those that will stick to their own position as is the position on the Arab-Israeli conflict as in the case of Britain and will fluctuate between those that will identify with the American economic help to the Palestinians. The political positions, however, The countries of the European Community are likely to offer

Such was:

and realistic approach in light of the developments following the return, they would like to see the Palestinians adopt a pragmatic to continue their support to the Palestinians and their cause put in resolutions on the question of Palestine. The French are expected opposition, as well, to the idea of Israel's implementation of UN American censures of outright PLO participation and American process. The problem for the French, however, is how to overcome emphasize the need for Palestinian participation in any peace resolutions on the question of Palestine. France is expected to including the possible call for the implementation of UN justification for the continuity of this independent French position involvement in the Arab conflict should be seen, in part, as a Palestinians in European and international circles. France's active provided in the past an important base of support for the and with its highest level consultations with Palestinian leaders, has position, with its acceptance of the international peace conference position with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The French

France has traditionally adopted an independent political

The French and European Positions

approachement with the Palestinians.

international developments at present, may not be pressed for a considerations. But the Syrian leadership, given regional and

Israel. As a result of the Gulf crisis and the perceived pro-Israeli position of the Palestinians some European countries may be more susceptible to channeling funds through the Israeli authorities to specific Palestinian institutions and groups in the Occupied Territories. Israel will certainly manipulate such a situation to ensure the advancement of its political designs and measures in these territories.

The Palestinian Position :

The Gulf war necessitates a reassessment of the Palestinian position both in the Occupied Territories and in the regional and international contexts. But such a reassessment should rely on how to realize the Palestinian Political Constants and not on compromising them. These political constants include:

1. A speedy end to Israeli occupation with all the oppressive and repressive measures affecting the whole of Palestinian society.
2. The exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights including the right to establish a state along the guidelines stipulated by the various UN resolutions since 1947.
3. The November 1988 decision of the Palestine National Council which accept a two-state solution and UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.
4. The Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In reassessing the Palestinian position, priority should be given to ordering the Palestinian house. This ordering should be done by Palestinians themselves without interference by Arab and other states. The reassessment should aim at answering the following questions:

- a) What are the pressing Palestinian preoccupations, in terms of society and economy, after the Gulf war?
- b) Where does the Intifada stand, both internally and internationally? How would the Intifada continue and what are the most effective means to realize Palestinian objectives, given the present realities?
- c) How would Palestinians respond to pressures and attempts to divide them politically? How should Palestinians address the Arab masses and peace movements in Western Europe and North America, post-Gulf war? What are the political options open to the Palestinian leadership and how can it use these to safeguard the historical rights of the Palestinian people?

As to the practical preoccupations of the Palestinian people, these should top the Palestinian agenda, post-Gulf war. Addressing the practical preoccupations of Palestinians, as they relate to society and economy, is a necessary step to ordering the Palestinian house. Ordering the Palestinian house could involve establishing or renewing political contacts with other states but the stress should be first and foremost on meeting the practical concerns and needs of the people. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate how the Gulf crisis has affected the needs of the Palestinian people whether those who were forced to leave Kuwait and other Gulf states or those who continue to be exposed to Israeli practices and oppressive measures in the Occupied Territories.

One possible approach to meeting the needs and preoccupations of Palestinians is to work out a socio-economic plan for the Occupied Territories. Such a plan would aim at centralizing public services, especially those provided in education, health and welfare. While the health sector may have witnessed, in the last three years, more coordination among its various organizations, this coordination should be furthered and advanced even to a higher level. All public sectors, serviced by Palestinian institutions, need to develop a common strategy and vision for the future. This cannot

economic, educational, health and other accomplishments while
found wherever Palestinians would safeguard and advance their
on the concerns and needs of the population. A formula should be
achieving their political goals as well as the effects of such tactics
effectiveness of Intifada tactics used since December 1987, on
Arab and foreign powers. The Palestinians need to weigh the
strictly internal purposes and not as a means to compromise with
developments. This evaluation should be done internally and for
and its tactics, given the new regional and international
occupation. Palestinians, however, should evaluate their Intifada
This is simply because the Intifada is the synthesis of military
As long as Israeli occupation continues so will the Intifada.

in fact the political will of the Palestinian people.
therefore, counteract such possible negative effects and will keep
and contradiction with each other. A solid socio-economic base will
emergence of various centers of influence that are in competition
Palestinians are likely to have negative effects that may include the
socio-economic base, political and economic pressures on the
and needs of Palestinians is a political act. Without a solid
In the final analysis, attention paid to the practical concerns

efforts will not add up to substantial development of our economy.
likely get to a situation of chaos whereby all individual or small
to direct our economic efforts in the coming few years, we would
demand. Without agreeing among ourselves on minimal guidelines
of meeting most of our internal needs together with some export
should strive to develop our own industrial infrastructure capable
We should not be satisfied with restoring up existing industries but
should center in industry and agriculture as well as in construction.
jobs for the thousands of unemployed Palestinians. These new jobs
development of the economic infrastructure in order to create new
As important in such a socio-economic plan should be the

determine the priorities of the various Palestinian institutions.
be accomplished if factionalism and other narrow criteria are left to

adopting tactics that will keep the political objectives clear to the population at large.

Some may argue that the best way for the Intifada to proceed is for mass-based participation to be renewed. There is, however, a problem with this argument since it may tend to neglect that the factors affecting the Intifada in its 39th month are definitely different from the factors that were present in the first few months of the Intifada. But it is correct that the highest consideration in any evaluation or assessment of the Intifada should be on how to keep it a mass-based movement. This consideration, however, should be addressed keeping in mind the economic and other pressures that are being applied on the Palestinians. Assessing the Intifada, in its 39th month, should be a calculated and objective undertaking which, while considering the different internal political and ideological stands, should also touch base with Palestinian masses and with their pressing concerns and realities. If this is not done in the process of Intifada-evaluation and assessment, we are likely to find ourselves operating in disharmony and with serious gaps in communication between the different segments of society.

The Palestinians should be aware that they are heading towards a period of intense political pressure that aims at discrediting them, dividing them and assigning them a peripheral role in any future political process in the region. This kind of political pressure constitutes a form of psychological warfare to get the Palestinians to feel that there is no alternative for them but to play according to the wishes and rules of the US, Israel and some Arab countries. However, James Baker in his upcoming trip to the Middle East will probably meet with a Palestinian delegation from the Occupied Territories. The British Foreign Minister, while expressing his willingness to bring in the Palestinians from out of the cold, does not specify the price of doing so. The Israelis do not want to talk except with "acceptable" Palestinians and some Arab coalition partners introduce "distinctions" between the Palestinian leadership and its people. All these attempts are pressure tools to emphasize the "powerlessness" of the Palestinians.

representatives of the Palestinians people and its will.

the Palestinians will be represented not by dignitaries but by genuine. Whatever the procedure adopted, it and when peace talks begin, international peace conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict, same principle and declared the need for convening an alone in adopting this position, other voices have expressed the should apply to another, as a matter of principle. France is not French pronouncements prove that what applies to one conflict of Palestine, provide comfort to the Palestinian people. These emphasized the need to implement UN resolutions on the question French President and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had

Third, the West-European voices, and in particular those of

to which they adhere.

continue to speak with one tongue passed on the political constraints see with respect to Palestinian representation, the Palestinians will what Washington, Tel-Aviv and some Arab capitals would like to and approve, if not be PLO members themselves. Thus, despite of representatives in any future peace talks need to have PLO pressing legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Palestinian consensus among the Palestinians that the PLO is the sole peace process cannot conclude successfully. Because there is a Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinians will be invited, otherwise, the

second, if a serious peace process is started to solve the

was involved since 1948, the Civil war being the latest.

of the failure of this treatment are the seven wars in which Israel their rights, as a people, were not secured. A convincing illustration peace if Palestinians were not included in the peace-making or it never succeeded in overlooking the fact that there could be no real many powers whether in the region or outside of it. This treatment

First, ever since 1948, Palestinians were treated peripherally by

three reasons :

psychological warfare: they should keep their cool on account of Palestinians should not be quick to respond to this

acknowledge Palestinian rights.

Governments, peace forces and others who are ready to express willingness and act to open and renew dialogue with actively pursue a peace solution in the region and they should political position of Algeria, 1988. Based on this, they should

The option left for the Palestinians is to hold on to their

response was disappointing particularly from the US.

As reflected in the PNC decisions of November 1988 in Algeria, the the Palestinians adopted a pragmatic and realistic political position realism and pragmatism in order to achieve their goal. Even when have sought justice but others wanted them to show moderation, people, their society and rights. The Palestinians, time and again, fact that the creation of Israel was at the expense of the Palestinian on the wrong horse, every time. The problem lies in the historic after affliction, this state of affairs is not due to "Palestinian petting

While the Palestinian people has suffered, since 1948, affliction

Conclusion

for the eventuality of Arab-Israeli peace talks.

nucleus for the adoption of a common Arab stand in participation states, and in particular Jordan. This coordination should be the available to them in terms of political coordination with other Arab

More specifically, Palestinians should study the options

Arab world.

reconstruction and reintegration of both the Gulf region and the Arab and other states in order to contribute to the efforts of Occupied Territories. These contacts should also mend fences with these countries to continuing interactions against Palestinians in the on their political constraints and in order to alert the governments of Asian and African countries in order to explain their position based Palestinians need to resume their contacts with Arab, European, have to sit still and let the ball rest in the court of others. The

Keeping cool, however, does not mean that the Palestinians

Palestinians should stress that they seek a peaceful Middle East and that they are open to ideas that would guarantee that a future Middle East will be one of stability and prosperity for all of its peoples, including the Palestinian people. This message of peace should be at the center of the Palestinian political position and it should highlight Palestinian rights and aspirations. Flexibility by the Palestinians should be shown with respect to intermediate territorial arrangements that should, in the long run, guarantee their rights and aspirations.

A new Middle East cannot emerge without the active involvement and participation of the Palestinians, irrespective of plans by big or regional powers. This fact should reinforce the Palestinian in their position and yearning to have a just and lasting comprehensive settlement that would, hopefully, usher the region into a new era of peace, justice and stability.

Post Gulf War Assessment : A Palestinian Perspective

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi

(I) Preface

As the decade of the 1990s began we witnessed Mikhail Gorbachev initiate reforms in the Soviet Union, "Perestroika" and "Glasnost", the winds of change sweeping Eastern Europe, the collapse of Communist domination in many countries, the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989), the reunification of Germany and the debate over the future superpower deterrent relationship. These events and their repercussions have burst on to the world scene. News of one event may have overshadowed others. Ordinary people became confused by these and their causes and effects, especially with the "changes" in the world's balance of power. It seemed as if people are acknowledging that a new chapter in world history has been ushered.

The Gulf crisis and later the war, came as the first phase of this new chapter. Unexpected changes have taken place in the structure of regional and international coalitions, although unlike past crises in the Arab region, ruling regimes and leaders remained unchanged and untouched.

The United States led the largest world coalition under the umbrella of international legitimacy (The UN Security Council). It might be true to say, "had the coalition not been undertaken under UN Mandate, it would never have existed"⁽¹⁾. It might also be true to say that "the Vietnam Complex is over, both in terms of the American national psyche and everyone else's perception"⁽²⁾. As one American expert said; "The danger that lies ahead is not in under-estimating American power before the crisis, but in

overestimating it after the crisis"(3). Finally, the performance of President Bush in taking decisions leading the coalition and winning "Desert Storm" in the Gulf, makes one wonder how long he can keep the "coalition" together and continue to build the new world order?

As for the Soviet Union, it was not a member of the coalition, nor did it take part in the military operations. It chose to lead the political battle through diplomatic channels and its new relationships with Washington, Paris and the other European capitals, as well as through its traditional relations in the region and with Iraq. However, the Soviet Union could neither fulfill the short-term and the long-term goals to which it aspired, nor could it forge a new alliance with those who opposed the war and were still outside the sphere of Washington's influence or who showed solidarity with Iraq.

With the end of the war, the Arab world enters a new era. Months or even years may elapse before its waters calm and its affairs, although they are high on the agenda of many a world capital, are settled. This is a moment of opportunity may soon pass, or other events might occur unexpectedly thus pushing Middle East issues down on the world agenda. The new reality in the Arab region is that there can be no return to the status quo ante. It also means the beginning of "change" in the Arab psyche which has been shaken to its roots as it dived into the Gulf war.

The Western countries of the coalition will prove that they have learned nothing from the war, if they do not recognize and acknowledge the inseparable connection between the various problems of the region(4), even though the image may sometimes appear otherwise. In addition, they should recognize the effects of any event in the Arab world on Arab masses. Consequently, the self-interested priority should be in solving problems in which all parties, without exception, have an important role to play despite the current desire of some to bypass or drop a certain party or to find an alternative to it.

anticipated or desired for the post-Cold War requires a review of
The starting point then for projecting a picture of what is

different attitudes and interests of rulers in the Arab region.
them, despite the political borders separating them and despite the
religion, Arab identity and the deep rooted connection between
These two factors are greatly influenced by geography, history,
differ in perception from that of the Western mind and culture.
extent be captive to the Arab mind and culture both of which
domestic, social and political changes. This "change" will to some
will also witness more divisions while moving towards far-reaching
long or short. They will be fraught with hardships and losses. They
Their geographical area may expand and their duration may be
of "change" will go through a grey area for a transitional period,
formulating post-war society within a new context. The challenges
which these three factors meet could be the logical first step in
may converge or diverge. But the search for a bottom-line on
decision-making and directing the changes. Two of those factors
involved parties in the region will be the moving factors for

The needs, interests and desires of the directly and indirectly

international alliances.

than one capital in the world through new regional and
education whose early stages are being formulated now by more
within the limits and framework of a new all-encompassing
party to the Arab Middle East "house", in which it will participate
society. The second alternative for Israel is to become part of or a
deeply rooted fear which oppresses the thinking and behavior of its
this in the form of the unending journey of the Jew; with the
local and regional wars are being. Israel will continually pay for
upon which all reasons and justifications for the continuation of
Tunis and the land of the Imbissas) and so continue as the be
(South Lebanon, the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights, Entebi
remain a testing ground for small wars and modern west
changes untouched. Israel has an option. Its first alternative
present status quo and to go through the rapidly devel

As for Israel, it does not have the luxury to stay put w

As for Israel, it does not have the luxury to stay put with the present status quo and to go through the rapidly developing changes untouched(s). Israel has an options. Its first alternative is to remain a testing ground for small wars and modern weapons (South Lebanon, the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights, Entebbe, Tunis and the land of the Intifada), and so continue as the peg upon which all reasons and justifications for the continuation of local and regional wars are hung. Israel will continually pay for this in the form of the unending Journey of the Jew"; with the deeply rooted fear which obsesses the thinking and behavior of its society. The second alternative for Israel is to become part of or a party to the Arab Middle East "house", in which it will participate within the limits and framework of a new all-encompassing equation whose early stages are being formulated now by more than one capital in the world through new regional and international alliances.

The needs, interests and desires of the directly and indirectly involved parties in the region will be the moving factors for decision-making and directing the changes. Two of those factors may converge or diverge. But the search for a bottom-line on which these three factors meet, could be the logical first step in formulating post-war society within a new context. The challenges of "change" will go through a grey area for a transitional period. Their geographical area may expand and their duration may be long or short. They will be fraught with hardships and losses. They will also witness more divisions while moving towards far-reaching domestic, social and political changes. This "change" will, to some extent, be captive to the Arab mind and culture both of which differ in perception from that of the Western mind and culture. These two factors are greatly influenced by geography, history, religion, Arab identity and the deep rooted connection between them, despite the political borders separating them and despite the different attitudes and interests of rulers in the Arab region.

The starting point then, for projecting a picture of what is anticipated or desired for the post-Gulf era, requires a review of

the historical background to the crisis of the region, the role of major parties, and the Palestinian file.

(2) Historical Reminiscences

During World War I, the Arabs and the Jews sided with the Allies and fought with them. Each party received contradictory promises and pledges (McMahon 1915, Balfour 1917). The representative of the Arabs (Prince Faisal) and the representative of the Jews (Haim Weizman) at the First International Conference (Versailles 1919), failed to employ the Fourteen Points, put forward by the American President Woodrow Wilson, to achieve the aspirations of their respective parties, despite the recommendations of the international Committee of Inquiry (King-Crane). A new geo-political map, which divided the Arab World, was imposed. It fulfilled the interests of the Allies and curbed the national aspirations of Arabs and Jews alike. The "New World Order" was formulated while obviously ignoring "the right of self-determination of peoples", which was a major point in the American President's 14 points. The Americans were not yet ready for the idea of the "New World Order", or for having a role in it. Consequently, they voted not to join the League of Nations. The Arab region came under new headings of international legitimacy such as Trusteeship and Mandate. The Arabs and Jews entered a sphere of international, communal and self-challenges. Neither the Arabs nor the Jews were to participate in reshaping the map, nor were they to be able to amend its lines through principles of international legitimacy such as self-determination, independence, sovereignty or freedom. Furthermore, Arabs and Jews, failed in their joint dialogue to agree on a common formula for the map of the region under such titles as unity, union, or self-government for the Jews in part of Palestine in unity with the Arabs in one state. The allies continued to disregard the cries emanating from the region in the form of revolutions and uprisings by Palestinians, as well as revolutions in Syria, Iraq and Egypt.

It is noteworthy that the Arab-Jewish "dialogue" continues in Arab and European capitals in an effort to explore positions, views and possibilities of common understanding or agreement, sometimes without the intervention of a third party, but more often with such an intervention⁽⁶⁾.

In the interval between the two World Wars, there was a serious effort to resolve the Palestine Question and the Arab-Jewish conflict. The St. James Conference of 1939 was convened in London with full participation of the Palestinian legitimate representatives (The Arab Higher Committee), the Jews (The Jewish Agency) and the Arab countries (Foreign Ministers).

As a result of this conference, the representative of international legitimacy, Britain, issued a "White Paper". It called for the establishment of one Palestinian State for both Arabs and Jews. It also restricted Jewish immigration. However, the White Paper was not implemented. It was replaced by the "Partition" resolution under the umbrella of international legitimacy (UN. resolution # 181 of 1947).

During World War II, the Arabs stood divided between the Allies and the Axis. In the aftermath of the war, a new international map was drawn up . Again, the call of the then U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt for shaping the New World Order in accordance with the principles of the four freedoms, was ignored. Instead, the 1945 Yalta Conference formulae were adopted for the region in accordance with the interests of the Allies and under the umbrella of new international legitimacy (the United Nations), namely: bilateral treaties, and joint Alliances. As the world entered the Cold War era and in the wake of the Axis crimes, especially against the Jews, the Zionist movement began to reap the fruits of world sympathy and to utilize it for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This sympathy was exploited politically, economically and financially as well as manpower, to build up the initial infrastructure of the Jewish state under the umbrella of international legitimacy, that is to say under the auspices of the

British Mandate as conferred by the UN was finally realized in May 1948. It is worth noting that dialogue between Arabs (Palestinians, in particular) and Jews, continued, even during times of conflict with a third party, i.e. Britain. Meetings were held in Arab and European capitals and sometimes in Palestine itself. These meetings took place with the participation and encouragement of a third party. However they bore no results as far as the relations between the two sides were concerned.

The Gulf crisis (2 August 1990 - 28 February 1991) was certainly a significant event for the region, in view of the membership, roles, and interests of the coalition countries led by the United States and in light of the gravity of the challenges posed by Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the possibilities which encountered the decision-makers in Washington and Moscow. During this crisis, the Arabs were divided : some fought alongside the coalition, others rallied against the war, and others showed solidarity with Iraq. Meanwhile, the Jewish State received Iraq's missiles without retaliation. By doing so, Israel regained the sympathy of the Western World. Israel utilized this sympathy, investing it politically, economically, financially and in terms of public opinion. It emerged, temporarily, from the isolation imposed on it as a result of its oppressive policies and practices against the land and people of the Palestinian Intifada. Palestinian-Israeli meetings and the dialogue which had been going on throughout the occupation both inside and outside and which had assumed an advanced framework and method during the first three years of the Intifada, came to a halt following by the "divorce" declared by the Israeli Left on the first day of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, 2 August 1990.

The Palestinians experienced unique suffering during the Gulf war. They neither fought alongside the coalition as some Arabs did, nor could they realize a political breakthrough by bringing the Arabs to agree on an "Arab solution" to the Gulf crisis. The Palestinians were not alone in this. Some Arab leaders, such as king Hussein also sought such a solution. Indeed, the Palestinians,

despite any argument to the contrary, lived as an interacting part in the Arabs' most modern crisis. They are part of the "linkage equation" in the problems of the area (Iraq's initiative of 12 August 1990). They are part of the society and civilization of the Gulf, with about half a million Palestinians living or working in various Gulf States. They are dispersed throughout the Arab world affecting it and being affected by it. Lastly, they suffer the "new" Israeli policy of dealing with the Intifada. This involves such restrictions as the separation of towns, villages and camps from one another and from Jerusalem. The Palestinians are exposed to the blows of occupation against their economic achievements with the aim of limiting or paralysing their economy. Israeli policy during the war brought tightened restrictions on their movement, travel and work. Arrest campaigns against Palestinian workers were doubled. Moreover, the Palestinians witnessed the physical assassinations of their historical leadership abroad (Abu Iyad in Tunis on 15 January 1991) and "political assassinations" of the leadership inside (distorting and deviating statements by Faisal Hussein, and the arrest of Dr. Sari Nuseibeh). Israel has also carried out a new policy of disengagement between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Israel according to an Israeli timetable and agenda. Israel began to prepare the ground for more than one political scenario and included extremist Rahvaam Ze'evi in the Israeli government. Under these circumstances, some Palestinians took to the roofs of their houses to applaud and cheer the Iraqi missiles reaching Israeli cities. It seemed as if they were expressing their own understanding of the logic of "Linkage" between the issues of the area. The missiles and bombs that were hitting Baghdad and other Iraqi cities, and the bombs, gas and bullets that hit Palestinian towns, villages and camps during the Intifada, were to some extent counterbalanced by the hitting of Israeli cities. Yet other Palestinians were quick to call their Israeli friends and acquaintances to enquire about their safety. This was also an expression of their understanding of the logic of "linkage" between the life and future of human beings in this region, be they Palestinians or Israelis, and of their rejection of the logic of war as

a means to solve their problems and the logic of devastating the homes of others to build a future on their debris.

With the end of the Gulf War, the various capitals of the coalition countries led by Washington, the capitals of the anti-war countries and those of Arab solidarity with Iraq, all came face-to-face with the "challenges" presented by the aftermath of the war, specifically the new World Order as perceived by the U.S. President Bush and his two doctrines: democracy and security with the fall of geographical borders. Would the interests of the coalition countries, and those of Washington in particular, allow for the international legitimacy framework to continue operating as before, even at the risk of uniform application ?

(3) The Attitudes of the Major Parties

A-The United States

The insurmountable obstacle that has been plaguing US Foreign Policy in the Middle East for the past four decades is manifested in two ways :

firstly, its inability to bridge the gap between the "declaration" of policy, and its application. This gap between declared principles and actual practice has grown even wider over the passage of time(7).

Second, its inability to reconcile or to adopt one of two alternatives of diplomatic action. The first option, i.e., the comprehensive formula, means having a plan to solve all major conflicts in the region in an integral manner. The second option is the step-by step formula. This means the start of a slow-paced process, thus moving from one issue to another after dividing the problems of the region, in the hope that overcoming or scoring a success in one step may pave the way towards a solution or towards softening the next step(8). Throughout this process, US presence is essential in the region, thus diminishing if not obscuring, the presence of other world powers.

The agenda of previous US administrations has contributed to mercurial ups and downs for the problems of the Middle East. Sometimes such problems were written off the agenda altogether. When we evaluate the policies of these administrations towards the Middle East, we notice that they were predominantly characterized by "imbalance" between the comprehensive outlook and the partial one. In addition, there is a double standard in dealing with the region's issues.

In the 70s, the declared policy of President Jimmy Carter called for a "Palestinian Homeland". But the actual policy resulted in the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel without the participation or consent of the Palestinians. The "comprehensive" outlook raised the issues of human rights, whereas the applied policy was ineffective before the outrages committed by the Israeli military government against the Palestinian people, its land and rights. The policy of a step-by-step formula revealed that it left the door open to the perpetuation of the problems of the region. In addition, the parties to such a solution have exploited and distorted US policy's texts. Menahem Begin emptied the equation of land for peace of its substance: he only withdrew from Sinai. Meanwhile the other two partners, Washington and Cairo, could not do anything to rectify or stop that deviation⁽⁹⁾. The double standard in dealing with the issues took the form of massive aid from the U.S. to Israel without taking into consideration the deteriorating living conditions of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and in the Arab countries hosting them.

During the Reagan administration, the implementation of US policy took the form of actual involvement in the Lebanese crisis. The "declaration" of policy came later in the initiative of the 1st September 1982. The option of the solution by stages, and the plan of US Secretary of State George Shultz, on 6th March 1988, revealed how impotent and fruitless they were in the face of rejection by the concerned parties⁽¹⁰⁾. The gap between the "declaration" of policy and its "application" was also clear in the attitude of both the White House and the State Department

towards Israeli settlement in the Occupied Territories. Both of them stated that Israeli settlement is illegitimate and illegal. Moreover, the State Department has annually reported Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights in the Occupied Territories. US policy "application" however, is represented in financing Israeli settlements and supporting Israeli practices by using the US veto at the UN. Security Council. The "implementation" of US policy came in the form of imposing Washington's famous conditions for engaging in dialogue with the PLO which finally started on 14th December 1988. The comprehensive formula required that all parties accept those conditions (UN resolutions 242 and 338, renunciation of terrorism, and recognizing the right of all countries in the region, including the Israelis and Palestinians, to live in secure and recognized borders). Based on this comprehensive formula, the UN Secretary General would be able to call all involved parties and the five permanent members of the Security Council to convene in an International Conference to find a political solution based on the principle of "land for peace".

Things have not changed during the first three years of the Bush administration, whose policy is a methodical continuation of the previous administration. The gap between declared principle and actual practice has continued. An example of this is President Bush's three-point plan announced on April 4th, 1989: the importance of Israel's security, the ending of occupation in the Occupied Arab Territories and the realization of Palestinian political rights. The implementation of those three points took a completely opposite direction. How could the security of one country or a group of countries in the region be guaranteed while arms are flowing from all the capitals of the world into that region ? Washington participated in this competition for arms, if not in directing and encouraging the participants in it. How could the Israeli occupation of Arab territories be ended while the US vetoes UN Security Council resolutions and recommendations, especially recently, when the international body saw fit to send an enquiry commission to look into the Rishon Letzion crime against Palestinians of 20th May 1990 ? The US also introduced

amendments to the UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israel for murdering Palestinians in the Haram El-Sharif in Jerusalem on October 8th, 1990. Thirdly, how could the Palestinians achieve their legitimate political rights when they are deprived of the simplest form of human freedom ? Thousands of them are behind bars. Others are beyond the borders. They are denied freedom of thought, education and expression. Their institutes are closed, their press censored, their movement, travel and work restricted. Money is meagre and its sources shut off. Even the option of candidacy and election, if any, has to be channelled through the occupying authority. Their leaders and representatives are denied an entry visa to the US to address UN Security Council and urge the world body to put an end to these Israeli measures.

The US gap between policy and practice grew even wider when President Bush characterized Jerusalem as an occupied city⁽¹¹⁾. At the same time his administration finances plans and programs for Israeli settlements and remains silent in the face of Israeli practices to Judaize the city of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the White House did not interfere with the decision of the US Senate that considered Jerusalem as an eternal and united capital of the State of Israel.

In addition to all of this, we have James Baker's formula as put forward in May 1989. The Secretary of State, addressing the leaders of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), demanded Israel relinquish its dream of greater Israel and its claim to hold on to the Occupied Territories. He also added that Israel must reach out to the Palestinians. By contrast, the "implementation" of this "declared" policy involved the suspension of dialogue with the PLO following the incident of Abu el-Abbas on a Tel Aviv beach on the 1st of June 1990. Another example of such contradiction was Baker's five-point plan of October 1989 to push forward the peace process. No "implementation" has taken place because the US Secretary lost interest after Israel's rejection

and obduracy. However, he left Israel his phone number to call him when it was willing and/or interested.

Is there any reason to believe the US will act any differently with regard to its latest initiative? On 6th February 1991, James Baker put forward his new five-point plan in which he called for the resumption of the peace process between Israel and its Arab neighbours and between Israel and the Palestinians. This declaration was reaffirmed by President Bush in his address to a Joint session of the House and Senate on 6th March 1991. President Bush called for a comprehensive solution grounded in UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 ; the principle of land for peace ; and the security and recognition of the state of Israel, at the same time that the Palestinian legitimate political rights be guaranteed. He also called for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

B-The European Community (EC)

The EC's desire and initiatives to find a political and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine issue go back to the early 70s.

The EC positions were ahead of those of the rest of the world community. The EC initiatives were based on principles in line with its mutual and common interests with the Arab area and with Israel. They were also in harmony with the developments, events, attitudes and moves of decision-makers at regional and international levels. The EC has been careful, through its initiatives, to express its role and position as an independent power on the international arena. At the same time, each European capital expressed its freedom and independent views in adopting the mechanism it deems fit to implement the broad lines of a European Middle East policy, the European-Arab policy and the European-Israeli policy.

The European initiatives were based on the principles of implementation of resolutions 242 and 338, the need to end Israeli

occupation of Arab territories, and the recognition that a just and lasting peace should take into consideration Palestinian legitimate rights (statement of the European Foreign Ministers, November 6, 1973)⁽¹²⁾.

In 1974 West Germany was the first EC country to recognize the principle of self-determination for the Palestinians. Its leaders were among the first European officials to meet with the PLO leaders. In 1974, Yasir Arafat met, in Geneva, the former West German chancellor Willy Brandt and the Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky in their capacity as representatives of the Socialist International. The German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt confirmed West Germany's support of self-determination for the Palestinians in 1981⁽¹³⁾.

The EC reaffirmed its positions toward the Middle East issues and the Palestinian question in various statements, particularly the Venice Declaration of June 13 1981. On February 23, 1987, the EC issued a statement which reiterated its support for an international peace conference to be held under the auspices of the UN with the participation of the parties concerned. The EC has also welcomed the acceptance by the PNC of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for an international conference, which implies acceptance of the right of existence and security of all states of the region, including Israel (Declaration by the EC on 21 November, 1988). The EC welcomed the Israeli government proposal of May 14, 1989 for elections in the Occupied Territories. The Europeans viewed elections as a contribution to the peace process, part of a procedure towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict. Their position has been that the elections should include East Jerusalem under adequate guarantees of freedom. No solution should be excluded and the final negotiations should take place on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, based on the formula of "land for peace" (The Madrid Declaration on 27 June 1989).

In the context of these comprehensive views on the conflict in the region, the EC called upon the Arab countries to establish normal relations of peace and cooperation with Israel. In return, it asked Israel to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination (The Madrid Declaration on 27 June, 1989).

Since the beginning of the Palestinian Intifada in December 1987, individual capitals of the EC states have expressed sympathy and solidarity with Palestinian demands and rights. Even those most cautious in expressing their attitudes, such as Britain, moved to record, on more than one occasion, their support for the Palestinians. On May 2, 1989 the French President Francois Mitterrand received Yasir Arafat at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

All this indicated an improvement in relations. In the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, this process has regressed. The EC and the European leaders have found themselves in a complex situation and faced with more than one test for the "declaration" of priorities as to their interests and relations.

As regards US- European relations, Europeans need to answer one question: To what extent can European policy maintain its independence, to say nothing about its role as a partner in the international equation, and avoid the role of a mere follower of Washington in the light of Washington's decision, right from the outset of the crisis, to bear the full extent of international responsibility and to take the lead in demanding an unconditional surrender by Iraq ?

Europe has had to choose between two trends or to link them. The first is the trend set by the position of Britain, the second by France.

Britain enthusiastically followed the US position throughout the Gulf Crisis. It called for strong measures, not only with the aim of implementing UN Security Council resolutions calling for a total

embargo on Iraq, but also to punish Iraq and its leadership for "raping" Kuwait which had been under British protection not long ago.

France, on the other hand, adopted a more independent stance perhaps in part due to the legacy of General Charles de Gaulle who believed it was part of France's destiny to develop a special relationship with the Arab world⁽¹⁴⁾. Moreover, France's position is influenced by its proximity and close relationship with its neighbours in the Arab Maghreb, the majority were opposed to the war in the Gulf. Furthermore, besides the influence of about 4 million North Africans living in France, Iraq was foremost among the Arab countries in trading with France, especially in purchasing arms⁽¹⁵⁾.

Between these two trends, the EC found itself facing a new threat: that the UN might become a "tool" for serving US interests. The EC was surprised by the unexpected structure of the coalition and the divided Arab world, represented by the Damascus-Cairo-Riyadh and Sana-Khartum-Amman axes. In between the 2 were the Palestinian people, and leadership both inside and outside the Occupied Territories and outside. This division came at a time when the EC had been keen on enhancing Western-Islamic and European-Arab relations.

Finally, one must bear in mind that the EC has a special relationship with Israel and with American and European Jews with their traditionally strong influence in the economy, finance and media. This special relationship is represented in the balance of trade : the EC buys about 30% of the total Israeli exports and it provides Israel with about 50% of its total imports⁽¹⁶⁾.

In the interval between the beginning of the Gulf Crisis and the outbreak of the war, France, Italy and Spain tried to find a political solution to end the crisis. They issued a statement during their summit meeting between 15-18 December 1990 that "guarantees that Iraq would not be attacked if it withdrew from

Kuwait". But the idea receded as President George Bush warned of the need to maintain a "fixed" and united European position within the coalition led by Washington⁽¹⁷⁾.

As for the Palestinian issue, the EC continued to adhere to its previous positions. It reaffirmed the call for an international conference and for backing the efforts of the UN Secretary General to protect the Palestinians. The EC promised to double its aid to the Palestinian people by financing development projects in the Occupied Territories, raising financial support to \$13 million in 1992⁽¹⁸⁾.

In another European initiative, the Foreign Ministers of the "Troika" (Holland, Luxemborg and Italy) announced their full support for Moscow's search for a political solution and urged the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The "Troika" considered Iraq's initiative on February 15, 1991, which was rejected outright by Washington, as "positive and important"⁽¹⁹⁾. France (Francois Mitterand) kept seeking the formulation of an independent and balanced stand until a few hours before the outbreak of war. On 24 September 1990, the French President, in his address to the UN, called for "the democratic option for the future of Kuwait". He added that all the countries in the region should "respect the minimum of human rights". And he called for an international conference to solve all the problems of the region⁽²⁰⁾.

In a third attempt, France and Germany accepted, and Italy supported, Soviet President Gorbachev's plan on 22 February 1991, that "Iraq will comply with Security Council resolution 660 and will begin withdrawing" (from Kuwait). The French Prime Minister Michel Rocard declared that Moscow's Plan "meets the conditions for peace in the region". The former Algerian President Ahmad bin-Bella revealed that he personally was pursuing French-Iraqi negotiations in Geneva and that the basis of the announced Soviet Plan was the agreement of the two sides in Geneva. But Washington disregarded the Soviet Plan. Iraq rejected the last minute French initiative for "withdrawal in return for convening

an international conference". Thus the military option became inevitable⁽²¹⁾.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the EC continued to work as an independent party in the political equation. It wanted to show that it was still capable of taking independent initiatives, parallel to the U.S. position, but not necessarily contradicting it. This has been despite differences over procedural details that sometimes surface and make things appear as if there are contradictions and differences. These tensions point to two possible outcomes for Europe : pinning hopes on a greater European role or reducing the importance of the European role to the point of "contempt" to show that the "European statements" are no more than hollow ones.

The EC agreed with Washington's position as stated by President George Bush in his speech before Congress on March 6, 1991. It reiterated almost the same phrases in "asking Israel to give up land for peace". The "Troika" of EC Foreign Ministers repeated this stand in their statements during their visit to the area in early March 1991⁽²²⁾.

What is noticeable, however, is the convergence of the European and American views in levelling sharp criticism against the PLO and Yasir Arafat's leadership. Early in February 1991, the EC decided "not to make any contacts at high levels with the PLO". Even Germany, which was among the first European countries to recognize and support Palestinian legitimate rights and whose leaders met with Yasir Arafat, stated after the war, through its Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Gensher, that, "the Palestinians are still an important party to the dialogue in the Middle East, but not necessarily the PLO"⁽²³⁾. Bush's statements to the Arab press on March 8, 1991 stressed this "criticism" by saying that "Arafat betted on the losing horse at the wrong time and in the wrong place". He added that there will be no dealings with the PLO leadership at this stage while emphasizing that "there are good people in it". Continuing this pattern of American-European criticism, US

Secretary of State James Baker stated in Cairo on 11 March 1991 that the US had "suspended" dialogue with the PLO and that the PLO knows what is required of it in order to renew dialogue. The Italian Foreign Minister, Gianni de-Michelis, on the other hand, stated that Italy regarded the question of Palestinian representation as something that belongs to the Palestinian people. But he added : "We are waiting for Mr. Arafat to take a clear position after the Gulf crisis"(24).

Between the two positions, the one that "criticizes" the PLO leadership and does not seek to cooperate with it at the present time, and the second which calls for non-intervention in the issue of the political representation of the Palestinians while asking for "clarifications" if not the adoption of a new position, a third view has emerged in Europe. It calls for "something new in the new era". This was revealed in the statement of the Dutch Foreign Minister, Hans Von Brook, while addressing a group of Palestinians that met with the Troika in Jerusalem on March 7, 1991. He said : "The Palestinians cannot be denied the right to choose their leadership but they should realize that the matter will be complicated when they confine themselves to one choice"(25).

The European position departs from that of the US in identifying the mechanism for a political solution. The EC has continued to ask for an international conference for peace. France (Mitterand) sees the possibility of holding a number of international peace conferences on the Middle East. The Troika Ministers reiterated this position during their meetings with Palestinians in Jerusalem. The Foreign Minister of Luxembourg stated that "the EC has been calling for an international conference to be held under the auspices of the UN, for the past ten years". The French Prime Minister (Michel Rocard) reiterated this position during his meeting with Bush in the White House on March 10, 1991, but was careful not to leave the door open for different views on the role of his country. He added that "France is keen on cooperating and working together with the US to achieve a political

solution ... and to provide the mechanism for Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and that France and America are two close allies"(26).

In the light of this, it can be said that the Europeans are cautious in pronouncing an independent European view. They are also careful about the contribution of Europe's role in the shaping of the New World Order and the New Regional Order.

The Europeans express their involvement in two directions. The first is in the direction of the political issue, reaffirming and holding to the declaration of basic principles regarding the Palestine issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The second direction is the economic issue, by expanding the volume and extent of financial and technological aid, as well as investments in the development of the Middle East.

The European role at this stage is that of a partner of the U.S. which is careful to play the politics of consent. Both will share in the formulation or even the implementation of the new equation and will be involved in forwarding ideas and agreeing on broad lines and distribution of roles. This was emphasized by President Bush's statement following his meeting with the French Prime Minister on 10 March 1991. He said "France is a principal party and is of extreme significance and has special knowledge of and interests in the region".

A European "ally" could be strong or weak. And a European "partner" could be agreeable or disagreeable. But the importance of the "ally" or "partner" depends on their willingness to leave the other party free from commitments and obligations. Or they may leave the other party alone to draw up plans, make decisions and implement them.

The Palestinians, more than anyone else, are concerned that the Europeans maintain a strong role. They are interested in dealing directly with Europe. Hence their quick replies to questions coming from Italy, Spain and France. The Palestinians, moreover,

continue to welcome the economic role of the EC. The PLO is expected to be lenient in its position when it stresses that the EC should comply with its recommendations. The Palestinians will "listen" more to European proposals. This often develops into an "understanding" or "acceptance" of some European ideas aimed at finding a new Palestinian equation. Such an equation would include the idea of a "homeland and state", or the willingness to play a role in the game of political manoeuvring when facing the Israeli initiative for "elections" in the Occupied Territories. This means that Palestinians are not hiding behind such phrases as "rejection" but are accepting the challenge of wrestling with a policy that will not result in total loss for them or a full victory for their rights and needs.

Palestinians will maintain their contacts with Europe and intensify their meetings with European officials "inside" and "outside". This will restore confidence in these relations, not because of the importance of European-American relations at this stage, or for the hope that Europe will assume a major role in the current or future political scenario or, finally, out of a desire to obtain economic and financial aid. What the Palestinians are trying to avoid is being left alone in the arena, without a friend or ally, and thus becoming an easy prey to others who are now more powerful.

While the European role is based on the political formula "land for peace" and the implementation of UN resolutions 242 and 338, the European capitals have varying positions as to how this policy should be achieved.

France, under President Francois Mitterrand, believes that the establishment of a homeland for the Palestinians should be part of the new world order in the Middle East. This can be achieved, according to France, through an international conference or a regional conference or a conference for security and economic cooperation in the Middle East, like the Helsinki Conference of 1975 in Europe. The ultimate goal is to bring the Palestinians and the Israelis to direct negotiations. The French stress their support

for the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, as well as the need for an independent Palestinian role.

Italy and Spain share the French position regarding the establishment of a homeland or independent statehood for the Palestinians alongside Israel. A comprehensive political settlement, they believe, should be achieved through the UN, with the same vigour that UN resolutions on the Gulf crisis were implemented (statements by the Foreign Ministers of Italy and Spain in mid-March, 1991). The two countries do not want to get involved in the details and nature of Palestinian representation. However, they are awaiting "clarifications" from the PLO leadership and are perhaps eager to see a "new position" adopted by Yasir Arafat(27).

Holland, Luxemburg and Belgium have retreated from their previous support for the PLO and Yasir Arafat and are calling for another option. They have also displayed interest in proposals made by the Israeli Labour Party and the Shamir plan of May 15, 1989, which was re-endorsed by the Israeli government in March, 1991.

Britain has even gone further in its dealings with the PLO. It has joined the US in criticising the PLO and urging it to "correct", if not change, its policy, while showing interest in dealing directly with Palestinian leadership from the Occupied Territories. Britain has made no decision vis-a-vis an international conference. It is waiting for "suitable" circumstances and elements, depending on the latest developments in the Arab region.

Germany, once again, is involved in its past. On the one hand, it provided the US with financial and political aid during the Gulf crisis whilst on the other many Germans were condemning the Gulf war. Germany has again slipped into the "Guilt Complex" which has governed its behaviour and decision-making since the end of World War II. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany apparently have not released the country from this complex. The Germans share the British view of a "joint

Arab delegation for negotiations". Such a delegation would include Palestinians together with Jordanians and/or Egyptians. The confederation thesis is given priority as the mechanism for an international peace conference.

C-The Soviet Union and Eastern European

It is premature to judge the political role of the Soviet Union, in the light of the historical developments and "new thinking" in the Kremlin. While Soviet leaders are absorbed with their own internal crises and have therefore been absent from the international scene for some time, one must not under-estimate the political influence of Moscow.

Leaders in the US and the West want to see continued Soviet participation in the new power balance. President George Bush has officially admitted that the Soviet Union has "legitimate interests" in the Arab Gulf⁽²⁸⁾. France is also encouraging Moscow to participate while Germany, for its part, is maintaining that the new world order will become de facto only when the Soviet Union is given an equal part and role in discussions over international issues.

Most of the initiatives for "change" in the last years have come from the Soviet Union. The "detente" perspective, a kind of agreement on regional issues, has paved the way for relaxation in superpower realtions which has prevented confrontation between Moscow and Washington.

The new thinking in Moscow gives priority to the national interests of the Soviet Union as a state and a society. It moves away from raising and adhering to ideological slogans. The Soviet Union advocates dialogue with all parties and sees that settlement of regional conflicts is an important objective, to be achieved through the pursuit of a political path leading to a climate of peace and world stability⁽²⁹⁾.

A key result of the new thinking in the Soviet Union is that Soviet foreign policy displays a new style of independence, despite the fact that it has taken second place to the priorities of domestic policy. The flexibility of movement and the multiplicity of alternatives in Soviet foreign policy have been reflected in a more relaxed approach to Soviet involvement in international affairs, giving it more choice as to whether or not to take up certain issues.

In the Middle East, the Soviet Union has improved its relations with Turkey and Iran. It has begun to establish diplomatic relations with the Arab Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia⁽³⁰⁾. It has resumed its contacts and dialogue with Egypt and Libya and seriously renewed relations with Jordan without drastically disturbing its traditional relations with Syria and Iraq. The Soviet Union began to talk to the Palestinians and Arabs about the need to reach a political solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It asked the Palestinians to take the initiative of recognizing the state of Israel and negotiating with it as a breakthrough to achieve "victory" for the Palestinian Intifada and to speed up the process of a comprehensive political solution through an international conference, attended by all parties concerned, to be held within the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union opened the gates for emigration of Soviet Jews and reopened the channels of contact with Israel. Meetings were held between the Foreign Ministers of the two states. Israeli officials visited Moscow and diplomatic relations at consular level were established. Moscow also lifted restrictions imposed on the channels of communication between the Soviet Jews living in Israel and those who remained in the Soviet Union. The "revival" of relations between the countries, and the citizens thereof, especially when there is a religious and cultural connection, will create interests in both directions. Israel is no longer talking about its fear of Moscow and Soviet diplomacy. Soviet immigrants have regained their confidence in the motherland. It has revived projects and ideas for continuing

human, cultural and even political relationships; and expanded the sphere of mutual influence, as well as the competition and contrast between the relationship of US Jews with Israel and the relationship of the Jews in and outside Israel with the Soviet Union.

Some Palestinian and Arab circles considered the results of the new thinking in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a serious challenge to Arab and Palestinian interests and as a departure from the fixed traditional attitudes and automatic support they had known from a strong ally over the years. The Soviet Union and most East European countries severed diplomatic ties with Israel in the wake of the June 1967 war. But they had not rescinded their recognition of it. Many communist parties in the Arab World began to look for a new frame and title for their party organizations. The Palestinian Communist Party declared (Sulaiman an-Najjab on January 31, 1990) the Party's decision to abandon Marxist ideology due to internal considerations as well as the changes and policies that have taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Other Palestinians and Arab circles considered the new thinking as an opportunity for Palestinians and Arabs to come to grips with the challenges of the 90s: "they cannot ask for fixed policies in a changing world". They are not entitled to demand that the Soviet Union and East European countries do not resume diplomatic relations with Israel. This is so because they themselves declare their acceptance of Israel's existence and call upon Israel to negotiate with them, as shown in numerous resolutions taken by Arab and Palestinian meetings starting with the Fez Summit in 1982 and ending with the 1988 Intifada Summit in Algeria.

Despite the attitude of these two groups, those who criticize, and those who consent to and understand the new thinking, the Palestinians and Arabs are moving to intensify "dialogue" with the Kremlin, to explain the uniqueness and the dangerous dimensions of Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel⁽³¹⁾. In other words, the

Palestinians and the Arabs have to deal with the new thinking in the Soviet Union in order to remove the threat to their present and future, and not to create a void.

One of the most serious issues for the Palestinians has been Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel. The Palestinian position, in the light of the new thinking in the Soviet Union, has been based on "dialogue". First, the Palestinians have said that they are not opposed to a person's right to return to or leave his country. This is an absolute right which must also include the Palestinians. Second, they are not against opening the gates for the emigration of Soviet Jews or others. But this emigration should be organized and reciprocated as other countries follow suit. The emigres should be given the right to choose their destination and not led to a specific place. Third, the Palestinians are demanding that the Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel should not be at the expense of Palestinian rights and interests. These include residence, work and mutual resources. Fourth, the Palestinians are strongly opposed to the settlement of Soviet Jews on the land of Intifada, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These are Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the international community, through the UN and Security Council, have rejected Israeli attempts to change the status of these territories.

Moscow has welcomed the Palestinian and Arab statements and continued the official and popular dialogue. It has asserted its support for the political and legitimate rights of the Palestinians under the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. It has also supported the call for an international conference to be attended by the PLO on an equal footing with the other concerned parties. Moscow has seen to it that the PLO remain informed about its political initiatives in international affairs, especially in the Gulf Crisis. It also coordinated with the PLO leadership at all stages in the exchange of information and in negotiations. The PLO welcomed this formula of relations and considered it as a natural extension of its alliance relationship with the Soviet Union.

This is why the Soviet Union has not criticized the PLO or demanded explanations for what it did as some countries have done since the Gulf War. Palestinian circles expect the Soviet Union to maintain its role in the post-Gulf war era and to insist that the PLO leadership be a party to and a full and independent partner in the proposed political equation. It continues to consult and coordinate with the PLO. It would also use dialogue to convince other parties of the impossibility of bypassing, or dropping the PLO, or even of dealing with an alternative to it.

The burden and responsibility of renewing relations with Eastern Europe and the renewal of the "tools, faces, and lines" of communication are awaiting a quick Palestinian initiative before it is too late.

D-Israel

Since the end of 1987 (9 December), almost four years prior to the eruption of the Gulf Crisis, the Palestinian Intifada has succeeded in reimposing the Palestinian problem on the everyday political agenda in Israel. In addition, the Intifada has also succeeded in drawing the attention and sympathy of public opinion in many countries. The Intifada's message has been, and still is, that Palestinian struggle does not aim at destroying Israel. Rather, it aims at ending Israeli occupation and at achieving Palestinian freedom and independence in a state alongside that of Israel.

However, Israel remains unable to respond to the Intifada's message positively. The question remains: How can the Palestinian issue be solved? Israel is a divided society. Its social, ethnic, religious, cultural and economic structure is complicated and contradictory. It lacks harmony in its priorities and aims. There are wide gaps separating the parties of the political establishment. The problem in Israel is not a formal or organizational one, i.e. the election system, the function of the Knesset or the formation of a

government. It is a problem of substance lying in the nature and borders of the Hebrew state. What type of Israel is wanted, a pure Jewish state or a state open to others ? A state within the borders of 1947, or 1949, or 1967, or a state comprising the two banks of the River Jordan? The latest opinion poll in Israel explains the wide gap that separates the base from the leadership. It also explains the reason for the lack of confidence between the two sides. About 80% of the electorate in Israel express their reluctance to give any concrete advantage to any of the two major parties (Labor and Likud) over the other. This is one way of showing lack of confidence in the ability of either party to perform the task completely. It also reflects the fear of the Israelis that one party or the other may retreat and give concessions under certain circumstances. Israeli society has been, and still is, unable to be "politically decisive" as far as the Palestinian issue is concerned⁽³²⁾. This impotence reflects itself in the multiplicity of widely differing suggestions made by the Israeli political and intellectual elite regarding plans, formulas and equations for the solution of the Palestinian issue. The pivotal question of all these plans is : should the "territories" be kept at whatever cost or should the issue be solved, even by giving up most of the territories?

For the first time in the history of Israel's political crisis, a coalition government consisting of the two major parties fell not because of a religious, economic or personal dispute, but because of its incapacity to deal with the Intifada and the questions of how and when Israel should start talking to the Palestinians and of which solution it wants.

Israel is led by two political parties which have sharp ideological, philosophical and historical differences. Both have hawks among their ranks and elements from the right, left and center. These two parties have not changed their platforms since the establishment of the state of Israel.

The Labour party (Ma'rach) accepted the 1947 partition of the "Palestinian Land". Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharret led the party to

a dialogue with the Arabs and an understanding with Jordan on the Palestinian issue. According to this understanding, Israel would not object to the "unification" of the West Bank to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan(33).

The Likud party, on the other hand, has not only called for the entire "Palestinian Land", but it has called for expanding Israel to include the East Bank of the Jordan River. Jabotinsky and Menahem Begin led the party in fighting the Arabs and "dissolving" the Palestinians in the Arab states and outside Israel.

Today, the Labour party, under Shimon Peres and Itzhak Rabin, has announced that it is ready to give up territory to the other side. It also supports a referendum on the principle of "Land for Peace". Labour is seeking a dialogue with the Arabs and "international participation" in the negotiations. It wants to achieve an understanding with Jordan on the Palestinian issue according to which there would be a confederation or federation between the West Bank and East Bank, but no third state would be established. Peres and Rabin are stressing the time factor, saying that Israel has only one year, as 1992 is an election year in Israel and the US. There are two schools of thought in the Labour party. The first is led by Haim Ramon and Yossi Beilin with five other members. The second is led by Moshe Shahal. The first calls for granting the Palestinians the right to self-determination on condition that the Palestinians and the Arab states recognize Israel and its right to exist in peace and security. The second calls for an independent Palestinian state or entity linked to Jordan through a confederation. It also believes that some concessions must be made but there is no leadership capable of dealing with this issue(34).

The present Likud-led government is one of the most radical governments in the history of Israel. It represents the half of the Israeli people which prefers to control the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Led by Yitzhak Shamir and Moshe Arens, the Likud is committed to the ideological and religious bases of the Israeli

right-wing, namely, Greater Israel, including Judea, Samaria and Gaza. The Likud platform calls for unconditional negotiations with the Arab states. Its peace plan of May 14, 1989 calls for "mutual recognition between the states" and acknowledges the "rights of a minority" to a "narrow autonomy that applies only to the people and not the land".

There are other voices in the Likud which offer various suggestions. David Levy, for example, calls for including Israel in the "joint security arrangements" between the eight Arab countries (The Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria). He is not against allowing UN observers to supervise the elections for the Palestinians. Ariel Sharon advocates the idea of a Palestinian state in Jordan. Yitzhak Modai, a liberal, is inconsistent and is shaken by the ideas of each trend. Dan Meridor, the Minister of Justice, says that the "time is fit" for dramatic changes. He believes there is an opportunity now to talk with the "Arabs in the territories" and is urging his government to make an effort to bring the "Arabs of Judea, Samaria and Gaza" to the negotiation table with Israel in order to reach an interim agreement and not a "final solution"⁽³⁵⁾.

Outside the two major parties there are the schools of thought of the Peace Now Movement. Uri Avneri calls for the establishment of a "Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip". This is the only solution, he says, and warns of an "Arab-Islamic volcano that would turn the region into hell"⁽³⁶⁾.

And from outside Israel there is the advice of Henry Kissinger (former US Secretary of State), who calls on Israel to avoid "nightmares" and to find a compromise. He warns of the dangers of two options: first, if Israel insists on maintaining every inch of the Occupied Territories, it will face a similar situation to that of South Africa, isolated and boycotted by the UN; second, if Israel gives up all of the Occupied Territories, it will risk becoming like Lebanon and finding itself under siege. Kissinger sees the way out through a compromise between these two options, and that this is the best

time to do so, because "the enemy has been defeated, and the moderate countries have won over the radical doves"(37).

But the Israeli government understands the "time element" in a different way. Time is not an opportunity that should be exploited. Rather, it is something that can be used not to undertake anything but to wait for a "change" in the political equation. Thus it can avoid making any commitment or decision in anticipation that the change would come from the other side. The government also hopes that with time, differences and splits would emerge on the other side. Meanwhile, the Israeli government continues to carry out its policy of creating a de facto situation and a new reality by building settlements or expanding those already existing. While Israel has been able to "delay" a solution over the past four years, now it will not be able to pursue this policy. Changes have occurred in all directions. Now the door is open for Israel to enter the home of the Arab Middle East through the Palestinian issue in all its components: land, people, rights and legitimate representation. Otherwise, it will remain a divided country of "nightmares", afraid of the future. It will remain incapable of moving from its fear to a solution compatible with an era where the theory of secure borders has collapsed and thus will become a new South Africa.

E-The Arab Countries

The old problem of the Arab world is the ongoing phenomenon of divisions and differences between the various Arab governments. Even when there is minimal understanding on a certain issue, it is lost when officials are removed from positions of responsibility, or with a change in the balance of power in the area. The Gulf War has revealed more than ever these divisions.

Some sided with the allies against Iraq and deployed their troops in the Gulf. Others opted for solidarity with the people of

Iraq against the war, and sent medicine and food to Iraq. Between these two groups, the Arab people expressed rejection of the return of foreign forces to "occupy" Arab land. Meanwhile, Arabs everywhere watched helplessly as the option of the "Arab solution" to the Gulf Crisis receded in the face of the advancing "foreign solution". The boundaries of the Arab region thus expanded with the "return" of Iran and Turkey. Iran returned via the "Islamic awakening" and the advance of its geographic borders toward the Gulf and Iraq. Turkey's return came through its "water interest" and its borders with Syria and Iraq. Thus, the Palestine issue receded in the face of the advancing regional geopolitical and security issues.

The "veil" that concealed the face of Arab society in the Arab Gulf states and Saudi Arabia has dropped. The presence of more than half a million US and Western troops on Arab land will not be without its consequences, if not immediate then in the longer term. These consequences will not be confined to the Gulf region, but will extend to the whole Arab homeland.

It might not be an exaggeration to say that, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the "Arab house" faces a choice. One alternative may be that of a new awakening, not yet clearly defined, but still going through a grey phase carrying with it a lot of wounds, pains and casualties. This "new awakening" will not be completed before the region has settled down in preparation for reconciliation and the healing of wounds that opened up in the aftermath of the war. To overcome this ordeal the institutions of the Arab "house" must be reorganised on modern bases, the most important of which are national institutions and joint Pan-Arab institutions so as to create harmony between the North and South, and between the haves and have-nots. The second alternative is to continue with the Arab regional conflicts: between Iraq on the one hand and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on the other, between the Kuwaitis and Palestinians, the Syrians and Palestinians, the Lebanese and Palestinians, the Iraqis and Egyptians, the Saudis and the Jordanians, the Libyans and the Sudanese, the Moroccans and the Libyans, etc.

The Arab Gulf states, Kuwait in particular, may, in the foreseeable future, withdraw from their engagement in the Palestinian issue. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria will step in to invest in the Palestinian issue, in order to continue to reap the fruits of the "Desert Storm" in the Gulf. The Arab Maghrib states will continue their previous solidarity with the Palestinians. The present and future of Jordan will remain associated with the Palestinian issue. In the midst of all this, Arab awareness dwindles. Syria may follow Egypt in normalising relations with Israel. Regional economic and security formations may emerge. But they will be void of any overall nationalistic substance or Palestinian National presence. The Arab region will revert back to square one to await the surprises that the unknown holds for it.

(4) The Palestine File

The Palestinians are in agreement with others that, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the world has entered a new era. While the international and regional political map is witnessing upheavals and changes in its situations and relations they see that the Palestinian Question (the land, the people, the rights and leadership) constitutes the main link in a chain of Middle East issues and that it tops the political agenda of many regional and international political forces.

The Palestinians are also of one opinion that, after the Gulf War, the Palestinian Question itself has entered a new era of challenges on three fronts simultaneously: the Israel Front, the Arab Front and the inter-Palestinian Front.

A-The challenges of the Israeli Front

The policy of the right-wing Israeli government is based on the notion of exploiting the time-factor for as long as possible, on

creating a new status quo (immigration, absorption and settlement), on new alternatives resulting from a change in the regional political powers, on the withdrawal of Arab support for the Palestinians, or the fall of the Palestinian leadership, alongside the economic subjugation of the Palestinians on the inside. With the passage of time, Israel hopes to close the door on international solutions to the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict. Israel is conducting its policy on two levels: towards the Arab states and towards the Palestinians⁽³⁸⁾.

The Israel: policy towards the Arab states is based on the philosophy of dividing the Arab world through four schemes :

1) Dividing the Arab countries into two or more camps and dealing with each bloc at the expense of the other, or dealing with each Arab country individually to normalize relations between them in the same way as it did with Egypt after Camp David. It follows then that the concerned Arab bloc or country is removed from the sphere of the conflict if not entirely neutralized.

2) Dissociating the Arab countries from the Palestinians and their historical legitimate leadership. This would open the door to an "Arab alternative" or a "Palestinian alternative" attached to an Arab country, or a reversal of Arab acceptance of the Palestinian right to self-determination, and the imposition of Arab states' solution.

3) Dividing the PLO from within. Thus national consensus would vanish and the door would be open for competition, political rivalry and factionalism, pluralism claims of representation, and dealing with narrow, limited and marginal interests outside the Palestinian land.

4) Divorcing the Palestinian "Inside" from the Palestinian "Outside". The Palestinian issue would thus be transformed from the cause of land, people, rights and legitimate leadership, to the "rights of a minority" to which a narrow self-government that involves the people but not the land will be granted.

On the Palestinian local level, the Israeli government has failed to crush the Intifada militarily. Israeli generals and leaders concede

that the Intifada is not a "war", but a deeply rooted popular movement with national aspirations. Despite the heavy casualties inflicted on it (about a thousand dead, more than 75,000 detainees, hundreds of deportees, demolished homes, and the confiscation of property and land) the Intifada continues. Having failed in its military effort, the Israeli government embarked on the policy of undermining the Intifada in four simultaneous stages:

1) Turning the West Bank and Gaza Strip into Palestinian ghettos by segregating them geographically and demographically. This was affected by long-term curfews (more than 33 consecutive days), the closure of towns, villages and camps and the positioning of "border" posts among them to restrict communication and travel. Jerusalem was also isolated. "Separation" between the land of the Intifada and Israel proper was implemented according to Israel's schedule and timing. Palestinian workers (about 50,000) were barred from Israel. "Green Cards" were forced on others (20,000) and new laws prohibit single people from leaving the Occupied Territories. These restrictions constrained Palestinians to worry about their social and economic condition within the confines of their own town, village or camp;

2) Imposing a total local and international news and media black-out on the conditions and changes in the land of the Intifada. It could be Henry Kissinger's advice in a new form : "Do what is to be done, but don't let anybody know". By doing so, the occupying force will be free to practise its suppression after the style of South Africa. Everything is done without witnesses or observers and in the absence of world public opinion. Consequently, "human sympathy" with the Palestinian National struggle has receded;

3) Continued closure of public and national institutions, such as universities, research and cultural centers, trade unions, societies and national committees. Other institutions were emptied of their national substance. Gradually the infrastructure of the Palestinian

society has been destroyed. Thus national momentum is reduced to a minimum in order to create a vacuum to be filled with immigrants and settlers. Settlements were established and expanded in preparation for "Judaizing" the land. The statements of Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Housing Minister, revealed a plan to build 13,000 New housing units in the Occupied Territories over the next two years. The US State Department's annual report on settlements, issued in late March 1991, revealed an annual increase of 10% in the size of the 200 settlements in the West Bank. The number of settlers has reached 200,000, that is, 13% of the total population of the occupied West Bank⁽³⁹⁾;

4) Reviving the role of the institutions attached to the occupying force, such as the municipalities, or the economic and commercial sectors. These would be granted "licences" to start economic and financial projects, which they would be concerned to maintain. It follows that they would become "tools" in the hands of the occupying force. They would operate under the slogan of "salvaging whatever can be salvaged". Israel would then deal with them as an alternative leadership.

B-The Challenges on the Arab Front

The Palestinians were, and still are, part of the "Arab House", living its crises, fighting its battles and struggling for its unity, out of faith, conviction and experience that in Arab unity lies the strength and victory of the Palestinians. The Palestinians can neither afford to be detached from their national roots, nor can they afford to withdraw from their position in the "Arab house". On the other side of the Arab-Palestinian relationship, the Palestinians are keen on preserving their own character, represented in the history of their struggle to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence like the rest of the Arab peoples. Hence, they would not accept "guardianship" over their interests. They resist interference in the independence of their decisions and in the political representation of their historical

legitimate leadership. The Gulf crisis and the consequences of "Desert Storm" war put this precarious relationship to the test.

The State of Kuwait has declared its "withdrawal" from the Palestinian issue. It forced Palestinians into a third "exodus", and opened up a deep wound in the human relationship between the Kuwaiti and Palestinian people within the "Arab house". The ominous challenge lies not in its ending the direct material support of some Palestinian institutions in the Occupied Territories or in its withdrawing of the material, moral and political support for the PLO under Yasir Arafat, but in turning the relationship between the two peoples into one of bloodshed, destruction of life and annihilation of the Palestinian presence by threatening the future of about 400,000 Palestinians in Kuwait.

As for Syria, where some 300,000 Palestinians live distributed among ten refugee camps, Damascus has nurtured Palestinian "dissension". It is reserved in its dealings with the PLO and Yasir Arafat's leadership. Syria is also trying to eject PLO forces from Lebanon. It joined the allies against Iraq and played a leading role among the eight states (Gulf States, Egypt and Syria) in devising the "Damascus Accord" for economic, political and security cooperation. Israel, on the the other hand, is using the media to seek the normalization of relations with Damascus after the Egyptian model in Camp David. Therefore, Damascus is expected to revive its relationship with the dissidents in the Occupied Territories at the same time as it is changing its relationship with the Palestinians "Outside" through the setting free about 400 Fatah prisoners from Syrian prisons. Its aim is to strengthen its influence over the Intifada and weaken Yasir Arafat's leadership.

Egypt acts as an open clearing house for methods of solving the Middle East conflict. Cairo seems willing to discount any option at the moment. Despite official reservation in Cairo's relationship with the PLO and Arafat's leadership, Egypt still deals with members of the Executive Committee (Jamal as-Surani at the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting) and former senior members and

advisers in the PLO. At the same time, the Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv is active in dealing with many institutions and personalities in the Occupied Territories. Cairo's policy is in agreement with Riyadh and Washington concerning the "new ideas" to formulate the Palestinian representation and role. It coordinates its efforts with Damascus for the convening of a regional conference for security and development. It is also waiting for a Jordanian approach to Cairo for the re-opening of channels of communication with Riyadh, if not with Washington. However, this complicated and interwoven Egyptian political equation may be totally stalled or reversed if the Egyptian "street", or the Islamic opposition, expresses opposition to particular policies.

As to Jordan, the consequences of the Gulf war imposed new "challenges" on Palestinian-Jordanian relations⁽⁴⁰⁾. The Palestinian issue constitutes the backbone of the Jordanian policy. Internally, it affects security and stability in Jordan, and externally it affects Jordan's regional and international relations⁽⁴¹⁾. These challenges involve two levels; first Jordanian and second Israeli.

On the first level, the problem has three dimensions. The first has to do with the latest Palestinian population group that is now entering Jordanian society in addition to the previous groups. The first group arrived between 1948 and 1967 and became part of Jordanian society and state⁽⁴²⁾. The second group entered Jordan between 1967 and 1987, became part of the internal political opposition and represented the strategic depth of relations with the Occupied Territories. The third group is an amalgamation of these two previous groups extending from 1948 to 1988, which remained confined to the refugee camps. The new fourth group comes from Kuwait and the Gulf States, and may equal in number the first group that entered in 1948, i.e. 250,000-300,000.

The first aspect of this fateful problem is that it is not in the Palestinian interest, that this fourth group of Palestinians should be permanently settled in Jordanian territory. Jordan's interest also dictates that they should not take on a Jordanian identity as

happened with some Palestinian population groups in the past. Instead, it is necessary to direct Palestinian aspirations towards a Palestinian National Homeland and an Independent State on Palestinian soil. In addition, the economic and social conditions in Jordan cannot shoulder the burden of their "transient presence" in Jordan. Jordan may find limited and interim solutions to this new situation. It may grant loans and aid to help employ Palestinian skills and expertise in the Jordanian economy, as a temporary dressing for their wounds in order to protect the social and political climate in Jordan. Or it may even encourage a limited number of Palestinians to emigrate to Canada, Australia, USA and Europe. But the basic problem remains unsolved and temporary or emergency conditions may be perpetuated.

The second aspect of the problem lies in the differing priorities of the Jordanian and Palestinian sides. This is reflected on the present and future of the Occupied Territories. In view of Jordan's disengagement decision on 31 July 1988, the economic, financial and demographic pressures on the country, and the lack of any offer by Arab countries or international political powers of an independent role for Jordan or the PLO, Jordan may consider itself compelled to continue the suspension of its joint political move with the PLO. Therefore it may consider joining the new alliance structure in the region. It may do this either through Damascus, Cairo or Washington. By doing so, Jordan would prepare the appropriate regional ground for internal security and stability first, then for joint action with the Palestinians and their legitimate representatives, or for a joint Arab move (Amman, Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh). Palestinian-Jordanian relations therefore may revert to previous tensions or even clashes.

The third aspect of the problem lies in the role of the "Islamic Reawakening" in the Jordanian arena. This is coupled with the absence of a "moderate" leadership that balances the aspirations of the people with the resources available to meet them. During to unemployment, and the difficult economic, social and demographic crisis in Jordan, the door may well be open to conflicts. This in

turn will further complicate things in Jordanian society, and impair Jordan's political relations with the outside world. Thus the Kingdom's flexibility may be weakened and its current political strategies may be stalled.

The Israelis are also contributing to the dilemmas confronting Jordan. The extreme Israeli right continues to call for a "New Palestine" on Jordanian soil. This call is justified by the human and historic connections between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples with attention drawn to the high percentage of Palestinians living in Jordan. It is also being justified by Israel's claim that the border with Jordan is "weak" and allows for "Resistance crossings". So, Israel would move to occupy the Jordan Valley and establish a "Security Zone" similar to the one it established in South Lebanon. This Zone would then be used to "undermine" Jordan's stability, if not preparing it for the "Transfer" policy advocated by the Israeli right, despite voices raised in the U.S. and Europe against such a move.

The second part of the Israeli challenge is represented by the continued adherence of the Israeli Labor party to the so-called "Jordanian option" for a political solution to the Palestine issue. Jordan has continuously held that it will not be an "alternative" to the Palestinians or to their sole legitimate representative in any talks or negotiations. Such a position is based on real Jordanian interests, and on a deep conviction of the impossibility of behaving otherwise. Yet Jordan may find itself in the midst of worsening internal problems, and almost daily Israeli pressure, in addition to the emergence of a regional axis (The Eight States), US pressure, and European and Soviet non-interference. All of this might drive Jordan into working out a new formula for its relations with the Palestinians and their sole legitimate leadership. There may be no immediate changes to the nature of the current relationship, but new formula may well lead to that.

C-Challenges on the Internal Front (Within the Palestinian House)

The Palestinians are reassessing and reviewing both their performance during the Gulf war and their current position. There may be formal differences over the order of priorities and the severity of the threat to the achievements, interests and needs of the Palestinians both inside and outside the Occupied Territories, but there are no substantial differences over the content and nature of the challenges faced. Moreover, Palestinian consensus still stresses the need to jointly share the burdens and responsibilities without the exception of anyone in any position. This stems from the commitment to national duty, and from awareness of the gravity of the next stage, rather than from any fear of the future. It also reflects the conviction of the importance of unity and harmony within the Palestinian "house". It is also generally acknowledged that the "flaw" was not in the Palestinian performance but in presenting and explaining the position on the Israeli, regional and international fronts. For the sake of clarity these challenges can be divided into internal or domestic ones concerning the future of the Intifada, and "external" challenges that relate to the relation between the leadership "inside" and "outside".

I-The Intifada

For the present and future of the Intifada, as a basic chapter in the national march towards freedom and independence on the national soil, the issues facing the Palestinians include: 1) the philosophy of the Intifada; 2) the tools of the Intifada; 3) the leadership of the Intifada.

1. The Philosophy of the Intifada

The Intifada is a predominantly non-violent "white", popular and national movement. It seeks to change the status quo i.e.

ending the authority and presence of the occupying Israeli force. and it works for building the new Palestinian society through the establishment of the power and nucleus of a Palestinian state on national soil. No one disputes this message. But four years into the Intifada, Palestinians are being challenged to re-examine this philosophy. Is it being displaced by actions on the ground that suggest it is no longer viable ? Or has it become a way of life for Palestinian society on the inside? For instance, in the wake of Rishon Litzion massacre on 20 May, 1990, was it still rational for the Palestinians to go on with their hunger strike at the Red Cross headquarters in Jerusalem after the U.S. veto against despatching a UN enquiry Commission and providing UN protection for them? Was it still possible to renounce or denounce armed action against Israel at a time when Israel was still suppressing and killing Palestinians in the villages and camps? In the wake of the murderous crime at al-Aqsa Mosque on 8 October, 1990, was it still possible to avert confronting the Israelis with knives or to escalate confrontation to involve firearms in some villages and camps? Was it still possible to overlook these horrible events and continue with the non-violent approach, on the assumption that the blood spilt is something of an individual, transient and abrupt tax, and a natural result of the "heated" confrontation that will eventually calm down after the end of mourning on both sides? Or does it really mean that the philosophy of the Intifada is doomed to change, and that the Israeli escalation will make it imperative upon the Palestinians to resuscitate the armed struggle option and to mobilize the masses for it? Should this option be reactivated as a complementary tool on a limited scale without basically "changing" the philosophy of the Intifada, then the second option will have to do with the place and time. Will there be a mechanism as well as a geographic base for this option? Will it remain confined to the Occupied Territories?

2. The Tools of the Intifada

During the Intifada Palestinians have used the stone, the

burning tyre, the burning car, the closed shop, the partial strike, the general strike, graffiti, fax-correspondence, announcement of struggle plans in leaflets, political and information statements by National Institutions, a Palestinian day-light saving time that starts and ends on different dates from those of Israel, and whistling and the Kuffiyeh as pass-words. All these tools have been used to emphasize the Palestinian "speciality" to regain their natural position on the Palestinian soil and force the occupying power to retreat and withdraw. The challenges here involve three things. First, the Israelis have learnt how to cope with these tools by a combination of repression, "ghettoisation" of the Occupied Territories, restriction of media coverage and so forth. There is therefore a need to generate new forms of struggle. Secondly, some of the Palestinian methods of struggle have become tools for self-inflicted punishment instead of resisting occupation. This is how we might view the declaration of a general strike in the wake of long-term curfews imposed by the occupation. Such action may well result in effects on the community that are not in line with the aims of the Intifada. For example, there might even be a deterioration in the performance of the social and economic infrastructure, which is supposed to be the solid cohesive base and the national depth that drives the Intifada. The economic and social conditions should not be allowed to degenerate into a mere additional burden on the Intifada that would impair the capability of its tools. This makes it imperative to the Intifada to change its tactics in order to protect its aims. The third challenge relates to the tools of education and awareness; the time and place for using such tools, and the ability to ensure discipline, to criticize or even punish abusers and to deter those who would follow them blindly without the least consideration for the consequences of their acts.

3. The Intifada Leadership

The formation of the "United National Leadership" in late December 1987, was seen as a new Palestinian attempt to set up a local leadership for the National movement in the O.T. It was also

considered as a complementary arm of the sole legitimate leadership, the PLO. One of the most prominent characteristics of this new leadership was that it was not established on traditional or family lines. Nor was it a mere extension of former leaderships. The new leadership has sprung up from among young sectors of the community from various locations and trends. The new formation includes an intellectual leadership, a field leadership and an information leadership. The leadership includes representation of the four factions :- Fatah, the Popular Front, the Democratic Front and the Communists. However, its composition was not fixed. Moreover, its membership was kept secret making it impossible for the occupying authority to detect and eliminate them even when some elements were uncovered and removed either through murder, arrest or deportation. Any vacancy resulting from Israeli suppression was immediately filled with a new element or representative. The leadership continued functioning throughout. These rejuvenated successive leaderships succeeded in continuing to shoulder the responsibility of leading and directing the Palestinian "house" and so throughout the four years of the Intifada, people granted them confidence and support and responded to their appeals. Moreover, the leaderships won credibility and recognition by all.

But the challenges that these leaders encounter, at this stage, do not lie in the nature of their being structured on an organizational, "party" basis. The problem lies in the discharging of their role within the leadership and in the community. The UNL has become a local political and information institution, that issues its decisions unanimously or by consensus agreement among the various elements. These decisions are supposed to meet the needs of the community. After functioning together for four years, the interests of the different organizations and factions have begun to reassert themselves. Their dealings with one another have become based on the "thought, position and interest" of the organization or faction, which commands their loyalty. This interest has, on some issues, taken precedence over the real public interest. Leadership members who are supposed to possess political awareness, national courage

and the inclination to place the public interest before the factional one, have been unable to continue in their positions if they attempt to cast off the mantle of their faction or take a position incompatible with that of their faction. Such behavior has kept them in the role of a mere "representative", rather than as a responsible partner in the leadership.

Moreover, a leadership member, that acts as the envoy or representative of a faction, may deem it necessary to be "non-committal" on a decision taken by the majority. He usually does so in order to safeguard the interests of his faction in the Palestinian "street", or to embarrass or hinder other organizations. He may seek justifications for his opposition, arguing for the practice of democracy within the Palestinian "house", and that opposition is a healthy phenomenon. If opposition is not undertaken for its own sake, then the point of view it represents will constitute another option later on, when the decision of the majority has not yielded the "expected results".

Sometimes, a faction representative in the leadership may have built up over the years personal relations and self-interests. They become part of his thought and practice. This induces him sometimes to give them precedence over the faction or even public interest. Such things, can lead to fragmentation of the leadership and adverse consequences for community. The first signs of this are individual moves by some factions of the leadership. On occasions groups have taken, without prior coordination, political, informational or escalatory actions that sap the momentum of the joint national action. They thereby undermine its capability and effectiveness, and inadvertently may help other trends, the fundamentalists in particular, to take up the initiative.

The major danger of these actions lies in preparing the ground for either the occupying force to deal singly with each faction in various locations and eliminate its leadership, or it may drive one organization or faction to initiate a change in the structure of the leadership.

II-Relations between the "Inside" and the "Outside"

This issue was, and still is, the most sensitive. It is not a matter for debate outside the Palestinian "house", on the assumption that it is an issue of national security. Open debate of the issue now may be justified not only for the purpose of self-criticism, but also to respond to Israeli pronouncements on the issue which have become part of their psychological war against the Intifada, as well as to affirm maturity and political awareness which are the protecting shield of national security.

It might be said that there are seven problem areas relating to the nature and structure of the relationship between the leadership "outside" and that "inside". First of all is the plain fact that the main leadership is located outside. This weakens the interaction between the base and the leadership. The leadership abroad may vacillate in assessing, deciding or determining policy or action or else make no decision at all. The leadership "inside" may consider itself more informed of the conditions and their particulars, and consequently more capable of evaluating the immediate or future results. Besides, the leadership inside considers itself more keen on maintaining harmony among the elements of the leadership inside and on its future work. In addition, all the leadership of one faction, namely the Communist Party, is located inside. Hence, it enjoys flexibility and expediency or even the ability to take the initiative from the leadership on the outside. By doing this, it places the leadership "inside" in a contradictory position. Either it goes along with the rest of the inside leadership to formulate a local decision, or it will await a decision from the outside. In both cases, the outside leadership comes under pressure.

The second problem area reflects the absence of historical leaders (Abu Jihad, Abu Iyad and others) whose presence was credited with effecting unity "outside" and then "inside". Those leaders were able to realize against all odds national consensus. They were also the direct founders of the underground Intifada and involved in selecting its leadership. They had always commanded

the respect and loyalty of the "inside". The challenge posed by their absence follows the ascent of this second generation of leaders outside. The majority of these new leaders are still unknown to the inside. Therefore, it may take some time to build bridges between the two sides, and to prove that the new leaders are capable of filling the vacuum. But the possibilities of either success or failure are still there. So, the alternative available to Yasir Arafat's leadership is to find a common denominator between the leadership of the inside and this new generation of leaders. Otherwise, the PLO will be strong "inside" and weak "outside". It follows then that, under the current circumstances, the political weight will be in favor of the "inside", something which may strain relations with the outside. The "outside" may also rush into political moves in more than one direction for many purposes, foremost among them its desire not to lose its central role. Such initiatives could undermine the general Palestinian position or the leadership itself.

The third factor concerns the inability to invest the Declaration of Independence with political substance. The leadership put off or suspended the implementation of the second part of it, that is, forming a national provisional government. With the absence of state laws and regulations, we continued to appeal to customs and traditions. Under the social changes created by the Intifada, and the rebellion it is leading against political and traditional conditions, locally and on an Arab level, together with the active soul-searching, coupled with the difference in age between the leaderships of the "Inside" and the "Outside", this may turn into an "accusation" which will evolve into rage and revolt. This will be the beginning of separation between the "Inside" and the "Outside" and this is one of the most serious challenges facing the national movement. It is also foremost among the aims which Israel seeks to achieve.

A fourth area of concern reflects the Palestinian "departure" from the Arab "house" due to the onset of regionalism. With the retreat from pan-Arabism and the political move of the eight members of the axis to manipulate the "dissidents" in Damascus, or

the "functionaries" in Cairo, or the "opportunists" in Riyadh, or the "mongers" in Amman, or even the "fundamentalists" in most of these capitals, to build contacts with the "Inside" or to open "shops" for competition and rivalry first, then for participation on the soil of the "Inside". All of these factors may beleaguer the inside and facilitate its penetration. It also weakens the leadership outside.

A fifth area of anxiety has arisen because of the recent deterioration in the international standing of the PLO. Actors on the international stage have opted for direct dealings with the leaderships and institutions of the inside, even though this was done with a "green light" or permission from outside. At the same time, the lack of interference or objection by Israel has helped, indeed, to highlight the role of the leadership of the inside. Local and international public opinion has thus been prepared to accept this as a prelude to "recognizing" it. This action further enhanced the strength of the inside in its dealings with the "outside". At the same time, it demanded from the "Inside" leadership a "test" of loyalty to the outside. As for the outside, it became skeptical and apprehensive that the rug might be pulled from underneath its feet.

A sixth problem has arisen owing to the loss of financial support from the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia which may severely impair the effectiveness of the PLO apparatus and plans. It might fail to meet the needs of the inside through its inability to raise enough funds to fulfil its obligations. This makes it imperative to reduce or drop appropriations. The list of priorities has to be rearranged for the inside and the outside, both of whom will be enfeebled.

Finally, the ideological and political differences among the four organizations are still a prominent trait of the structure and style of the leaderships inside and outside alike. The Communist Party entered the leadership after three months following the Intifada in 1987. The Fundamentalist leaderships (Hamas and the Islamic Jihad) joined it after three years. Today, the Communist Party, following its ideological retreat, has become a regular,

administrative and financial institution. The fundamentalist trends have become a "sprawling social institution". The former institution is small in size, but it participates in decision-making. The latter institution, though big in size, is not necessarily in harmony with the aims of the leadership. It may even compete with it for the loyalty of the masses. Both institutions and their respective roles undermine the efficiency of the leadership. The former institution deals with the leadership on the basis of its party interests first, whereas the latter institution deals with it on the basis of its ideological interest first. Eventually the leadership is weakened. As a result of this other organizations or factions may move to conclude agreements or alliances with either institution. Consequently the central role of the general national trend led by Fatah will be shaken. These possibilities were clearly manifest in the attitudes of these organizations (factions) towards the decision to meet with US Secretary of State early in March 1991 in Jerusalem.

To set against all these challenging issues, there remain a number of positive aspects to the relationship between the inside and the outside:

First, the presence of a broad economic, social and political infrastructure that adheres to the Palestinian constants and the PLO led by Yasir Arafat. Even Washington has had to concede that "as long as the Palestinian people is supportive of the PLO, then it is difficult to ignore it";

Second, the immunity and experience realized by the national movement inside, qualified it to continue with shouldering responsibility, taking decisions and implementing them within the Palestinian house and in the sphere of relations with others under the most difficult conditions;

Third, the PLO has become an institutional leadership, including the PNC, the Central Council, the Executive Committee, the Trade Unions and Associations, whose functions are governed

by laws and regulations. It has its roots, and even branches and fruits, in the "inside". So, it is impossible to bypass it when dealing with the inside;

Fourth, the PLO has a political platform that has won the support and consensus of the Palestinians inside and outside, as well as Arab and international recognition. It comprises the Declaration of Independence, the PNC resolutions and the peace initiative that calls for the implementation of international legitimacy by carrying out all the UN and Security Council Resolutions. Therefore, its political move does not stem from vacuity, nor does it end in a vacuum. There is a fixed national ground and clear legitimate aims;

Fifth, the PLO, under Yasir Arafat, has proved, over the last three decades, its ability to absorb crisis shocks and to remain in the leadership position. This was demonstrated after the 1970 events in Jordan, the events of the 1975 civil war in Lebanon, the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the collapse of coordination with Jordan in 1986. The Palestinian people have repeatedly made clear their complete rejection of all forms of interference in their right to support their sovereign body, adhering to its leadership and thwarting all attempts to bypass it;

Sixth, there remains the issue of finance as a stabilizing factor in the relationship between the inside and outside. Despite the problems related to this issue, such as the reduction or holding back of financing, it has a positive side represented by meeting the minimum needs. The current situation makes it imperative to reconsider priorities and to redress mistakes. By so doing, the national institutions and their efficiency in the national movement will be reinvigorated.

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NOTES

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