

Where we came from, **what** we have been doing, **where** we are going and **what's** next.

PART 2: Where We Have Been Going and What's Next

I now pick up the story of Palestine in the context of Middle Eastern affairs to continue my effort to create a matrix to position the events and trends. I find that these events and trends fall conveniently, if with some overlaps, into four phases. In the first phase, roughly from 1948 to 1967, the states, Israel, Egypt and Transjordan are the actors and the Palestinians, scattered, leaderless and immobile, are the objects; in the second phase, roughly from 1968 to about 2004, the Palestinians under the leadership of Yasir (also spelled Yasser) Arafat attempt to create a "state-in-exile" under the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), clashing not only with Israel but also with what had become Jordan (by the amalgamation of the West Bank), Lebanon and in its Tunisian exile. but Egypt continues to play the leading Arab role; in the third phase, roughly from the death of Arafat in 2004 and under the leadership of Mahmoud Abbas (the PLO moved back to the West Bank, attempted to make peace with Israel; in the fourth phase, a virtual war engulfs the resurgent Islamic movement Hamas and Israel.

I warn the reader that I will not offer here a detailed history.¹ I will leave out much in order to keep my focus on the main elements with the purpose of providing a matrix or framework into which to fit the unfolding story. I also should reveal that during the early 1960s I moved from being only an observer to being a participant in events. During that time, I wrote the first of several plans for ceasefires and peace. After 1965, except for a one-day return to the White House, I have had no relationship to the US Government and now write as an independent scholar. So, what follows is my personal judgment and nothing more.

Phase One: The States

First consider Israel: Benefitting from enormous infusions of American money (in the years from 1947-1973 amounting in various forms to over \$33,000 for each Israeli man, woman and child) and the arrival of about 1,500,000 Jewish immigrants, Israel underwent an almost total transformation of what it had been the British mandate. As I have pointed out in the previous part of this essay, the modernizing capacity of the *Yishuv* was evident already in 1947. It grew in the wars fought between the Arabs and Israel in 1956 and 1967. Experience was gained and the events were decisive in fund-raising abroad. As a modern, industrial, "Western" state, Israel had and further developed capacities of a different order from the essentially still-colonial Middle Eastern states. In the military sphere, it had sophisticated command and control techniques, including the decisive element of ground-control for aircraft, and, given its social cohesion, it could increase its army from a standing force of no more than 50,000 to 300,000 in about 48 hours. Finally, being a small, interlaced territory, it could shift military forces rapidly from one frontier to another to achieve "theater dominance."

Apart from the military confrontation, Israel faced a major social challenge. It had to create a unified Jewish society from a deeply divided population. The Oriental Jews, as the Israeli-American scholar Nadav Safran wrote in *The United States and Israel*, "differed sharply in relevant historical background, culture, education, motivation, and even physical appearance from the European Jews." Perhaps even more significant was their different historical memory. Whereas European Jews had long suffered from often-violent anti-Semitism, the Oriental Jews

¹ I have provided a more detailed history in a series of three essays which can be accessed on my website (williampolk.com). I will provide ancillary information where useful in footnotes so as not to disrupt the development of the framework I am endeavoring to create in the main text.

lived as self-governing “nations” (*millets*) and had not suffered from the holocaust. So, one aspect of the “nation building” of Israel was to implant among the nine tenths of the recent immigrants who are Oriental Jews (the *Sephardim*, *Mizrahim*, *Beta Israel*, *Beit Avraham et al*) and the Asian Jews (the *Karaite* and *Juhuro et al*) the experience of the *Ashkenazim* or European Jews. Nation-building required emphasis on the Holocaust. The Holocaust became the national myth of Israel and its “persona” in its international relationships.

In addition to the constant and powerful emphasis on the Holocaust as a unifying historical memory, the Hebrew language was made into a powerful nationalizing force. To prosper in Israel, one had to speak, read and write Hebrew. Not unlike America, where immigrants dropped their former languages, dress and habits to become “American,” so in Israel arriving Jews of diverse backgrounds rushed to become Israelis. Education was the seedbed of the new nationhood and the new nationalism. In this effort, the Israelis did as the French had done in the nineteenth century in replacing regional languages and dialects with French, and the Chinese have done more recently in replacing the dozens of languages and dialects used in China with Mandarin.

Education had always been among the most laudable features of the Jewish experience. The Western Jewish society, the *Ashkenazim*, arrived in Israel virtually completely literate, and from the beginning Israel had more engineers, physicists, chemists, doctors and technicians than all of the Arab states and the Palestinian society combined. But among the Oriental Jews, more than half of the women and a quarter of the men were illiterate, and as late as 1973 only one person in each 50 had graduated from university. Oriental Jews remain today Israel’s poor folk.

World-class universities and research institutions are the crown jewels of Israel. Like the United States, Israel benefitted from the migration of already highly educated men and women who quickly organized themselves to perform as they had done in Europe. The intellectual impact on both America and Israel was revolutionary. In both countries, Jewish immigrants helped to turn little institutions into world-class universities and research centers.

In no field in Israel was this more evident than in armaments. Begun in the Mandate and fed by the universities and research centers, was a powerful military-industrial-university complex which enabled Israel to become one of the world’s major suppliers of weapons. From the 1950s, it was subsidized by the United States which purchased equipment from it and shared technology with it. With the help of France, South Africa and the United States, sometimes inadvertently secured through espionage, Israel acquired at least from 1960 the ability to manufacture nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. It did.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian people – it was too early to refer to them as a nation or even a single society – were scattered, immobilized and kept in an intellectual, emotional and political limbo. In Israel after 1948, hundreds of villages were plowed under, farm lands were taken over, old buildings, mosques and churches were bulldozed, roadways were changed and new maps were produced that no longer showed the old landmarks. In a lecture the former minister and general Moshe Dayan acknowledged this policy, saying “Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don’t blame you, since these [old] geography books no longer exist. Not only the books do not exist -- the Arab villages are not there either.”²

² Reported in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* of April 3, 1969.

Some Israelis even denied the existence of the Palestinians. Prime Minister Golda Meir was quoted as saying, “There was no such thing as Palestinians...They did not exist.”³

We the outsiders, both the Soviet government and the American government, acted in effect although for different reasons and in a different definition of what was meant by “Palestinians,” on Mrs. Meir’s opinion. We never treated the Palestinians as a nation or even as a whole society. We never engaged them except as recipients of our aid or our anger over what we regarded as their terrorism. The Soviet government similarly dealt mainly with states rather than the scattered Palestinian political groups. The Arab governments were at least ambivalent about them: Palestinians were an embarrassment, a reminder of defeat, a threat to the status quo and a diversion from other political and social requirements. In short they were *refugees* with all the connotations implied by that word.

At this point, it is useful to ask why the Palestinians had such trouble in identifying themselves as a society. I suggest that there are two obvious answers and one more obscure answer. The obvious answers are that the Palestinians, like most Asians and Africans and pre-modern Europeans, lived in virtually autarkic villages. Each village was a corporate unit with few ties -- and those mostly wary or even hostile -- to neighboring villages. There was much to protect (water rights and land boundaries) and little to share (since they produced essentially the same crops they had little to trade with those nearby).

The second answer is religion. It is convenient to think in general categories as Islam, Christianity, Druzeism, but these were not how villagers or townsmen perceived them. Rather, what counted were the subcategories of each: Islam was composed of not only Sunnis and Shiis but a variety of offshoots of Shiism, including Yazidis, Alawis, Ismailis and Druze; These in turn were subdivided. The Druze, for example, were split, sometimes bitterly in armed combat, between the Yazbakis and the Junblatis. The one in five Palestinians who were Christians were divided in an even more luxurious fashion, and each sect detested the others.⁴ Tiny doctrinal differences metastasized in hostility. Even today, these divisions run deep.

The third issue, as I have said, is more obscure. Palestinian intellectual or ideological attempts to overcome their crippling divisions were weak, late in coming and were mainly restricted to the urban elite. The Palestinians, like other Arabs, went through the sequence of emphases on territorial nationalism (*wataniyah*), pan-Arab, or at least more inclusive, Arab nationalism (*qawmiyah*), but, I believe, with less enthusiasm than the Syrians, Egyptians and others. Thus, the Palestinians did not form a single society and, under both Ottoman and subsequent British rule, did not become conscious of themselves as a nation.

This statement is controversial so allow me to dilate: while the early Zionists were gaining the experience of running their own affairs under a shadow government in the 1930s, virtually all (about 1,000) of the most active of the leaders of the Palestinian community had been suppressed, jailed, exiled or executed during their rebellion in 1936-1939. Many of those who stood aside were coöpted by the Mandate government. Regard the most famous interpreter or “encourager” of the Palestinian sentiment and aspiration, George Antonius.

³ *The Sunday Times*, June 5, 1969)

⁴ The Mandate government, finding it difficult to work with Christians as a whole but impossible to ignore their various communities, made a report in 1931 listing 14 sects and alluding to “other churches.” They found that they had to carefully allocate among them even the pegs on which robes were hung in the Church of the Nativity. When I visited it on Christian eve in 1946, I was warned by a Catholic priest to beware of “those damned Greeks.” Christianity was not a unifying force.

George Antonius was a member of the tiny (Greek) Orthodox Christian community, born in the Ottoman district of Mount Lebanon but serving as a civil servant of the Mandate government (there being no functioning “shadow” Palestinian government). His major work, *The Arab Awakening*, was a virtual archaeological account of the beginnings of Arab nationalism and the promises made to non-Palestinian Arabs by Great Britain. His aim and that of other Palestinian officials working for the British was *not to encourage* the Palestinians to take their own actions or form their own institutions *but to plead* with Britain to honor its promises to them. The plea fell on deaf ears and was, indeed, hardly heard by the Palestinians.

Meanwhile and particularly in the postwar years, some Arab countries profited from oil sales to begin to modernize. Egypt, without much oil but driven by the government that emerged from the 1952 coup, and whose leaders (particularly Gamal Abdel Nasser) had been shaped by their failure in the 1948-1949 war, were determined to modernize. They were further motivated by the 1956 Israeli-French-British attack on Suez. Thereafter Egypt began a massive drive toward education and the building of a larger, better trained army.

These two aims – education and military power -- merged because President Nasser used the army to convert peasants (*fellaheen*) into what I have called “new men.” This is a subject I have analyzed in detail in *The United States and the Arab World*. Briefly put, the number of students was multiplied and the subject matter was shifted from the humanities to science and technology. An attempt was made to copy the Zionist collective farms (*kibbutzim*) in what was called Liberation Province. And service in the armed forces trained *fellaheen* in the use of mechanical tools, motorized vehicles and rudimentary public health. The result was the creation during the 1950s and 1960s of thousands of a new kind of Egyptian at all levels of society. Important as they were in beginning a trend, these “new men” formed only a tiny minority of the population, and Nasser exaggerated the effects of his efforts. His unrealistic view would have major consequences. Moreover, while he concentrated on domestic modernization, events outside Egypt distracted its government and shaped the events to come.

The first event was the 1962 *coup d'état* in Yemen. There, a small group of army officers and western-trained young men overthrew its antique regime. This move disturbed Britain which was trying to hang on to its check point at Aden's Bab al-Mandab; Saudi Arabia which feared the opening the coup might give Egypt's President Nasser the ability to intervene on the Arabian peninsula against its conservative monarchy; and the United States which wanted, at all costs, to protect the flow of oil from the Saudi Arabian fields. Had the coup been successful, the outside powers would have accommodated, but it failed to secure the country. The Imam escaped and became the figure head of a counter-coup British mercenary force. Unable to defeat it, the incoming military leader, General Abdullah Sallal, appealed to President Nasser to protect his government as an integral part of Nasser's own drive toward Arab unity. As Nasser told me, he felt that, put in that context, he could not refuse.

These events were superimposed upon the tribal structure of Yemen so that, in strategic terms, the war was fought to win tribal support. Britain encouraged the royalist faction and Saudi Arabia bankrolled it; Nasser sent the 8 best brigades of his army and most of his air force to uphold Sallal. The conflict lasted eight years and proved to be Egypt's “Vietnam.”⁵

⁵ President Nasser allowed me to visit Yemen, review the campaign with his commanders and tour the battle zone. Crown Prince (later King) Faisal then allowed me to visit the Saudi-Yemeni frontier to meet with the royalist guerrilla leadership. Meanwhile, the CIA was trying to convince our government to covertly join the campaign against the Yemeni “republicans” and Nasser. I was urging Nasser to concentrate on uplifting Egypt and urging our government not to get involved. Everyone stumbled onward without conclusion.

The second major issue was the 1967 war between Israel and Egypt in which both Jordan and Syria were also severely affected. Nasser believed his army had reached parity with the Israeli army. In numbers, it nearly did. But Egypt's army was essentially a Second World War, Russian-style force whereas Israel had an ultramodern army with access to the "magic" of communications intelligence and the latest American equipment. Nasser miscalculated; he was also driven by his belief in Arab nationalism; and he was taunted by his rivals in other Arab countries for "hiding behind" the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF)⁶ on Sinai. Thus, in high dudgeon he decided to replace UNEF with Egyptian troops and declared the shipping lane, the Enterprise Passage in the Straits of Tiran (which was less than half a mile off the Egyptian shore and so legally Egyptian) closed to Israeli shipping. Foolishly, Nasser proclaimed, "Under no circumstances will we allow the Israeli flag to pass through the Gulf of Aqaba. The Jews threaten war. We tell them you are welcome. We are ready for war, but under no circumstances will we abandon any of our rights. This water is ours." All of the angers, frustrations and humiliations of the Arabs for the previous twenty years show in that emotional statement. Nasser had yet to learn that emotion is not a good basis for strategy.

Remarkably, in rare agreement but acting separately, the governments of the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union tried to pressure Nasser into backing down. At least the US government thought it had strong-armed Nasser into doing so.⁷ But when the normally cautious king of Jordan embraced him and Egyptian policy, Nasser decided he could not back down. For Israel, Nasser's decision was tantamount to a declaration of war. In the first days of May 1967, Soviet intelligence passed to the Egyptian government information that Israel was preparing to attack Syria, Jordan and Egypt. The Middle East rushed to war.

Two hours after dawn on Monday, June 5, fighter bombers of the Israeli Air Force caught on the ground and largely destroyed the Egyptian Air Force. With mastery of the air, the Israeli army crushed the Egyptian forces in Sinai; then it threw the Jordanian army back across the Jordan river; and in a furious assault it destroyed the bulk of the Syrian army and reached the suburbs of Damascus.

The war did not stop with the Arab states. Incidental to the attack against the Arabs was an Israeli attack on America. On June 8, 1967, Israeli aircraft and motor torpedo boats attempted to sink the virtually defenseless US Navy intelligence-gathering ship, the USS

⁶ Then headed by my friend, Stevenson Institute fellow and former general in the Bengal Lancers, Inderjit Rikke.

⁷ Although I had resigned from the Policy Planning Council in 1965 and was then Professor of History at the University of Chicago and President of the Adlai Stevenson Institute of International Affairs, Walt Rostow, who was then head of the National Security Council, arranged a briefing for me on Saturday June 3 with senior State Department, CIA, Defense Department and NSC officers, all of whom asserted that the danger of war had passed. I thought this was nonsense and, at Rostow's request, I wrote a memorandum for the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense explaining why. In it, I predicted that the Israelis would attack within 72 hours. They did in 36 hours. As a result of my accurate prediction of the war and because of my relationship with McGeorge Bundy, to whom Johnson turned over the Middle East problem, I was called to the White House on June 5 to write a plan for a ceasefire and a subsequent peace treaty. I was given the office of Lyndon Johnson had when he had been Vice President. Because all the furniture had been taken out, I spent the first few hours sitting on the floor. I took this as proof that, unlike the 1956 Suez crisis, there was no "collusion" on the 1967 war. I wrote my plan for ceasefire and an eventual peace plan. but Johnson decided not to negotiate. My assignment became pointless so I returned to Chicago. My return to government had lasted only one day. It was my last day in government service.

Liberty. It was the first time since Pearl Harbor that an American naval ship was attacked in peacetime. Other than the drama and the pain of the vicious attack -- 34 servicemen were killed and 171 were wounded and life rafts were machine-gunned, apparently to attempt to prevent any of the crew from surviving⁸ -- the long-term import of this incident was two-fold:

First, Israel was given an indication that the US government would not react strongly even to attacks on its naval ships and the killing its uniformed troops. So, it could discount all future American protests and warnings. Apparently, that message was not lost on Prime Ministers Sharon and Netanyahu. And, second, seven months later the North Korean government hijacked the sister ship of the Liberty, the USS Pueblo. Like the Israeli action, the action of the North Koreans went unpunished. Obviously, the dangers of miscalculation increase when governments act in unpredictable ways. The outbreak of the Second World War was triggered by a similar misstep by Chamberlain at Munich. Today, we may be experiencing the consequences of such decisions in both the Middle East and the Far East.

Second, the immediate effect of the war was that the armies of the Arab states were decisively defeated. The Egyptian army was pushed back to the Suez Canal, just about 60 miles from Cairo, Israel assumed full control over the Palestinian West Bank and it seized the Golan from Syria. The Arab states lost not only territory but also about 25,000 men, a loss which, given their populations was proportionally equivalent to the loss of several times the number of soldiers America lost in Vietnam. Indeed, the loss was even greater as the soldiers were among the relatively small portion of better educated, technically most qualified and most needed members of their societies. The war showed that the Arab states could not defend even their own territories and certainly not the Palestinians.

For President Nasser of Egypt, the defeat was devastating. Already suffering from the diabetes that would kill him, he publicly threatened to resign on June 9. With what remained of his army tied down in Yemen, he feared – and the Russians warned – that the Israelis could conquer Egypt. None of the Arab states could stop them; realizing this, the endangered leaders drew together.⁹ Thus, ironically, defeat did more to create Arab unity than Nasser had been able to do. But, at home, Nasser felt betrayed by colleagues, even by his brother-in-law, the army chief who had encouraged his misjudgment and tried to overthrow him.

⁸ The Israeli government said the day-long attack was an accident, but intercepted communications showed that it was not only deliberate but ordered by the highest authority. See “A Report: War Crimes Committed Against U.S. Military Personnel, June 8, 1967: Submitted to the Secretary of the Army in his capacity as Executive Agent for the Secretary of Defense, June 8, 2005.” *Al Jazeera's* “The Day Israel Attacked America” (October 30, 2014) is the fullest visual account. Because I had left the White House before the attack, I have no personal knowledge of why Israel tried to sink the ship. Later, I was told by a member of the investigation that it was probably because the NSA monitors on the ship had learned that Israeli armed forces were executing large numbers of Egyptian prisoners of war. The attack was, in fact, the second Israeli attack on America. The first, which I mentioned above, was the “Lavon Affair,” a false flag attempt to damage Egyptian-American relations by burning the American library in Alexandria, Egypt and blaming it on the Egyptians.

⁹ Abdel Magid Farid, the former secretary-general of the Egyptian Cabinet, has provided a remarkable, almost minute-by-minute and nearly-verbatim account in *Nasser: The Final Years* (Ithaca Press: Reading U.K. 1994) of the meetings held from June 22, 1967 two weeks after the Arab defeat, between Soviet and Arab leaders from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Egypt and Algeria. Even King Husain (also spelled Hussein) briefly joined them. The war cost Egypt about a 30% loss of revenue. The Soviet military experts were scathing on Egyptian *mobilization* (while “15% of Israel’s population carry arms,” in Egypt “those under arms amounted to only one per cent. The situation was the same in Syria.”) and *performance* (tank drivers had less than 3 to 6 hours’ experience before the battle “which means they do not have combat capability to use the tanks in battle.” After the battle, they were incapable of action, “even for defence.”)

In the aftermath, the Israelis did not follow up, the Soviet Union rearmed Egypt and both sides settled down to a pointless, painful and wasting cannonade on the Suez Canal. Nasser thought that the Palestinians could distract the Israelis and agreed to supply them with such help as Egypt could afford. And, in the following months, for the first time, Egypt began to raid Israeli-held Egyptian territory with its own troops.

Here I must violate chronology to clarify substance; so, I skip ahead about three years. The Israelis decided on a Suez program to achieve two objectives: they wanted to end the fairly constant if small-scale loss of their soldiers on the canal (about a dozen a week), and they wanted to encourage President Nasser in an “Egyptian first” policy. Without disclosing this aim, Israeli Prime Minister Meir asked me to mediate a ceasefire with President Nasser. Regardless of the aim, I regarded it as a first step toward peace and laid it out for President Nasser. He agreed, and the ceasefire I negotiated went into effect shortly before his death in 1970. The ceasefire did not have the effect I had hoped for. Under Nasser’s successor, Anwar Sadat, Egypt again prepared for war, but feeling somewhat secure on the Suez front, Israel concentrated its power on Jordan and Lebanon. The ceasefire consequently played a role in the rise of the PLO.

Phase Two: Palestinian Would-be State-in-Exile

For the Palestinians, the 1967 war was another disaster: 175,000 refugees were forced to flee again and 350,000 more Palestinians were turned into refugees. The refugee community grew to 1,375,915 men, women and children. But, paradoxically, the defeat of the Arab states was a sort of liberation for the Palestinians. Many Palestinians faced, for the first time, the fact that they were on their own. And this lesson coincided with the growing realization that another colonial people, the Algerians, had won their war of national liberation.

In Algeria, less than 13,000 Arab and Berber combatants forced the withdrawal of 485,000 French soldiers. Drawing an analogy, many Palestinians thought they could win against Israel like the Algerians had won against the French. The analogy was false. But false not so much militarily, where both lost – the Algerians in the 1957-1958 battle of Algiers and the Palestinians in the 1968 battle of Karamah – as politically where both “won.” As I pointed out in the previous essay, the French could not afford to stay in Algeria, either financially or politically; its colonial population was small relative to the natives; and world opinion was against the brutal counterinsurgency of the French army. None of these elements was present in Israel. Israel was relatively rich; there was no effective Palestinian population left in Israel; and world opinion was on the Israeli side. But, of course, the “external” Palestinians wanted to reclaim their homeland and had little to lose by trying, even if trying proved disastrous.

The Arab states’ leaders found this intolerable; so they sought to create a less dangerous path for the Palestinians to follow. To divert Palestinians from attacks on Israel, the Arab states’ leaders collectively had agreed to create *for* the Palestinians a limited government-in-exile. This was the origin of the *Munadhdhamat-Tahrīr Filastīniyah*, the Palestine Liberation Organization, the PLO. Under the auspices of King Husain, a group of some 400 Palestinians met in September 1963 in Jerusalem to proclaim the PLO’s birth. Its stated objectives were elimination of Zionism, destruction of Israel and the fulfillment of the right of return to the Palestinian homeland. However, from its start, the Arab states appointed a leadership that would not promote those objectives. The PLO was not created *by* but *for* the Palestinians. It was intended to be a paper tiger. Rhetoric, not armed rejection, was to be its assigned mode of operation.

The PLO “constitution” did not proclaim statehood. Initially, indeed, the PLO was only a confederation of different, even opposing, groups which could operate only on the sufferance of non-Palestinians. In the early years, the closest the Palestinians came to having a territorial state was that the PLO asserted what was only a notional claim to territory under Israeli occupation; Jordan did not recognize its authority on the West Bank nor did Egypt in Gaza. In effect, the PLO was relegated to a sort of observer status.

Then an unanticipated change came about. One of the component parts, then the most-active, became the largest component of the PLO, reaching about 80% of the membership. That organization was FATAH . The reverse acronym of *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Falastini*, FATAH means “The Palestinian Movement of Liberation.” Since it began as a secret society, like a number of earlier political societies in Europe and Asia, its origins are obscure, but we know that it grew out of meetings, really more or less informal discussion groups, of Palestinian refugees in Gaza convened and led by Yasir Arafat.

Yasir Arafat had been born in Gaza and, although he spent his early life in poverty, he managed to get trained as an engineer. While he certainly could have secured a job in the oil-rich Arab states, as many educated Palestinians then did, he committed his life to the liberation of Palestine. At first, he sought an ideological roadmap. During his studies in Egypt, he probably joined the Muslim Brotherhood. Then, forced to leave Egypt during the crackdown on the Brotherhood in 1954, he spent the next ten years moving through the refugee camps, recruiting followers and broadcasting his message. He simplified his message. Forgetting ideology, it became “that the Palestinians had to take their destiny into their own hands and start harassing Israel.”¹⁰

As Palestinians joined FATAH and through it the PLO, Arafat set them to work indoctrinating the Palestinian community. He spread his word, as had nationalists before him, with pamphlets that were passed from hand to hand and often read aloud where refugees gathered. Their message was that the only feasible military action for the Palestinians was guerrilla warfare and that, in this struggle, the armies of the Arab states, and the states themselves, were irrelevant. For some time, while many listened, few joined -- all eyes were on President Nasser who most Arabs regarded as their hero -- but gradually Arafat recruited a small guerrilla force. He had to move with almost crippling caution – he was often on the run, dodging police -- since the leaders of the Arab states feared that his efforts would evoke Israeli reprisal. So, his *tactics* were to work between, the Arab states, and his *strategy* was to force the states to engage Israel while he built Palestinian national consciousness.

Beginning in 1966, Arafat began to engage his followers in raids on Israel from bases in Syria. Israeli counterattacks played into his hands as more Palestinians felt oppressed, were wounded or had relatives killed. Then came the massive defeat of the Arab states in the 1967 war. The defeat seemed proof of what Arafat had been preaching: the Palestinians *were* on their own. The Israelis were the victors, but Arafat’s FATAH thought themselves “liberated.” No longer, they thought, could they be considered just wards of the Arab states. Indeed, Arafat came to the conclusion that the Arab states’ corrupt governments must be overthrown. The 1967 war had shown, Arafat believed, that Nasser was a spent force, that Hafez al-Assad of Syria was unreliable, that Lebanon was irrelevant and that King Husain of Jordan had sold out to the Israeli government.

¹⁰ This was the interpretation of Arafat’s program by his principal Israeli adversary, General Yahoshafat Harkabi, who was chief of Israeli military intelligence, in his book *Fedayeen Action and Arab Strategy*, (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, 1968). We had several exchanges on the Palestinians.

The Palestinians, on the contrary, Arafat proclaimed, had been forged by their suffering. Their two generations in the “wilderness” had passed. From scattered villagers, they had become a nation. From *wards*, they had become *guides*: the Palestinians could lead the Arab peoples to the unity their leaders had proclaimed but failed to achieve. All hope rested on the new Palestinian “army,” the *Fedayeen*. Arafat was elected the PLO leader in February 1969.

Arafat’s first major move to acquire a base was in Jordan. Jordan would give the incipient Palestinian *nation* territory to become a *nation-state*. The stumbling block was King Husain. However, like most observers Arafat then believed that Husain’s throne was wobbly. The relatively secure principality of Transjordan had become the insecure kingdom of Jordan by the incorporation of the Palestinian West Bank. Palestinians had become the majority of Jordan’s population. They were less interested in protecting Jordan’s king and his followers than in recovering their homeland. The more vigorously the Palestinians confronted Israel, the more the King had to deal with the Israelis.¹¹ The cycle of action and reaction led inevitably to the attempt by the Palestinians to take over Jordan.

Push quickly came to shove. On June 9, 1968, there was an attempt to assassinate the King. That attack was followed by others on the royal palace (both by the *Fedayeen* and by the Israeli Air Force), the national radio station and other targets. Next the PLO demanded that the King dismiss his uncle as commander of Jordan’s largely tribal armed forces. To the surprise of his advisers, the King complied. But his concession encouraged the more radical factions of the PLO. One of these groups (the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PFLP, *al-Jabhah al-Shabiyah li tahrir Filastin*) demanded violent action. When Arafat did not move, it hijacked and destroyed several commercial airliners. That was a hijack too far.

Acutely embarrassed and under pressure from his own followers, the King feared that the PLO would turn Jordan into a Palestinian state. He had to respond or abdicate. He responded. To his bedouin army, the Palestinian cause was irrelevant and the *Fedayeen* were just city boys playing soldier. At the king’s order, the army rampaged through the refugee camps in what came to be called “Black September.” In two weeks, they killed between 5,000 and 10,000 Palestinians and virtually crushed the PLO. But, wisely, Husain gave the PLO an out: on September 8, 1970, he flew to Cairo to sign a deal with Arafat under the aegis of President Nasser. The essence of the deal was that the PLO would leave Jordan.

Here the story I have to tell gets more complicated, and I must analyze the positions and actions of each of the participants. I will try to simplify without distorting, but their shifting positions and interactions are often difficult to grasp. So, I must bring forward more detail here than elsewhere in my account. I begin with the PLO’s move from Jordan.

The PLO’s move to Lebanon was logical because some 300,000 Palestinians were already living – existing is a more accurate word than living -- in huge refugee camps that had become city slums. They aggregated about one in six of the country’s total population. Some FATAH/PLO activities had already been based there including attacks on Israel, and Israel had begun to react. While glad to get the PLO out of Jordan, the Israelis were determined to prevent Lebanon from becoming a base of operations against them. They had attacked the Beirut airport in December 1968 and had engaged in a number of other operations designed to force the Lebanese government to control the refugees and neutralize the incoming PLO.

¹¹ The Anglo-Israeli scholar Avi Shlaim has covered this complex relationship from the time of Prince Abdullah through King Husain in *Collusion Across the Jordan* and *Lion of Jordan*.

With the move of Arafat's organization, the Palestinians had become a state within the Lebanese state. And, as the PLO grew in power, the Lebanese state weakened. The Lebanese army had been organized as an amalgamation of the 14 religious "nations" -- what the Ottomans called *millets* and what Lebanon's French rulers called "confessions" -- that made up Lebanese society. When the national government collapsed, the army broke up. Moving into this void, the Maronite Christian community formed its own militia known as the *Phalange* ("phalanx" in the Lebanese lingua franca, French) or "strike forces" (in Arabic), the *Kataib*.

The *Kataib* was an authoritarian, militant movement modeled on the Fascist "shirts" movements in 1930s Europe I have described in Part 1 above. It viewed the Palestinians both as the obstacle to its own domination of Lebanon and as a subversive horde of unwelcome refugees. To overcome them, it decided to make common cause with Israel.

Frightened by the advent of virtual civil war, the president of Lebanon who, by the constitution was a Maronite Christian, invited Syria to send a peacekeeping force to establish control over the country in 1976. It tried to do so, but one section of the *Kataib*, led by a disaffected army major, broke away and was armed and funded by Israel. It established a military fief on the Israeli frontier. Its purpose was to block Palestinian attacks on Israel. But, attacking Israel was the *raison d'être* of the Palestinian movement; so it carried out a series of raids culminating in a significant raid in March 1978. In response, the Israeli army invaded south Lebanon including the Shi'a Muslim district. (See map) About 200,000 Lebanese, mainly Shia Villagers were driven from their homes as Israeli forces occupied their villages. Israeli insensitivity to the local population, its customs and the Shia religion gave rise to an intense reaction that would push its dominant organization, *Hizbollah* into an ancillary role in Palestinian and Syrian affairs with serious consequences up to the present day.



The Israeli invasion astonished the Carter administration, then in the midst of the Camp David peace negotiations. Acting with unusual determination, the US took the matter to the UN and secured a motion demanding Israeli withdrawal. The UN then created a force known as UNIFIL to monitor Israeli withdrawal. But, given authority only to protect itself and not given adequate arms even to do that, it was purely symbolic. Israel paid it no attention. Since it played little part in subsequent events, I will put it aside.

Overtly or covertly, there were then five active players in the Lebanese game: the Lebanese government which with few resources was attempting to play referee, the Maronite *Kataib* in the center and north, Syrian armed forces in the east and parts of the north and Israel in the south. The Palestinians were beginning to arrive.¹² I turn next to the Syrians.

¹² The American ambassador during this turbulent period was John Gunther Dean. Dean's father, Dr. Josef Dienstfertig, who had been president of the Jewish community in Breslau, fled to America in 1939 and changed his family name to Dean. Ambassador Dean has given an "inside" account of Lebanese affairs and American actions for the critical period 1978-1981 in his oral history interview (Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training: Arlington, Va., 2000)

The current Syrian government, like all previous Syrian regimes, regarded Lebanon not only as its neighbor but as its *entrepôt*. Beirut was the port for Damascus. That was that situation in peacetime; in times of foreign intervention, Beirut was another of those “chokepoints” I have described while discussing nineteenth-century British strategy. Closure of the port could choke Syria. Even more inciting than commercial interest was the memory of French imperialism. France had invaded Syria in the spring of 1920 from Lebanon, and they used Lebanon for the next 25 years as a bastion from which to dominate Syria. In reaction, successive Syrian governments had adapted Ottoman administrative practice in treating Lebanon as a sort of appendage of Syria; to them it was part of “Greater Syria.”

Consequently, the Syrians regarded intervention as justified and accepted the Lebanese government’s invitation. But Lebanon had become a risky place for Syrian action. With the arrival of the PLO leadership, the increasingly active Palestinians could provoke a battle with Israel that the Syrians knew they would lose. So, they were as hostile to the Palestinian “freedom fighters/guerrillas,” the *Fedayeen*, as were the Jordanians. From time to time, they locked up the PLO’s leaders and constantly sought to drive wedges into its structure.¹³

The Syrian soldiers quickly made themselves unwelcome. Unwelcome they were, but generally speaking the Lebanese adjusted to their presence. The Lebanese were a practical, commercially-minded people. The emotions of nationalism sat lightly on their backs. From Phoenician times, Lebanon had always been a marketplace. Particularly those merchants who were Christians profitably flouted Arab League restrictions on trade with Israel. They also profited from trade with Syria, and they did not empathize with the Palestinians. Palestinians evoked among the Lebanese the sentiments we have seen that Jewish refugees evoked among early twentieth century Englishmen and many Europeans harbor toward Muslim refugees today. They were blamed for disease, for crime and for just being there.

This unfriendly attitude soon mutated into violence. The PLO challenged the delicate balance of the “confessions,” challenged the ambitions of the Maronites and would not stop “harassing” the Israelis. It was to try to keep at least order if not peace, that the Lebanese government had called in Syrian forces and later it was to suppress, drive away or kill the Palestinians that the *Kataib* made common cause with Israel. Then, emboldened by the entry of Israel into Lebanon, the *Kataib* began to try to push the Syrians out. The Syrians struck back and, for the first time, an Arab organization, the *Kataib*, asked Israel to come to its aid. Israel did. After a series of clashes in June 1982, Israel massively invaded Lebanon. Brushing aside UNIFIL, and, paying no attention to a rare unanimous Security Council resolution demanding withdrawal, Israeli forces reached the outskirts of Beirut. I turn now to the fifth of the actors in the Lebanese drama, Israel in the context of its relations with Egypt.

Israel had faced and won another victory over Egypt in the 1973 war. Nasser’s successor Anwar Sadat had attacked Israel, as Nasser had planned to do, but then, as Nasser had opposed, sought to end the war with Israel without the return of occupied territories.

¹³ They did so even when this action required them to give aid and comfort to the most violent of the Palestinians, Arafat’s arch enemy, Sabri Khalil al-Banna, better known as “Abu Nidal.” Al-Banna, like Arafat, studied engineering but was more successful as a merchant. After the 1967 war, he first cooperated with Arafat and FATAH, but then broke away. He carried out a number of spectacular, if pointless, acts of terrorism against Israeli targets; he also tried to murder King Husain, and his group did murder several of the leaders of the PLO along with scores of others. His life was described by my late friend Patrick Seale in *Abu Nidal: A Gun For Hire* (Hutchinson: London, 1982).

Sadat wanted to end the war and turned first to the United Nations. He was given a nearly unanimous Security Council resolution that “deplored” continued Israeli occupation of Egyptian territory but the resolution was vetoed by the United States. That was the end of his first peace initiative. As an old conspirator, Sadat realized that to stop there would be to invite some “younger Nasser” to overthrow him; so, he gave the army its chance. His second peace initiative, it seemed to me at the time, was to let his military leaders to fail. I think he virtually *planned* the defeat of the Egyptian army in October 1973,¹⁴ Then, with his personal position shored up by the army’s failure, he offered to go to the UN with all the Arab states’ leaders (and some unidentified Palestinians) to negotiate a peace “based on respect for the legitimate rights of all the people in the area...provided Israel returned to the June 5, 1967 lines.” That, I suggest was his third initiative. He got nowhere. Failure led him to his fourth and most spectacular move – his unprecedented visit to Israel on November 19, 1977. His venture was widely regarded as a revolution in Middle Eastern relations and was expected to be the death knell of the Palestinian movement. So, I will need here to put it into a historical perspective.

During the build-up to the 1973 war, Prime Minister Golda Meir set the terms of what Israel would demand in a settlement. Israel would 1) retain that part of Syria it had conquered (the Golan Heights); 2) keep control over the West Bank and probably force much of the Palestinian population out; 3) tie Jordan’s economy to Israel by allowing Jordanians access to its ports at Haifa and Gaza; 4) incorporate the Gaza strip; and (5) retain a sizable area adjacent to the Straits of Tiran where the war had begun. As she laid out the program, she had Israel appropriate an additional 400 square miles of the occupied West Bank.

In the aftermath of the 1973 Egyptian defeat, as General Itzhak Rabin, then Israeli chief of staff, told me that Israel had purposefully “upped the price” of stable relations: it insisted on face-to-face rather than arms-length negotiations; it defined “reconciliation” as recognizing the existence of a Jewish independent state with open frontiers including free (that is, Israeli-dominated) trade; and it demanded the maintenance of Israeli overwhelming military superiority without any interference by UN peacekeeping forces. Rabin admitted that the Arabs could not accept these terms so they would be driven to surrender. It was essentially in reply to these terms that President Sadat made his 1977 visit to Israel.

Israel was then secure on its western front. So, it could then plan the strategy it would need to finally dispose of the Palestinians who had transferred their command structure to Lebanon. That essentially was the plan laid out by General Arik Sharon, the Israeli popular hero of the war with Egypt, who was then Minister of Defense. Probably several years in refining, it was first announced by Sharron in a speech at Tel Aviv University on December 15, 1981.¹⁵ The plan was to “decapitate” and demoralize the Palestinians and to install a *Kataib* government that would make peace with Israel. Simultaneously, Israel would “encourage” the remaining West Bank Palestinians to “transfer” to Jordan. Their move would have the effect of opening the entire West Bank to Jewish settlement, turning Jordan into “Palestine,” and so ending Palestinian claims on Israel.

¹⁴ Sadat wanted to be secure against a possible military coup like the one in which he had participated as a young officer in 1952. The Egyptian strategy was to create a war of sufficient magnitude that the world powers would have to intervene, but it never, for example, included an attack on Israel itself. Sadat stopped his forces only ten miles into Sinai at places they could not defend. I don’t think he really a “victory” and knew he could not defeat Israel. What he wanted was to protect his regime from his own soldiers by letting them fail.

¹⁵ Kept secret for over 20 years, it was finally published in the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Abronoth*, *Yedioth Abronoth*, and was quoted by Serge Schmemann as “Firestorm Over the Golan,” *International Herald Tribune*, May 12, 1997.

Sharon recognized that these moves would convulse Jordan; consequently, Israel would intervene there to install a government (replacing its king) that would sign a peace treaty. Additionally, these moves would leave Syria isolated and would force Saudi Arabia to compromise, thus making Israel the predominant Afro-Asian power.¹⁶ A more detailed presentation of Sharon's vision was laid out in February 1982 in what came to be called "the Yinon Plan."¹⁷

The existence of the Yinon Plan has been denied, but it appears to lay out a coherent and at least semi-official program, like a US National Security Strategy, for the future. Like the writings of the American neoconservatives and Muslim fundamentalists, it argued that the context in which the new strategy must be set out must take into account "the breakdown of the rationalist, humanist outlook as the major cornerstone supporting the life and achievements of Western civilization since the Renaissance." Only in that context could a national strategy make sense. So, what did Oded Yinon (and by inference Sharon) think Israel should do. In two words, expand and divide. Palestine as such would disappear; Egypt would be absorbed into Greater Israel up to the Nile and

Breaking Egypt down territorially into distinct geographical regions is the political aim of Israel in the Nineteen Eighties on its Western front... [italics in the original] Lebanon's total dissolution into five provinces serves as a precedent [sic] for the entire Arab world including Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the Arabian peninsula and is already following that track. The dissolution of Syria and Iraq later on into ethnically or religiously unique [sic] areas such as in Lebanon, is Israel's primary target on the Eastern front in the long run, while the dissolution of the military power of those states serves as the primary short term target... Iraq, rich in oil on the one hand and internally torn on the other, is guaranteed as a candidate for Israel's targets. Its dissolution is even more important for us than that of Syria... The entire Arabian peninsula is a natural candidate for dissolution due to internal and external pressures, and the matter is inevitable especially in Saudi Arabia... There is no chance that Jordan will continue to exist in its present structure for a long time, and Israel's policy, both in war and in peace, ought to be directed at the liquidation of Jordan under the present regime and the transfer of power to the Palestinian majority... Genuine coexistence and peace will reign over the land only when the Arabs understand that without Jewish rule between the Jordan and the sea they will have neither existence nor security. A nation of their own and security will be theirs only in Jordan.

In short, the sway of Israel, as Theodore Herzl proclaimed in 1904, should extend from the River Nile to the Euphrates as shown on the map on the next page.

¹⁶ Sharon's talk was published as a Government press bulletin in Jerusalem on December 15, 1981 and was summarized by Robert Neumann in *Foreign Affairs*, 62(1983).

¹⁷ Written by a former official in the Foreign Ministry, Oded Yinon, it essentially laid out Sharon's proposal. It was published in Hebrew in Jerusalem in *Kirunim*, a journal of the World Zionist Organization. Although officially denied, it accords with what is known of the thoughts and actions of Arik Sharon when he was Israeli minister of defense. See Israel Shahak (translator and editor), "The Zionist Plan for the Middle East, 1982," reprinted by *Global Research*, September 6, 2015. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/greater-israel-the-zionist-plan-for-the-middle-east/5324815>.

Direct control of such a wide area, Yinon believed, would put too much pressure on the Israeli armed forces; so, as under Western colonialism, native groups were to be created or, where they existed, fostered to supplement Israeli military might. And, as under Western colonialism, “any movement of revolt will be ‘punished’ either by mass humiliation as in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, or by bombardment and obliteration of cities, as in Lebanon now [June 1982], or by both. In order to ensure this, the plan, as explained orally, calls for the establishment of Israeli garrisons in focal places between the mini states, equipped with the necessary mobile destructive forces.”



As we know, the plan was never fully carried out – few statements of national security policy ever are fully carried out -- but 6 months after Sharon’s speech and a few weeks after the circulation within the Israeli security establishment of Yinon’s and Sharon’s plan, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982, set the first steps of the plan in motion.

In keeping with my intent to provide a framework rather than a full account, I will not detail the events of the invasion, but I must mention five aspects: *first*, the “trigger” that started the war was the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador to the UK. The attack was not carried out by the PLO, but by PLO’s and Yasir Arafat’ vicious rival, Abu Nidal, although Israel used it as an excuse for the invasion; *second*, the war was hard-fought. Whereas Israel had effectively destroyed the armies of the Arab states in a week, overcoming the PLO was not fully accomplished in 9 weeks; *third*, a significant aim of the Israeli government was what I have termed *ethnocide*. Special teams of Israeli agents raided the Palestinian archives in Beirut and removed all the documents detailing the growth of national consciousness; *fourth*, the exacerbation of fears and hatreds of Maronite Christians led the Israeli-assisted massacre by the *Kataib* of at least a thousand unarmed Palestinian refugees in United Nations-administered camps outside of Beirut, from September 16 to 18; and, *fifth*, the PLO was forced to evacuate Lebanon on December 8, under a painstakingly negotiated but not fulfilled US guarantee of safe passage, to Tunisia.¹⁸

¹⁸ For the first time, the US engaged directly in “peace-seeking.” The aim was to get the PLO out of the Middle East and the US proposed and got agreement on Tunisia as a safe – and distant – haven. I have written about these events in *Crusade and Jihad: The Thousand-Year War Between the Muslim World and the Global North* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2018), 94 ff and in several essays on my website (Williampolk.com). A revealing account was written by the American journalist, Thomas Friedman in *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (Doubleday: New York, 1989). Former US Ambassador to Lebanon John H. Kelly gave his version in Jeremy R. Azrael (ed), *U.S. and Russian Policymaking with Respect to the Use of Force* (RAND: Santa Monica, 1996), chapter 6. Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger’s withdrawal of the American Marine Corps peace-keeping force which had been sent to protect the Palestinian civilians under the terms of the deal reached between the US, the Lebanese government and the PLO was described by Robert McFarlane of the NSC as “criminally irresponsible.” It led on April 18, 1983 to the bombing of the US embassy. In response President Reagan ordered the naval shelling of Druze-Christian villages above Beirut. Various engagements followed and in turn led to the October 23 car-bombing of the US Marine Corps barracks at the Beirut airport and the French army barracks where 241 Marines and 56 French troops were killed.

The PLO withdrawal to Tunisia solved none of the Middle Eastern issues and created new North African complications. While Tunisia had fewer of the ethnic problems that affected Lebanon, its government shared the misgivings of the Lebanese about the presence of a foreign armed force. Use of that force drew Tunisia into the existing conflict: using American-supplied aircraft, the Israeli Air Force struck the PLO headquarters in Tunis on October 1, 1985, attempting to kill Arafat and killing or wounding nearly 200 senior officials. In response, the Tunisian government threatened to break relations with the United States. Agreeing that the act was a violation of International Law, the UN Security Council condemned Israel by a vote of 14 to 0. Significantly, accepting some blame, the US did not use its veto.

The apparent PLO “victory” was hollow. Despite the UN resolution, Arafat appears to have been completely disheartened. Cut off from his constituents, he gave himself up the abiding sin of Arab leaders, corruption. He is reputed to have siphoned off perhaps as much a billion dollars from PLO funds. As knowledge of his relatively high living and dishonesty spread among the poor and suppressed people in occupied Palestine, he began to lose the aura of leadership and decided he must attempt to reestablish his connection with his followers. He realized that the PLO leadership must return to what was left of Palestine.

Phase Three: Back to Palestine

During this time, the Israeli population continued to grow. A massive new wave of immigration mainly from the Soviet Union raised the Jewish part of Israel’s population to about 6 million. Nearly half of them were 21 years of age or younger. And they were different from earlier Israelis. The 1980s were, after all, almost two generations removed from the Jewish experience under the Nazis, and memories of European oppression had become distant. How far memories had faded was dramatically demonstrated in one notable instance. During the 1980s, settlers in the new Israeli town of Ariel forced the local Palestinians to wear badges inscribed with the Hebrew words for “Foreign Worker.” When the Israeli press pointed out how bitterly Jews had resented being forced to wear identifying labels (yellow stars) in Germany, the Ariel’s town government changed the wording but kept the badges¹⁹ and when three Jewish reporters came to investigate, townsmen beat them up. Not all Jews remembered Nazi oppression; increasing numbers had never suffered it.

Almost daily were other incidents. For years, Jewish settlers on the West Bank had formed vigilante “intervention forces” that the government armed and authorized to act as auxiliary police. These groups were well known for searching, raiding and intimidating Arab villagers. Even more extreme groups acted like lynch mobs. On the national level, an American, Rabbi Meir Kahane, was involved in various terrorist attacks. His followers went too far: when they also began also to attack Jews, the Israeli police moved against them. Among both Jews and Arabs, anger was endemic. But, despite all the warning signs, the sudden explosion of December 8, 1987 caught everyone, including the PLO and Arafat, by surprise. The explosion was the first truly popular revolt of the Palestinians. They called it an *Intifadah*.²⁰

¹⁹ Alan Cowell, “Documents Given to Arabs,” *The New York Times*, June 3, 1989.

²⁰ Like many Arabic words, *intifadah* is more complex than is suggested by the usual translation, “uprising.” It incorporates the notions of exhausting (provisions or patience), forcing a person to pay back what is owed, so “retribution” and, in a more primitive sense, to plumb the bottom of a well. So, to Palestinians, it meant going to the depths of their experience to take revenge.

The Israeli government struck back with massive force. The then Minister of Defense (and later Prime Minister) General Yitzhak Rabin sent 80,000 soldiers into the affected areas and authorized them to fire live ammunition into demonstrators. As he told *New York Times* correspondent Anthony Lewis, “The first priority is to use force, might, beatings...” His words were explained by an analyst in the *Jerusalem Post*, ‘beating suspected protest leaders ‘is considered more effective than detentions...A detainee is released after 18 days unless there is evidence to hold him and he may then resume stoning soldiers. But if troops break his hand, he won’t be able to throw stones for a month and a half.’ Correspondent John Kifner reported in *The New York Times* on February 25, 1988, breaking bones is “a new, officially declared policy of the Israeli army and the police...” The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* revealed that there were a number of reports of security police beating Palestinian suspects to death.

And it wasn’t only the security police who acted: the Israeli Army admitted that it allowed teenage Jewish paramilitary trainees to beat Palestinian detainees with clubs, breaking their bones. The young Israeli trainees were developing attitudes that would affect the rest of their lives. And, since for 16 months during 1988 and 1989 all the schools and colleges were closed, young Palestinian men and women had little to do but nurse grudges and throw stones. Hatred had taken root in the next generation of both Palestinians and Israelis.²¹

The consensus of observers including the Israeli intelligence service (Mossad) and the chief of the Israeli General Staff was that the Palestinians perceived a mortal challenge of such magnitude that it forged them into a nation. Even the normally passive Israeli Arabs joined. A UN investigation noted that “For the first time...the Arab population of Israel held a strike in sympathy with the population of the territories...”

Meanwhile, the reaction of the American Jewish community was divided: The head of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations called the beatings “an offense to the Jewish spirit” that “betrays the Zionist dream.” He cabled the Israeli president, “We plead with you to bring this madness to an end.” But some American Jewish groups reported that contributions had actually increased with news of the events and “some have called wanting to arrange education and fund-raising parties, asking who from the army can come and speak.”

²¹ Casualty, wounding and demolition statistics were variously reported, but even the minimal figures are staggering. During those months 25,599 Palestinians were injured and at least 430 were killed, 48 were expelled across frontiers, 176 houses were blown up or bulldozed by the IDF and 6,599 Palestinians were imprisoned, the United Nations “Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the population of the Occupied Territories” reported on October 24, 1988. The Committee’s activities had been restricted by the Israeli government, but when it was not allowed to investigate it quoted Knesset Member Dedi Zucker as saying in a speech at the Knesset that in the previous ten months, “1,999 Arabs had been injured from beatings with truncheons, causing breaking of bones, 647 were injured from gas and 979 from shooting...” Acting on the report of its own investigators, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 43/21 of November 3, 1988 in which it “Condemns Israel’s persistent policies and practices violating the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenseless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, collective punishment and detentions, as well as denial of access to the media [and]...[and] Demands that Israel, the occupying Power, abide immediately and scrupulously by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist forthwith from its policies and practices that are in violation of the provisions of the Convention...” But, killings and beatings continued. And, as Michael Schaeffer Omer-Man reported in the magazine +972 on June 17, 2018 the Knesset is considering a bill to criminalize, with mandatory prison sentences, videotaping, recording or photographing (even by Israeli journalists) of beatings.

In the occupied territories, as in their repressed communities, including Iraq under American occupation, daily events poisoned minds. Prison camps became “schools of hatred” in which the politically active communicated their beliefs and experiences to the new arrivals. Like the earlier Jewish terrorist group, the Irgun, and dissident Russians under Stalin with their *samizdat*, the Palestinians began to circulate among themselves mimeographed newspapers and articles. Avidly read, they focused public attention on the *Intifadah*. The audience was there. As Robert Friedman wrote in *The New York Review of Books*, on March 29, 1990, “Every refugee family I met in the occupied territories had at least one son in prison, in the hospital or dead.” In the twenty years after 1967, 300,000 Arabs had been arrested,¹⁹ Without the guidance of the PLO, indeed often against its orders, Palestinians took up their slingshots and rocks. Allusion to the story of David and Goliath was frequently made – and reversed -- Israel had become Goliath. Palestinians saw themselves as so many Davids.

The Israeli chief of staff was reported on June 17, 1989 on Israeli radio saying that the uprising could not be resolved militarily “short of mass deportation, starvation or genocide.” He was wrong: as living conditions of the Palestinians deteriorate, hatred grew. The Israeli government estimated that over half of the occupied territories had passed into Israeli hands by 1986. Israeli Chief of Staff General Rafael Eitan was quoted in *The New York Times* of April 14, 1983 as saying, “We declare openly that the Arabs have no right to settle on even one centimeter of *Eretz Israel*...Force is all they understand. We shall use the ultimate force until the Palestinians come crawling to us on all fours.”

Well-tended were the vines that would produce the grapes of wrath.

During these years, a sequence of *publicized meetings* took place between the PLO and the Israeli government -- in Madrid, Camp David, Taba, Annapolis and elsewhere. I will skip over them because they were more public relations affairs than productive encounters. Meaningless events is also how they seemed to the Palestinians, but there was one series of *secret meetings* that was to have long-term effects. That was the Oslo sequence of 1993-1995.

At Oslo, under the auspices of the Norwegian government, PLO representatives met with a group of Israelis, headed by Yossi Beilin, and put together an agreement, based on Israeli and American proposals, ostensibly to push toward an end to the Palestine conflict. Palestinians were to get limited self-government under a new “Palestinian National Authority,” *al-sultah al-Wataniyah al-Filistiniyah*). Established on May 4, 1994, it agreed to *recognize Israel* and to *stop resistance* in areas under its control. The PLO was to be sidetracked.

Later meetings divided “Arab Palestine” into three parts: the Palestinian Authority was to exercise limited control over Area A (the urban areas of the West Bank and Gaza, shown here in color); Area B (the rural areas) would be under joint control. Area C (which included Israeli settlements, Israeli-only roads and the whole Jordan Valley) was to remain under Israeli Control. East Jerusalem was not included in the Agreement. Palestinians were banned from about 60% of the West Bank. The result has been likened to an archipelago of bits and pieces. As a coherent unit, Palestine ceased to exist.



The Oslo meetings had been kept secret in tacit recognition that what was there agreed would be violently opposed by the Palestinian community. Indeed, even before the meetings, increasing numbers of Palestinians viewed Arafat as a traitor to their cause. Their view was underlined rather than alleviated when, in the midst of continued violence and a growing sense of deprivation, a photo was circulated of Arafat and General Rabin shaking hands at the White House. It was seen in Europe and America as the beginning of the peace process, but in Gaza and the West Bank, as a sellout by the already discredited FATAH leader. And, daily beset by dangers and provocations, Palestinians saw Oslo's legacy as a litany of promises deferred or unfulfilled. Year by year, six years after the agreement, they experienced more loss of water rights, farm lands and even whole villages to Israeli settlements, less freedom of movement, and worse economic conditions. Predictably there was an explosion.

That explosion on September 28, 2000 is what came to be called the Second *Intifadah*. Like the first, *Intifadah* it was ruthlessly repressed, but repression did not bring peace.

Seeing that repression had not worked and under American auspices, a new Israeli Prime Minister laid out a plan at a “summit” at Camp David in 2002. There, risking his career, and perhaps his life, on return of several villages and release of some Palestinian political prisoners, Ehud Barak went further than any previous Israeli leader had gone. But Arafat saw his offers as a trap in which he would be forced to swallow a politically fatal deal. He realized that he could not accept the terms and stay in power or perhaps even stay alive. Generous from an Israeli perspective, they were inadequate from a Palestinian perspective: they were silent on the question of refugees, the land exchange was unbalanced, and much of Arab East Jerusalem was to remain under Israeli sovereignty. Seeking to shore up his declining authority, Arafat flatly turned down the Israeli proposal – strictly speaking there was never a formal or detailed offer. The Camp David summit was a classic case of misaddressed messages. Hostilities continued to grow.

A detailed account of the happenings of these years during and shortly after the Second *Intifadah* in which Palestinian society was convulsed. would add little of lasting import except for two developments: the first was begun following the death of Yasir Arafat in November 2004 in secret negotiations between the PLO leadership and the Israeli government. In effect, the new PLO leader, Mahmoud Abbas, tried to copy the path earlier staked out by King Husain. Husain had kept himself in power and alive by deftly moving between the opposing forces of Israel and Palestinian nationalists. Husain had barely managed in what were politically more primitive time, As conditions became more sensitive around the turn of the century, Abbas had less room for maneuver. He also lived in the age of the “whistleblower.”

Abbas’ whistleblower was a French lawyer of Palestinian origin named Ziyad Clot who had volunteered to help the PLO negotiate better terms. Having access to information on the secret negotiations, Clot smelled a rat. He concluded²² that what was advertised as

the ‘peace process’ was a deceptive farce in which Abbas collaborated with Israel and the United States in imposing biased terms that had been dictated

²² He published his account under the title *Il n’y aura pas d’Etat palestinien* or *There will be no Palestinian State* (Paris: Ed. Max Milo, 2010). Other information was published in 2011 by the Israeli magazine +972. *Al Jazeera* got access to and published some 1,700 files containing thousands of pages of memos, emails and minutes. Also see Seumas Milne and Ian Black, “Secret papers reveal slow death of Middle East peace process,” *The Guardian*, January 23, 2011.

by Israel and systematically endorsed by the US and EU...Far from enabling a negotiated fair end of the conflict, the pursuit of the Oslo process has deepened Israeli segregationist policies and justified the tightening of the security control imposed on the Palestinian population as well as its geographical fragmentation. Far from preserving the land on which to build a State, it has tolerated intensification of colonization of Palestinian territory.

If Clot was right that Abbas' PLO had misrepresented the Palestinian people, and subsequent events make clear that many Palestinians agreed, who could lead them? The people of Gaza thought they knew.

Phase Four: The Rise of *Hamas*

Having tried such nationalist movements as *wataniyah*, *qawmiyah* and *Baathism* and having flirted with socialism or *ijtimaiyah*, some Arab thinkers and much of Arabic society has come full-circle. Seeing the failures of secular ideologies, many Arabs began to think that all that was left for them was the Islamic core. So, this must take us, as it took many Palestinians and increasing numbers of peoples all over the Middle East, Africa and Asia back to *salafiyah*.

Salafiyah is one of those Arabic words that defy simple translation. Even native Arabic speakers usually translate it as “reactionary.” But the concept is more complex. The word *salafi* in classical Arabic means a person who stands *both* in the rearguard and in the vanguard -- Arabic delights in such contrasts. The logic behind the apparent paradox is not linguistic but political. Shared by Christian “Puritans,” it is that moving ahead requires a return to a ritually-“pure” base. Both Muslim and Christian fundamentalists believe that they must go back to the unadulterated message and lead or force their contemporaries to implement it. However much they differed, both Muslim and Christian fundamentalists were in this sense *salafis*. New England Puritans implemented a draconian, Biblically-based legal code, complete with lashings, burnings and stoning to death for such crimes as adultery, sodomy and blasphemy. Today's militant Muslim Fundamentalists, similarly, have insisted on a literal interpretation of early Islamic belief and practice. We see this in the *Ikhwan al-Muslimin* (Egypt and elsewhere), HAMAS (Gaza), *Hizbollah* (Lebanon), ISIS (Syria and Iraq), *Mujahidin* and *Taliban* (Afghanistan and Pakistan), Islamic Courts Union or *Itihadu'l-Muhakim al-Islamiya*, and *Ash-Shabab* (Somalia), the Moro Liberation Front or *Jabhat Tahrir Moro* and *Abu Sayyaf* (the Philippines); *al-Qaida* (Yemen) and others throughout Asia and Africa. Despite repression, *Salafiyah* sets the framework for much of today's happenings. An attempt to get Palestinian *Salafis* and secularists to bridge their differences, in October 2017 failed. I focus here on the results in Gaza.

Energized by belief and infuriated by Israeli practices, the people of Gaza have risen in fury. In intensity, their revolt resembles the 1943 Jewish uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto against the Nazis, but it has lasted much longer. The reaction of the Israeli government has been savage. While many would like to close their eyes – as many did on the earlier plight of the Jews – we need to know what happened. To learn what happened, I turn to the UN inquiry.

Under the chairmanship of Justice Richard Goldstone of South Africa, a UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) team made an exhaustive study of the Israeli occupation. Its results were published on September 25, 2009. Having decided not to cooperate with the UN mission, the Israelis were furious about its findings. Both they and their supporters in America and

Britain put extraordinary pressure on the members of the team to alter the findings. Goldstone, a notably sober, experienced and fair-minded man, although himself Jewish, was even accused of anti-Semitism. He cracked under the strain. In a letter to the editor of *The Washington Post* on April 1, 2009, he disavowed what he and the other team members had found.²³ Themselves distinguished investigators, the other members were outraged and reaffirmed their findings. Indeed, since the report was meticulous, it is difficult to see how Goldstone could have retracted its details. The findings were upheld by the UN General Assembly, the UNHRC, the European Union and the relevant non-governmental organizations.

The Report makes clear²⁴ that the Israeli intent was to make Gaza unlivable. It aimed to do that by destroying food: "...the only purpose [of destroying a mill] was to put an end to the production of flour in the Gaza Strip." (§ 50, 915-927); water (§52,1022); housing: "3,354 houses [were] completely destroyed and 11,112 partially damaged" (§53,67); power sources (§65,187) and sewage treatment (§971). The Committee pointed out (§57,67) that these measures particularly harmed children, large numbers of whom were already "stunted" and in poor health from lack of an adequate diet.²⁵ Women were "detained in degrading conditions, deprived of food and access to sanitary facilities, and exposed to the elements in January without any shelter." (§57) Women and children as well as men were used as human shields (§58). "The Palestinian men who were taken to detention facilities in Israel were subjected to degrading conditions of detention, harsh interrogation, beatings and other physical and mental abuse." (§59) This treatment was "contrary to fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and human right law...Such acts are grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions and constitute a war crime." (§60). "Hospitals and ambulances were targeted by Israeli attacks." (§68). "Some 280 schools and kindergartens were destroyed." (§70)

Gaza was not the only or even the first target.

The Mission noted that "Settler violence in the West Bank in the period preceding the Israeli military operations in Gaza...[is a result of] Israel's decade-long policy of facilitating and encouraging the settling of its citizens inside occupied Palestinian territory, defined as transfer of population and prohibited by international humanitarian law." (§1384) Casual and unnecessary cruelty was repeatedly evident. They singled out one civilian who had been shot

²³ Goldstone's disavowal conjures the then British Prime Minister's disavowal of the results of a high level and official British inquiry into the Palestine problem in 1930 by way of a letter to *The (London) Times*.

²⁴ I will summarize the most important findings by paragraphs (§) as they set the conditions under which subsequent events transpired.

²⁵ Already in 2003, according to UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen in "Hungry in Gaza" (*The Guardian*, March 5, 2003) "Palestinians are suffering in the main from micro-nutrient deficiencies" that cause children to "fail to grow and develop normally; their cognition is damaged, often severely and irreversibly, and their immune systems are compromised..." He continued, "The stark fact is that almost a quarter of Palestinian children are suffering from acute or chronic malnutrition. His finding was cited and confirmed by Gideon Levy, "Gaza's Darkness." (*Haaretz*, September 3, 2006). Patrick Cockburn, "Palestinians forced to scavenge for food on rubbish dumps," (*The Independent*, September 9, 2006), reports that 4% of Gaza's agricultural land had been destroyed by Israeli bulldozers, that 70% of the population could not meet their food needs and that "The 35,000 fishermen cannot fish because Israeli gunboats will fire on them if they go more than a few hundred yards from the shore." Peter Beaumont, "Israeli blockade 'forces Palestinians to search rubbish dumps for food' (*The Guardian*, December 21, 2008) notes that the UNRWA figures show that 51.8% of Gaza's then 1.5 million inhabitants lived below the poverty level. And, Scott Wilson, "Sealed off by Israel, Gaza Reduced to Beggary" (*The Washington Post*, December 15, 2007), reports that "The Israeli government is increasingly restricting the import into the Gaza Strip of batteries [even for hearing aids for the 20,000 hearing-impaired children], anesthesia drugs, antibiotics, tobacco, coffee, gasoline, diesel fuel..." Etc.

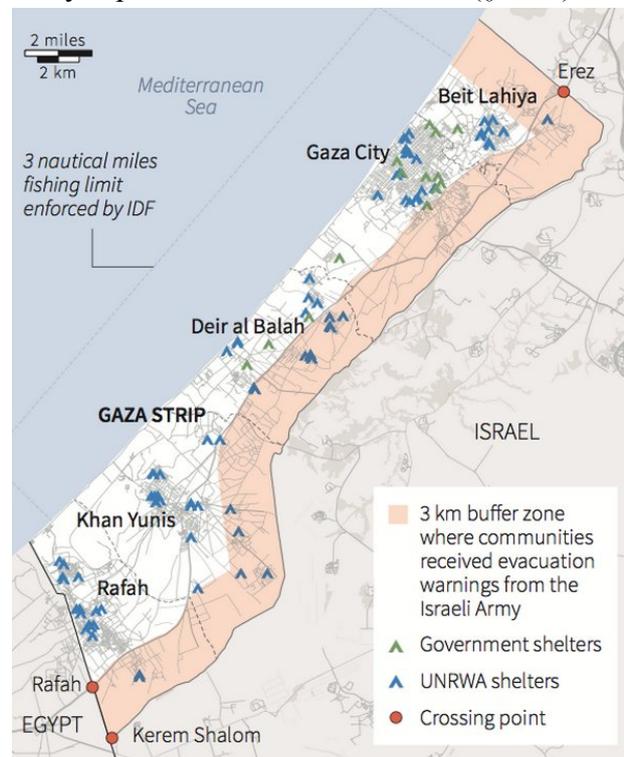
in front of his family while “pleading for help from his wife, children and relatives....[but they] were under a very credible threat of being shot themselves if they came to his help, and [they] were compelled to abandon him on the road to bleed to death.” (§742). “The Mission found that the Israeli armed forces repeatedly opened fire on civilians who were not taking part in the hostilities and who posed no threat to them.” (§ 800)

Overall, the Report pointed out that “Israel’s military operation in Gaza between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009...fits into a continuum of policies aimed at pursuing Israel’s political objectives...Many such policies are based on or result in violations of international human rights and humanitarian law (§1877)...the policy of blockade that preceded the operations and that in the Mission’s view amounts to collective punishment [were] intentionally inflicted by the Government of Israel on the people of the Gaza Strip...These measures were imposed by Israel purportedly to isolate and weaken Hamas after its electoral victory in view of the perceived continuing threat to Israel’s security that it represented. Their effect was compounded by the withholding of financial and other assistance by some donors on similar grounds. Adding hardship to the already difficult situation in the Gaza Strip, the effects of the prolonged blockade did not spare any aspect of the life of Gazans.” (§1878).

Almost universally, other observers have echoed the UN inquiry’s findings and have drawn comparisons with other uprisings. Measures included blockade and prevention of exit even for desperately ill or wounded patients, fed an unemployment rate of nearly 50%, gross overcrowding with nearly 2 million people crammed into what has been termed “the world’s largest open air prison,” where virtually all drinking water is polluted for lack any means to clean it. Gazans found that “Life and Death are the Same.”²⁶ Revolt and attempts to break out inevitably followed.

On March 30, 2018 Gaza erupted in what amounted to a third *Intifadah*. The citizens of Gaza began what they termed “the great march of return” (*Masirah al-Awdah al-Kubra*). In the months that followed when thousands of Palestinians approached to within 200 meters the barriers erected by the Israeli forces, thousands of men, women and children (and even clearly marked medics) were shot by snipers.

The professed aim of the demonstrators was to force the Israeli government to allow their right of “Return” (*haqq al-awdah*),²⁷ but their immediate aim was to focus world attention on their plight. They failed in both endeavors: on the one hand, the Israelis just shot down the



Source: Reuters, UN OCHA. IDF-Israeli Defense Forces

²⁶ Jack Khoury, ‘Life and Death are the Same’: What Gazans Are Saying About the Latest Round of Violence With Israel,’ *Haaretz*, May 30, 2018.

²⁷ UN General Assembly Resolution 194 which was reaffirmed in Resolution 302 establishing UNRWA and yearly reaffirmed in subsequent resolutions. Israel was not a member of the UN when the first resolution was passed (December 11, 1948) and has not allowed its implementation.

protesters. About 14,000 were wounded and about a hundred killed by live fire and chemicals in lethal concentration and, on the other hand, the international community did not react effectively although Israeli actions have been criticized by UN officials and various independent observers. The United States even blocked a move to investigate.²⁸

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Conclusion: Is peace feasible? If not, What lies ahead?

Both Jews and Arabs believe they are right. *Half-right* has proven not to be a sustainable position: both Jewish liberals and Arab compromisers have been pushed aside by those who see the issue in stark divisions: they believe that either Israel must be a Jewish state or Palestine must be an Arab state.

It follows, I believe, that no move toward compromise will be successful unless it is effectively pressed by outside forces.

Thus, the question is, ‘will such pressures be applied?’ So far, at least, pressure has been applied only to the Arabs. The Israelis have staked out for themselves and have been awarded by the world community a position of immunity. The result is that Israel has been treated *not as a state* in the community of nations, and so subject to its laws and customs, *but as something unique in history, a retribution.*

Unless or until Israel is treated as a nation-state, I see no hope for peace. That this will ultimately happen, I believe, is inevitable but far off in the distant future. Meanwhile, Israel will seek to delay being subjected to the comity of nations while pursuing a *domestic policy* of growth of power and population, a *strategic policy* of domination and a *foreign affairs policy* of maintaining the support of the world Jewish community, Christian fundamentalists and American politicians.

Israel today is a modern, rich industrial state with a large and growing population while the Palestinians remain poor, mostly unprepared to engage at least militarily in the modern world and still suffering from what I have called “post-imperial malaise.” The weaknesses of the Palestinians are manifest; those of the Israelis require more analysis. I turn to them.

To try to get a broad view on my guesses, I have checked my conclusions against a wide variety of opinions, ranging from the far Right to the far Left. I confess I have most often listened to the liberals and “peaceniks.” They have been my “siren song;” but, not being, like Odysseus, tied to the mast, I have reached out also to their critics.

Among their critics are former leaders of the Israeli intelligence service (Mossad). Unlike the “peaceniks,” they are experienced and hardened practitioners of war and repression. They offer an informed and frank set of views on what Israeli leaders see as the art of the possible. Conveniently, the most widely read Israeli Hebrew-language newspaper, *Yedioth Abronoth*, on March 30, 2018 published a symposium to bring out their analyses.

²⁸ A particularly horrible new weapon, used by snipers, is what is known as the “butterfly bullet.” On impact, it expands. These bullets are the modern and more lethal version of the hollow-point ‘dum-dum’ bullets that were banned by the Hague Convention of 1899. The senior UN official on the spot and the doctor who tried to treat the injured observed that they cause such damage to muscle, internal organs and bones that those hit would probably never again walk normally. Israel denies using them.

Putting all my sources together, and factoring in what we might call the “Mossad view,” I find that the dilemmas faced by the Israelis come down to these three:

1) To the extent that “traditional” Zionism remains a guide, the Israelis want two incompatible outcomes: they want to be a Jewish state and a democracy. They have managed to delay facing this dilemma by driving out the bulk of the Arab population in the 1940s and since have tread a fine line between apartheid and inclusion for those Palestinians who remain in Israel. This line will disappear as the Palestinians increase in number and are ultimately “absorbed” and as significant numbers of Jews emigrate. As a former head of Moasad, General Danny Yatom, who was a member of the Knesset for the Labor Party and chief of staff to Prime Minister Ehud Barak, reflected on current choices, he concluded that a bi-national state would be the end of both the Jewish and democratic state. At whatever cost to democracy, he and others – probably most Israelis -- believe, Israel must be a Jewish state.

2) Despite intense effort over the last century, Israeli Jewish society remains fractured. This is true politically, socially and culturally. In several categories, divisions have grown. 9 in 10 of the new immigrants are from the former Soviet Union. They did not participate in the Zionist movement, have rejected its socialist inspiration (exemplified in the *kibbutz* movement) and were not affected by the Holocaust. They are from that portion of the *Ashkenazim* who remained in Russia while others migrated to the West in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some are not *Ashkenazim* but descendants or mixtures of *Khazars*, an originally Turkic or Mongol people, *Gruzim* or *Juhuro* of the Caucasus, and/or the Karaites of the Crimea. The contemporaries of these groups fit into the Israeli political establishment on the Far Right and emphasize power over democracy. They make up the bulk of the Settler population.

The alliance with them of the Ultra-Orthodox (*Haredim*) works against the previously dominant *Ashkenazim* and appears to be one of the reasons for the large scale (about 200,000) emigration of them and of the more westernized *Sefardim*. Mossad General Zvi Zamir expressed strong concern over the role of the *Haredim*. They “have,” he said, “enormous influence over the country’s character, and there isn’t any counterweight in the leadership.” The result, presumably, will be further emphasis on the absolute religious requirement to “obey God’s covenant.” That is, not to give up any of what is now and, in their view, always was “Israel.” This represents a reversal of the traditional position of the *Haredim* that Israel is not a land but a religious way of life. Today, for them, every inch of “Biblical Israel” is holy ground.

So far, left out of the benefits accruing to these groupings are the *Mizrahim* (or “Oriental” Jews) (Ethiopian Jews, *Beta Israel*, Yemeni Jews, *Teimanim*, Cochin or Black Jews, the most ancient of India’s Jews). They are the new proletariat of Israel. Focusing on them, former Mossad chief Efraim Halevy, not a general but a lawyer who comes from an Orthodox family background, lamented that *Mizrahi* “Jewishness...isn’t recognized. We’ve created here a very grim reality in which a large part of those people can’t conduct normal lives, even if they served in the army. That’s intolerable...it leads to extremism.”

Rifts remain deep within Israeli society, particularly between the *Mizrahim* and *Ashkenazim*, said former Mossad chief Nahum Admoni. Admoni said he had hoped that the divisions would “heal over the years. That hasn’t happened, and there’s no one who is trying to reduce that [schism], but to the contrary...”

Is this diversity germane to the issue of peace?

I suggest it is in two ways: on the one hand, Israel (like many countries) has used service in the armed forces to homogenize diversity and, on the other hand, it has used war (also like many countries) to promote nationalism. Thus, I believe it promotes tendencies toward Israeli expansion and/or conflict with neighboring states and also against efforts at accommodation even with those Palestinians who have become Israeli citizens.

3) Contrariwise, the previously solid support of the American Jewish community for a bellicose and uncompromising Israeli policy is being called into question. So far, the signs of change are few and weak, but in comparison to the fervor and unity of earlier times, splits within groups of Israeli supporters are today evident. No longer is a loose use of the charge of “anti-Semitism” quite so effective in squelching legitimate inquiry or criticism. Treating Israel as a state rather than a retribution for the Holocaust is still unacceptable to many. This mindset is nurtured by groups of people with various motivations: Anti-Semitism is ugly and is rightly deplored by decent citizens; protection of Israel, “right or wrong” is understandably favored by the large number of dual citizens; the traditional generosity of the Jewish community in endowing many museums, hospitals and schools has created a justified public approval; and the weakness of the American political system with its dependence on what amount to political bribes has caused many elected officials to support Israel even when its actions harm both America and, in the long term, Israel. But, it seems likely to me that the trend to think more rationally, now faintly evident, will grow. This will be better for everyone – Americans, Palestinians and Israelis.

Paradoxically, I find reason to believe that this trend will become more likely in Israel than in America. The Israeli press publishes information that few Americans ever see. A growing number of young Israelis, even in the armed forces, react against what they are beginning to see as injustice to the Palestinians. Former Mossad chief Tamir Pardo, who served and then split with Prime Minister Netanyahu, commented that the sense of injustice is not current but may arise: if it does, it will create “a problem for our grandchildren that they won’t be able to cope with, and it could very well be that they will simply leave [Israel].”

It follows from all the above considerations, I believe, that discussions over the issue of whether Israel-Palestine is to become a single state or a binational state are just games. Although the Israeli tactics are flexible, Israeli strategy is fixed. Israelis are determined, as Zionists have been since Herzl first proclaimed the aim of Zionism, to be a *Judenstaat*. In it, there is not now and never was a place for the Palestinians. Western imperialists thought they could bridge the unbridgeable with clever formulations or geographical divisions. Western liberals believed that Palestinians would accommodate. Each effort failed because Europeans found Israel useful; Jews found it vital; and Palestinians were not strong enough to stop them. There is change in all three of these positions but it is unlikely to be rapid or even necessarily productive of peace.

So, let me cut to the bottom line: if there is no effective move toward peace, what is likely?

For the foreseeable future, I believe the answer is sporadic low-intensity warfare. The Israeli aim will be to make life intolerable for the “near-foreign” Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza and probably eventually for the “domestic” Palestinians. I believe further that attempting to carry out the security doctrine for truly “foreign” areas, announced by Arik

Sharon and spelled out by Oded Yinon, will prove irresistible. Thus, I anticipate Intermittent larger-scale warfare with emphasis on air strikes, punitive raids and assassinations interspersed with ceasefires and peace conferences. Those will be tactics but strategically I think that Israel will attempt a complete takeover of the West Bank, Golan and perhaps the realization of “Greater Israel.”

Is Greater Israel a real possibility? As Mossad director Tamir Pardo summed up his view of the Israeli dilemma, “The central problem from 1967 until today is that Israel, across the entire breadth of its political establishment, hasn’t decided what country it wants to be. . . . If the State of Israel doesn’t decide what it wants, in the end there will be a single state between the sea and the Jordan. That is the end of the Zionist vision.”

Pardo’s remark was picked up by General Danny Yatom, who said, “That’s a country that will deteriorate into either an apartheid state or a non-Jewish state, if we continue to rule the [West Bank] territories. I see that as an existential danger...the Palestinians and the people who represent them are the partner we need to engage with.”

Sadly, I do not see that as happening. Rather, I think that the Arabs will continue to hope that Israelis will give up and leave and that the Israelis will continue to hope that they can keep the Arabs weak and divided indefinitely.

I see no peace in our time.

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