

Reiner Bernstein:

Our Middle East

The confrontation and hostility between Israel and the Palestinians is a conflict *sui generis*, even though they are embedded into political, social and economic manifestations and developments in the region. Promoting the ideas of Middle East peace since many years among the German public in conversations with German politicians and members of parliament the intention of my paper as a case study in conflict resolution is to show that

- the German government is well-informed about the developments about Israeli-Palestinian interactions, but refrains from pursuing a diplomatic attitude of political determination. With reference to the search for a joint European external relations policy the discourse among international diplomats, scholars, and intellectuals is neglected. This is all the more surprising, since the German and European parties do not get tired to underscore their desire to assist peace between the Israeli and the Palestinian people;

- public opinion in the United States, including large parts of the Jewish population, shifts continuously to a critical examination of the U.S. Middle East policy. Within the Administration Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is trying to exploit her close relationship with George W. Bush to modify or even to overcome the aura as of giving a general green light to Israeli military adventurism as a follow-up of the U.S. behaviour in Afghanistan and Iraq. Rice “seems convinced,” Dennis Rossⁱ confirmed, “that she can put in place a new foundation to guide peacemaking in the future, and even if this foundation cannot be implemented any time soon, it will provide the essential baseline for a two-state solution when it becomes possible.”¹ But until the Administration does not put pressure onto the Israeli government to provide substance to the negotiating process the chances for a two-state solution fade

ⁱ In an interview with “Haaretz” in October 2008 the paper speculated that Ross may be made Secretary of State in case Barack Obama is elected on November 4, 2008.

away, since after the conference in Annapolis the parties met over fifty times until March 2008, without delivering any recognizable results, on the contrary. Her biographers portrayed the Secretary of State simultaneously as little successful². At the end of her term in Washington Rice didn't find a clue about the Middle East;

– the Israeli government has open expressed its understanding that the status quo is detrimental to Israel's vested interests domestically and internationally. But Ehud Olmert wants to preserve the upper hand in the ongoing diplomatic battle about an accord with the Palestinians and does not shy away to "say the opposite today of what he said yesterday without batting an eyelash," as one of the leading Israeli commentators remarked;³ Olmert's language has nothing to do with the policy of his cabinet on the ground. At the same time he wants to avert any foreign interventions – including US American interference – to come to an agreement according to the stipulations of his own. Moreover, it seems that he is prepared to sacrifice an agreement in case the implementation of its commitments needs the support and the coordination of the international community and especially of Washington;⁴

– the confrontation between Fatah (Mahmoud Abbas ["Abu Mazen"]) and Hamas (Ismail Haniyeh) is in part the legacy of political and structural fallacies and omissions in the era of Yasser Arafat. Under the circumstances of the Israeli occupation the Palestinian Authority is determined to a course of national reconciliation without giving a hand to Hamas which represents more than half of the Palestinian population – and at the same time running the negotiations with Israel to make digest the "painful concessions" the Palestinians have to pay in generating an agreement. This is a too risky game Abbas cannot win. The failure to hammer out a substantial agreement with Israel has strengthened the reputation of and the confidence in Hamas. That instigated even Jewish US American institutions to demand from Washington to find "a way to bring Hamas into the [political] process."⁵ This requirement did not deter Condoleezza Rice to criticize former President and Nobel Peace Prize Winner of 2002 Jimmy Carter's idea to meet the Chief of the Political

Bureau of Hamas in Damascus, Khaled Meshal, within a study mission in the Middle East.

To elaborate my theses I collected large quantities of contemporary materials. The quotations from the Israeli and Arab media are usually taken from the English-language internet editions, unless I took the citation from Hebrew. In those cases it is mentioned separately. My central thesis tends to the conclusion that all international endeavours to shape the operational framework and to prop up the political outlines for an independent and viable Palestinian state have been in vain. The future of the Israeli-Palestinian interrelationship will be defined within other than nation-state parameters.

I. Some Remarks to the German and European Approach to the Middle East

1. The special relationship between Germany and Israel after the *Shoah*

Beyond the “business as usual”-style in the spheres of economy, sciences, culture, and other bilateral areas we notice a manifest political ambiguity. The German government is well-informed about the constraints of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Ze’ev Maozⁱⁱ once called the never-ending game of political speculations, summit conferences, and declarations of intent “the tragedy of peace, or the paradox of peace.”⁶ Yet, Berlin is afraid of drawing diplomatically meaningful conclusions. Israeli governments enjoy the acceptance of their interpretation of what they call “peace process”. The remembrance of the *Shoah* as a moral and human catastrophe has developed to the provision of extensive political benefits for the Israeli policy, instead of considering what Yossi Beilinⁱⁱⁱ advocated for

ⁱⁱ Professor Ze’ev Maoz was head of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at the Tel Aviv University and lectures now at the University of California.

ⁱⁱⁱ Yossi Beilin, Israel’s Deputy Foreign Minister in the Rabin-Peres Government and Minister of Justice and Religious Affairs in the period of Prime Minister Ehud Barak, was the leader of the Israel team to the Geneva Initiative.

“...the special relationship that binds together our two countries must, in my view, translate into a constructive dialogue about the future, not only the past. I have often told my German counterparts that a true friendship must not mean blind support and diplomatic taps on the back for whatever Israel is doing. It must dare enough to include a clear-eyed vision and a frank discussion of Israel’s best long-term interests, which are, after all, the interests of peace.”⁷

“You must not decide between pro-Israel or pro-Palestinian,” Amos Oz. “You must take side for peace.”⁸ Chancellor Angela Merkel has communicated Germany’s return to the transatlantic path and shies away from a cohesive stance of her own with regard to the Middle East: The German government entertains the machination that Israel stands perpetually with her back on the verge of destruction by its Arab neighbours and contemporarily by Iran. Berlin employs its reservations within the European Union like the United States that uses its veto in the U.N. Security Council.

The imprint of the *Shoah* as an obligation to support the Israeli policy is not convincing to all Israelis. For Daniel Levy^{iv} Israel has no special moral case, as long as the right to exist is not in jeopardy; in the same way “TIME” senior editor Tony Karon (South Africa) rejected the “idea that out people’s historic suffering somehow exempts Israel from moral reproach.”⁹ The supremacy of the Israeli army in the region is undisputed. But German politicians do not spare pains to neglect the boasting words of Ehud Barak that Israel “is the strongest country in the vicinity of 1,500 kilometers,” let alone the fact that Israel lives in peace with the most powerful Arab country, with Egypt. The parliamentary opposition admitted at least an interdependence between Israeli and Palestinian setbacks so that “the whole peace process until now did not bear fruit”.¹⁰ The imagination of Israel’s deadly vulnerability did not ask why the governments in Jerusalem shrugged away regularly from well-proportioned outlines of conflict resolution that their close friends and informal allies presented. It was the author Meir

^{iv} Daniel Levy was the advisor for Jerusalem to Prime Minister Ehud Barak and afterwards the man behind the legal draft of the Geneva Initiative. Now he serves as director of “Prospects for Peace Initiative” at “The Century Foundation” and as director of “Middle East Initiative” at the “New America Foundation” in Washington, D.C.

Shalev who worried that the continuing occupation threatens the existence
Israel more and more.¹¹

2. German policy and public opinion

In Germany the disparity between governmental statements to promote peace on the one hand and the impatience of public opinion about the deficits of implementing those official intentions on the other is an open secret. The gap has generated a dangerous climate. Israel's ambassador to Berlin Shimon Stein has lamented the dramatic decline of the Israeli image among the German population, whereas he complimented the attitudes of the political elites to Israel as fortunately unchanged.

An Israeli commentator summarized the distinct sensibilities with the words that after World War II Germans suspect power as immoral, while for Jews the powerlessness is untenable.¹² But contrary to what Ambassador Stein pronounced German officials in ministries and parliaments do not conceal anymore their uneasiness about Israeli policy in private meetings and on condition of confidentiality. But they are terrified to be charged with deep-rooted anti-Semitic and at best unintentional prejudices. We know of many experiences that members of the Israeli institutions and enterprises have utilized that anxiety the more the government in Jerusalem is examined by international observers and called upon urgently to redress its policy. Fierce attacks of "Honestly Concerned," a website financed by right-wing Jewish-American and Israeli institutions, on Minister of Development Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul after her visit in Damascus did not cause the heads of the official Press and Information Office in Berlin to respond appropriately.

3. German and European disposals for a joint Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) approach

In a resolution of June 22, 1967 the European Parliament demonstrated its conviction that all problems in dispute must be solved through a comprehensive peace treaty. Two months later the Arab Summit in Khartoum declined such a move vigorously. The first humble steps for a joint European security and defense policy were initiated in the early 1970s, when German Social Democrats set up an informal peace plan by urging the Israeli military to withdraw from the Palestinian Territories plus to re-partition Jerusalem. In 1980

the nine members of the European Community recognized for the first time “the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.” Today the European Union with now 27 member states the claim to play a crucial role in the Middle East has become an increasingly illusionary. The political erraticness of French President Nicolas Sarkozy obscures additionally drafting a joint foreign policy. Neither the call of Joschka Fischer to concentrate all European efforts to strengthen the international institutions and to shape a worldwide peace order¹³ nor his conviction of a consensus within the international community of states with regard to the “Middle East question” materialized.¹⁴ The main role consists of messenger services between the parties. As new Quartet envoy Tony Blair displayed a dismissive attitude of the Israeli argument that security comes first in any case¹⁵. Until now the verdict of Yitzhak Rabin proved to be true: “It does not make a difference, what you [Germans] do, it is of no importance.”¹⁶ Time for the two-state solution is inexorably running out – in the words of Bush: “the political horizon” and the “moment of decision.”

Zbigniew Brzezinski^v concluded that there is no Europe, only European countries.¹⁷ He recommended a close relationship with the U.S. to affect its policy, since “there won't be a European role until Europe—by which I mean primarily the political leadership of Great Britain, Germany, and France, maybe supported on the margins by Spain, Italy, and Poland—comes to us and says, ‘This is our European policy. We are your allies. We are willing to work with you, but policy is shared, and responsibilities are shared.’”¹⁸ Compensating the incapability to generate strategies in order to be recognized as a real “partner in leadership” the EU attempted to ease the restrictions, injuries, and grievances inflicted on the Palestinians by means of generous financial transfers and infrastructural assistance“ – since summer 2006 the EU transferred more than 494 million Euros into the Palestinian Territories by using the “Temporary International Mechanism” since June 2006.¹⁹ “We used to say: the Europeans pay and the others play“, EU-envoy Miguel Moratinos once complained. “Yet it is starkly obvious that peace in the Middle East will not be born out of projects,” former Jordanian Crown Prince El-Hassan Bin-Talal warned²⁰.

^v Zbigniew Brzezinski was Jimmy Carter's National Security Advisor 1977–1981.

Some other politicians grumbled that the Europeans are satisfied to “doing the dishes,” while Washington is “making the dinner.” Humanitarian aid, allowances, and programs—encouraged by the rather abstract model of Shimon Peres’ “New Middle East”—to raise social standards alone cannot serve as a substitute for diplomatic ambitions. No Arab will sell his national desires for a slice of bread and butter, the legendary Zeev Jabotinsky^{vi} warned in 1924, when confronting some appeasement advances within the Zionist movement²¹. Rice’s statement to raise the economic improvement of the Palestinians which “requires the ability to have greater movement and access,”²² is certainly not enough to implement the two-state resolution.

Eleven years ago the Canadian political scientist Rex Brynen (McGill University, Montreal) reported that foreign donor agencies underestimated the political and economic difficulties—with the result that for example German donations were qualified by Palestinians as the delivery of “office supplies and toilet paper.”²³ The British “Economic Roadmap” of September 2007 will meet the destiny of failure, if it is targeted at the reinforcement of the Palestinian economy to encourage “the forces of peace and moderation” among the Palestinians.²⁴ But if the Israeli do not allow the Palestinians to lead an acceptable life, Fayyad warned, the international community is wasting its money²⁵.

Consequently, German policy displayed just “annoyance,” when Bush nominated Tony Blair as fresh Quartet representative without consultations of his partners in the Quartet backseat. Nobody was informed properly about Blair’s precise mandate in view of other internationally entrusted—and competing—diplomats. The duties of U.S. Secretary State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch remained unaffected, and to aggravate rivalries between Blair’s mission and European Commissioner Javier Solana and Envoy Marc Otte, London appointed on its own Michael Williams as British delegate to the region who hurried to criticize the settlement activities, because these

^{vi} Zeev (Vladimir) Jabotinsky (1880–1940), during the First World War founder of the “Jewish Legion” in alliance with the British army to liberate Palestine from Ottoman rule, was the founder and leader of the Revisionist Party, established in 1925, within the Zionist movement. Before the British Royal Commission on Palestine in 1937 he criticized the obstacles the London government put against the immigration of the Jewish masses from Central and Eastern Europe. To date the succession of the Revisionist Party is incorporated in the Likud (forerunner Herut) with Benjamin (“Bibi”) Netanyahu as party leader.

“undermine hope for a contiguous Palestinian state.”²⁶ The imagination is quite peculiar that Blair is ready to recognize superior responsibilities, invested in those representatives. But “officially” his duties are restricted to focus on “technical” matters: to “build the institutions of Palestinian state ... including effective governing structures, a sound financial system, and the rule of law” (Bush).²⁷ This approach reflected, to put it in the words of Aaron David Miller, “the White House aversion to high-level envoys.”²⁸ In the same way of reserve the Quartet described Blair’s “urgent work” on July 19, 2007:

“Noting the centrality of reform, economic development and institutional capacity-building to the establishment of a stable and prosperous Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza that will unite all Palestinians and live in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.”²⁹

His “job for everything-but-peace-keeping-envoy is a cynical waste” of his prominence and skills, the “New York Times” commented and requested that Blair has to “make clear that the role of a peace envoy is to negotiate peace.”³⁰ An Israeli journalist was carried away to the sardonic remark that Blair should have taken a look into the archives of 10 Downing Street with their countless permutations of peace bids before taking office.³¹ In his acid letter of resignation in April 2006 James Wolfensohn (tenure 2005–2006) had confessed that he was perceived by Sharon and his advisors as a nuisance—and constantly undermined by Washington, albeit Bush personally had taken care of his appointment.³² Another European reluctance to exert accountability was noteworthy with regard to the “European Community–Israel Association Agreement” of 1997, providing Israel with free trade arrangements in industrial goods and preferential treatment of farm produce. In Article 2 the parties concurred in respecting human rights and honour democratic values. Article 79.2 stipulates that a party can adopt appropriate measures, when it is convinced that the other side does not comply with its obligations thereof. The reprimand of the European Parliament in April 2002 to suspend the Agreement was turned down by the European Council.³³

II. U.S. American Discourses of the Middle East

The U.S. uneasiness about a comprehensive approach has not vanished, even though Richard N. Haass, president of the prestigious U.S. “Council of Foreign Relations” and previously director of Policy Planning for the State Department, traced the anti-American sentiments in the Arab world back to the demise of the “Middle East Peace Process” (MEPP) that contributed to the attractiveness of radical Islamism:

“It was not and is not enough to say the United States stands by the ‘road map’ (...) if at the same time the United States fails to make it a diplomatic priority. Nor does it help to speak publicly, as the United States did in April 2004, of those aspects of final status welcomed by Israelis—Palestinians should have the right to return only to Palestine, Israel should be able to hold on to territory that reflects certain post-1967 demographic changes—without speaking of other final status issues likely to appeal to Palestinians. In order to give Palestinians incentive to act responsibly, the United States needs to make clear its support for a territorial division based on the 1967 lines, with territorial compensation to the Palestinians for the limited land outside those lines that Israel does end up keeping. The United States also hurt itself by not doing much more to rein in Israeli settlement and construction activity that is in many instances inconsistent with trying to bring about a viable Palestinian state.”³⁴

A “vigorously renewed effort to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict” is needed to change fundamentally the dynamics and the strategic calculus of key leaders in the region,” Brent Scowcroft^{vii} demanded.³⁵ Bill Clinton had introduced the logic of the two-state solution at the Camp David summit sixty miles east of Washington. The negotiations broke down, because the political circumstances were not comparable with those in 1978/79, when the “Framework for Peace in the Middle East” and the “Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty

^{vii} Brent Scowcroft, a former Republican national security adviser of President H.W. Bush, joined the Barack Obama-team together with Lee Hamilton, the co-chairman of the Iraq Study Group, and Zbigniew Brzezinski who was the national security adviser of President Jimmy Carter.

between Israel and Egypt” were concluded. After Clinton had suffered a defeat of prestige, nobody could have been surprised of Bush’s reluctance in his first seventeen months in office. Ambassador Samuel W. Lewis^{viii} analysed that “[o]ur political culture here remains 98% preoccupied with Iraq and maybe Iran.”³⁶ His five priorities in the Middle East became Iraq, Iraq, Iraq, Iraq, and Iraq, Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer^{ix} continued at a Geneva Initiative conference in January 2008³⁷. Senator Chuck Hagel (R-Nebr.), who was a candidate for president in 2008, reminded Bush that “American military power will not be the solution: ... We need strategic direction for Iraq”.³⁸

But exactly because of that negligence the United States needs an urgent improvement of its image in the Arab and Muslim world. Rice regretted that the State Department did not more invest in having its diplomats learn languages such as Arabic, Pashtu and Dari.³⁹ MJ Rosenberg, director of policy analysis for the “Israel Policy Forum” in Washington, D.C.,^x suspected that “so long as the United States is perceived as the enemy of the Palestinian people, U.S. interests in this strategically vital region will decline. Even worse, intensifying Arab and Muslim rage over the Palestinians jeopardizes the survival of the two most pro-American regimes in the Arab world—Egypt’s and Jordan’s. Burying the Palestinian hope for nationhood could also end up burying these two regimes along with their peace treaties with Israel.”⁴⁰ Barack Obama’s and

^{viii} Samuel W. Lewis was U.S. Ambassador in Tel Aviv between 1977 and 1985.

^{ix} Daniel C. Kurtzer who received a Ph.D. from Columbia University, was U.S. Ambassador to Egypt 1997–2001 and to Israel 2001–2005. Belonging to the Middle East transition team of President-elect Barack Obama he is S. Daniel Abraham Professor of Middle East Policy Studies at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. In April 2008 was reported that Kurtzer signed onto the Obama campaign. President George H.W. Bush once praised his “clearest sense of strategy.” Together with Scott B. Lasensky he is the author of “Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East” (The American Institute for Peace 2008), where he recommended that “reviving the peace process should be part of an overall strategy to revive U.S. influence, bolster moderate forces in the region, and stabilize the situation in Iraq” and to foster “endgame solutions” to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict instead of favoring the traditional piecemeal approach that led to nowhere. “Haaretz” (October 17, 2008) called Ross and Kurtzer “the center-right and center-left anchors of Obama’s Middle East advisory staff.” Cf. my review of Kurtzer’s and Lasensky’s book “Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace. American Leadership in the Middle East” (United States Institute for Peace, 2008) in the review column of my homepage (in German). After Hillary Clinton’s appointment as Secretary of State the media reported that Kurtzer will become the head of the Middle East Department.

^x The “Israel Policy Forum” was founded in 1993 after “Oslo I.” It is helping to shape the ideas of the two-state solution by consulting and mobilizing legislators, journalists and public opinion leaders. Seymour D. Reich is the president of the Forum, MJ Rosenberg its director of Policy Analysis.

Hillary Clinton's former Democratic Party rival for the presidential nomination John Edwards asked in his "Strategy of Freedom" whether America can win a war with weapons and without ideas,⁴¹ whereas Clinton continued to favour the vision "to export democracy ... in digestible steps."⁴²

Jewish annoyances

The traditional pro-Israeli stance among American Jews is beginning to erode without injuring the official relations between the two countries. The "Jewish lobby" does not represent the whole Jewish community. The "Israel factor", incorporated especially in the "American Israel Public Affairs Council" (AIPAC), the "Anti-Defamation League" (ADL), the "Simon Wiesenthal Center", the "American Jewish Committee", and a wide range of organizations, committees, and journals like "Commentary" and "The New Republic," try to enforce "Jewish Political Correctness" on human and ethical Jewish values by demonstrating what they believe is in Israel's national interest. But contrary to theories of conspiracy they are not omnipotent, although according to Bill Clinton they are "stunningly effective." At the international conference of the Geneva Initiative Team in Herzliya (January 12-13, 2008) Daniel C. Kurtzer recommended that the Israeli government should take pains to convince the Jewish audience in America to promote the two-state solution. Later on he submitted a paper to Barack Obama to wage the Arab Peace Initiative of 2002/2007 seriously and warned him to waste his political prestige by supporting only bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. According to a new survey and quoting officials, after a traditional over-representation among liberal activists and thinkers as well as in the arts and the law, "[p]olitics in America has become Jewish profession" with currently 33 members in Congress.⁴³

The attempted character assassination of John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt who were denounced to be the authors of the most recent brand of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and of a rebirth of Wilhelm Marr's 1879 pamphlet "The Victory of Judaism over Germandom" was the disgusting example how to cry *gewalt* against criticism of Israeli policies – notwithstanding Kurtzer's estimation that he has "no use for that book" Mearsheimer and Walt,

since [t]hose people don't know Washington, they don't know policy, and they know nothing."⁴⁴ Jimmy Carter shared this fate when he was labelled as an anti-Semite, when he presented his book "Palestine Peace Not Apartheid." Some years ago an Israeli author quoted a rabbi from San Francisco who begged to meet Ariel Sharon in order to convey to him the message:

*„Mr Prime Minister, for the sake of the future of the Jewish people and the State of Israel, please, evacuate the settlers from the Gaza Strip. And then insure that they leave the territories. That is the only way to salvage Israel – and world Jewry – from the terrible predicament in which it now finds itself. Please, I beseech you, do something to turn Israel back into the proud democracy it once was.”*⁴⁵

The impact of the Evangelical community centers and the Christian pundits who claim to represent 75 million "values voters" to shut a "God gap" in the U.S. society,⁴⁶ is growing weaker. After the leadership of Pat Robertson, James Dobson, and Jerry Falwell a new generation with Rick Warren, Richard Cizek, and T.D. Jakes is gaining ground with ecological, anti-AIDS, and anti-war topics. The top machineries of the "Jewish lobby" are challenged by groups like the "Israel Policy Forum,"^{xi} the "Americans for Peace Now," the "New Israel Fund"^{xii}, "Seeds of Peace" under the chairmanship of Aaron David Miller,^{xiii} and by "Brit Tzedek v'Shalom" or the new group "J Street",^{xiv} established under the

^{xi} Contemporary president of the "Israel Policy Forum" is Seymour D. Reich, one of the most prominent Jewish leaders in the U.S., a passionate supporter of peace in the Middle East and an advocate of human rights. Reich is a former member of the prestigious "Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations."

^{xii} www.nif.org. In February 2008 Noemi Chazan was elected as president of the "New Israel Fund." Chazan, a member of "Meretz", is a Political Scientist by profession at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a former Vice President of the Knesset. In March 2009 international newspapers reported that the "New Israel Fund" has to curtail its programmes due to lack of donations and grants after the breakdown of the "Bernard L. Madoff Investment Security."

^{xiii} Aaron David Miller served in the State Department as an advisor to six Secretaries of State especially on Arab-Israeli negotiations, as the Deputy Special Middle East Coordinator, as a senior member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, and at Bill Clinton's Camp David Summit in July 2000 as Deputy of Chief Negotiator Dennis Ross. C.f. my review of his book "The Much Too Promised Land. America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace" (New York 2008), in this homepage (in German).

^{xiv} <http://jstreet.org>. While "K Street" has been a cipher of the lobby establishment in Washington, D.C., "J Street" has become a local "in" joke. According to its invitation "J Street" will be "the first and only lobby and Political Action Committee [PAC] dedicated to ensuring Israel's security, changing the direction of American policy in the Middle East and opening up

assistance of former Clinton official Jeremy Ben-Ami and Daniel Levy in April 2008 as well as the “Foundation for Middle East Peace” with long-standing its documentation “Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories” by Geoffrey Aronson.⁴⁷ In the latest address of the Israeli orbit of “J Street sympathizers we read:

“As Israelis dedicated to our country, its future, security and progress, we are pleased to learn of the creation of J Street, a new American movement to support strong U.S. leadership in achieving immediate, peaceful resolution of Israel 's conflicts with its neighbors.

American political debate about Israel and the Middle East.” “J Street” includes Jewish and non-Jewish personalities like Robert Malley, Marcia Freedman—founder and former president of “Brit Tzedek v’Shalom”—, and former US-ambassador to Israel Samuel Lewis. In its “Statement of Principles” we read: “J Street was founded to promote meaningful American leadership to end the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israel conflicts peacefully and diplomatically. We support a new direction for American policy in the Middle East and a broad public and policy debate about the U.S. role in the region. J Street represents Americans, primarily but not exclusively Jewish, who support Israel and its desire for security as the Jewish homeland, as well as the right of the Palestinians to a sovereign state of their own—two states living side-by-side in peace and security. We believe ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is in the best interests of Israel, the United States, the Palestinians, and the region as a whole. J Street supports diplomatic solutions over military ones, including Iran; multilateral over unilateral approaches to conflict resolution; and dialogue over confrontation with a wide range of countries and actors when conflicts do arise... J Street will advocate forcefully in the policy process, in Congress, in the media, and in the Jewish community to make sure [that] public officials and community leaders clearly see the depth and breadth of support for our views on Middle East policy among voters and supporters in their states and districts. We seek to complement the work of existing organizations and individuals that share our agenda. In our lobbying and advocacy efforts, we will enlist individual supporters of other efforts as partners.” To the sphere of Israeli sympathizers of “J Street” belong Yossi Alpher, Shaul Arieli, Colette Avital, Ami Ayalon, Uzi Baram, Shlomo Gazit, Shlomo Ben-Ami, Daniel Ben-Simon, Shlomo Brom, Avraham Burg, Naomi Chazan, Galia Golan, Micha Harish, Tamar Hermann, Anat Hoffman, David Kimche, Amos Lapidot, Alon Liel, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Eti Livni, Moshe Maoz, Amram Mitzna, Ora Namir, Nimrod Novik, Israela Oron, Ilan Paz, Avi Primor, Ron Pundak, Dalia Rabin, Gad Ranon, Andrew Sacks, Talia Sasson, Uri Savir, Alice Shalvi, Shimon Shamir, Hillel Shuval, Levi Weiman-Kelman, Joanne Yaron, Danny Yatom, and Esther Yevnin. Gershon Gorenberg reported in “Haaretz” on March 4, 2009 that “J Street” and other non-conformist Jewish lobby groups are gaining political strength within the Jewish communities and at Capitol Hill at the expense of AIPAC. Aaron Lerner of “Independent Media Review and Analysis” in Jerusalem called “J Street” on March 26, 2009 angrily a “withdrawal advocacy group”. In its Hebrew internet edition the Israeli newspaper “Yediot Aharonot” (Yitzhak Ben-Chorin: Right or Left, Between Shore to Shore. Jews in America in Motion, in “ynet” September 18, 2009) quoted Jeremy Ben-Ami, chairman of “J Street” and in the 1990s four years an advisor to Bill Clinton in the White House, that President Barack Obama “helps to save Israel in spite of herself”—a literal correlation to an article by then Understate Secretary George W. Ball in “Foreign Affairs” in April 1977. On September 26, 2009 Katja Ridderbusch reported in the German radio station “Deutschlandfunk” that “J Street” has the support of more than 115,000 members and can count on a budget of three million dollars a year and a staff of 22 people. In October 2009 “J Street” held its first national conference in Washington, DC, in attendance of some 1,500 Jewish progressives and peace activists. On June 30, 2010 the German-Israeli documentarist Uri Schneider presented his film “Die jüdische Lobby” (“The Jewish Lobby”) about dissenting Jewish groups in America in one of the two major state-controlled German TV stations.

Ending the Israeli-Palestinian and the broader Israeli-Arab conflict quickly and diplomatically is an essential national and security interest of the State of Israel – as well as of the United States, the Palestinians and the region as a whole. Only a negotiated, political resolution to these conflicts will ensure Israel's lasting security and viability as a democratic, prosperous home for the Jewish people.

Now more than ever, true friendship requires strong American leadership and engagement to move the sides toward a comprehensive two-state solution. With time running out, business-as-usual will not do.

To achieve these goals, all parties – including the United States – will be called on to demonstrate political will and courage. The emergence of a movement in the United States which understands and is willing to provide political support for difficult compromises is essential to fostering that political will. In our opinion, such a movement is in Israel's best interests.

We deeply value the historic role of the United States as a staunch ally and irreplaceable friend of Israel's. We also value the role the American Jewish community and other American friends have played in strengthening and deepening that bond.

Being a friend and ally – being "pro-Israel" – means caring enough to get involved, express views and concerns, and provide advice. It does not require rigid agreement with every decision ever made or every policy pursued by the government of Israel or of the United States. Debate and discussion are essential to democracy and should be part of the relationship between Israel and Jewish people elsewhere in the world.

The ideas that J Street is promoting (a viable two-state solution, regional peace based on withdrawal to recognized borders with strict security arrangements, and normal relations between Israel and the broader Arab world along the lines of the Arab-Saudi Peace Initiative) have become consensus positions among Israelis. Yet, within that consensus, there is always vigorous and open

discussion in Israel over how best to promote our security and interests. Our country is stronger for the robustness of this debate.

There is every reason to believe that a similarly open discussion in the United States will also be in Israel's best interests. We see in the creation of J Street, an expression of support for and commitment to the State of Israel and to a strong and enduring U.S.- Israel relationship. Hopefully, your efforts will help us achieve our country's greatest hope: peace with our neighbors and permanent, recognized and secure borders through a diplomatic end to the conflicts that have plagued our people and inflamed the region for far too long.”

In January 2009 Miller added that *“We’ve allowed our special relationship with Israel to become exclusive. We acquiesced in too many bad Israeli ideas; we road-tested every idea with Israel first.”*⁴⁸

Beyond personalities with different political views like Noam Chomsky, Marc Ellis, Judith Miller, Norman Finkelstein, and Tony Judt who are regularly accused of “tribal disloyalty” – even Dennis Ross could sometimes not escape to be labelled as a self-hating Jew⁴⁹ –, one should not forget those philanthropists in the American-Jewish affairs like George Soros and Daniel Abraham who are engaged in promoting reconciliation with the Palestinians and the Arab states. Like in many parts of the American society the “silent bulk of the Jewish community is hungry for a progressive move to renew peace efforts,” Levy has observed.⁵⁰ Another author, Gidon D. Remba,^{xv} warned about the underestimation of the political ferment among Jews who understand that the Zionist ethos is bound to convert them to accomplices of the Israeli policy.⁵¹ In January 2009 – one day after the unilateral Israeli ceasefire in Gaza “Haaretz” senior editor Akiva Eldar referred to the spokesman of Israeli consulate in New York that boasted of the pro-Israeli solidarity demonstrations with the children of Sderot, and added up: *“He did not mention the masses of Jews [in the U.S.] who do not know where to hide their shame at the sight of*

^{xv} Gidon D. Remba is the national executive director of “Ameinu: Liberal Values, Progressive Israel.”

*pictures of Palestinian men weeping bitterly over the families who perished under the ruins of their houses.*⁵²

A study in 2007 funded by the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies found that only 54 percent of those American Jews under 35 felt comfortable with the very idea of a Jewish state, and less than half of those aged answered “yes” to the question whether they would consider the destruction of Israel a “personal tragedy.” The authors of this quotation continue that they discover “an emerging Jewish glasnost in which Jewish critics of Israel are increasingly willing to make themselves known.”⁵³ One day after 9/11 Thomas L. Friedman of the “New York Times” confessed that a “hard core of Orthodox Jews and Middle East nuts like myself will continue to visit Israel, but no matter how many solidarity marches they hold in New York, the next generation of American Jews will not share an intimate connection with the Jewish state.”⁵⁴ After the annual conference of AIPAC in June 2008 and having just returned from “a little drive through part of the West Bank,” Friedman demanded a “radical pragmatism five minutes after midnight” of the American diplomacy to save the two-state solution.⁵⁵ After the start of the “Operation Cast Lead” against Hamas the “Haaretz” correspondent distinguished between three groups of Diaspora Jews: those “good and innocent Zionist and Jews who see only the trauma inflicted on the people of Sderot, Ashkelon, and other parts of the country’s south-west; a “smaller but highly vocal group belonging to the more radical left, and even fewer to the anti-Israel Neturei Karta, who feel compelled to atone for Israel’s manifold sins and join its enemies in the demonstrations and sign petitions accusing the Zionist entity of war crimes,” and “a third stream of Jews – perhaps not the widest one, but I believe quite significant – who have more complex and uncomfortable feelings on the matter.”⁵⁶

Indeed, the latest poll commissioned by the “Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies” exhibits a “mounting body of evidence [for] a growing distancing from Israel of American Jews.” Even the “National [Jewish] Leadership Survey” among some 200 rabbis for 5768 (2007/08) revealed that only seven percent think that selected Israel-related advocacy and educational matters are pressing, whereas the Jewish State remains slightly for more than half of them a political key issue.⁵⁷ Consequently, the government in Jerusalem entrusted

scholars to link the question of the centrality of Israel in American-Jewish life with the Iranian threat: If Israeli information campaigns focus their attention to Jewish assimilation, Israel's centrality is important, Sergio Della Pergola (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) explained. But if the existential threat is the focus in American-Jewish life, Israel loses part of its attraction because of security concerns.⁵⁸ One development is clear: American Jews have turned their attention to domestic Jewish affairs: problems of so-called mixed marriages and raising their children, the strained relations being underway between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism, the observance of Jewish rituals and liturgies in correlation to lightning a Christmas tree and so forth. In February 2008 Ehud Olmert accepted those messages considering proposals for a new partnership on equal footing.

Rice' Challenges and Failures

Condoleezza Rice confessed that there “is one Palestinian people and there should be one Palestinian state.”⁵⁹ Contrary to her immediate predecessor Colin Powell who as an outsider in the realms of political diplomacy was squeezed between the Pentagon and the White House, Rice was eager to rescue herself from Bush's narrow perception of world politics and to speed up her efforts in the Israeli-Palestinian domain. After the breakdown of the enforcement of democracy in the Middle East she does not intend “to impose a solution” on Israelis and Palestinians. But by safeguarding publicly the façade of “sponsoring” negotiations she preserves a leeway for more or less tough interventions. She knows that her diplomatic collapse favors the military championship of the hardliners at home again. To the audience of the “American Task Force on Palestine” (ATFP), an organization of U.S. American citizens of Arab descent and a counterweight to the vociferous voices of AIPAC and ADL, Rice confessed in a personal pledge in October 2006 that

“I believe that there could be no greater legacy for America than to help to bring into being a Palestinian state for a people who have suffered too long, who have been humiliated too long, who have not reached their potential for too

*long, and who have so much to give to the international community and to all of us.*⁶⁰

For her friends, a German commentator corroborated, Rice was “the reinvention of diplomacy, a woman who brought back reason the US foreign policy.”⁶¹ Irrespective of some dubious equations between Afghanistan and Palestine of hers, she admitted that for “60 years, my country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in the region ... and we received nothing. Now we are taking a different course. We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people.” Settlement activity should stop, and expansion of settlements should stop,” Rice continued, after she was informed by Olmert about plans to the contrary.⁶² Israel’s future is not in the continued occupation of the West Bank, it is in building in the Negev and Galilee, she emphasized.⁶³ When Olmert in mid-September 2007 downplayed the proposed “agreement of principles” to a joint declaration of intentions and interests, she responded impatiently that “[w]e can’t simply continue to say we want a two-state solution. We have got to start to move towards one”⁶⁴ and requested the negotiating partners “to be substantive.”⁶⁵

Instead of being reduced to arguing about the numbers of checkpoints and other physical obstacles, Rice should have taken care that the State Department was not charged of being in the grips of the “Arabists” (among them Dean Acheson, George F. Kennan and Dean Rusk)—an accusation the State Department is confronted with from time to time since it cautioned in 1948 against a speedy recognition of the state of Israel.⁶⁶ On the other side Rice should have directed her political ambitions to assemble a group of distinguished Middle East expert she could trust in. There is no US policy activity, Daniel C. Kurtzer was quoted, “[w]e have nobody on the ground ... [a]nd there isn’t a strong team on the ground either to do the monitoring or to be encouraging the sides to do the tough negotiation that needs to get done,” calling Rice’s frequent travels “episodic trips of one or two days that see no activity in between them [and therefore] become meaningless.”⁶⁷ At another occasion Kurtzer complained about the negotiating preparations in the State Department which had become “so insular that it was only a very small group of people who thought that they had all the expertise within their group, but it turns

out the really didn't."⁶⁸ Yossi Beilin was quoted lately with "[t]he only word (...) to describe the method" of hers: "pathetic."⁶⁹ Rice missed the chance to what previously had been awarded to her: to secure and to consolidate "the ear of the administration."⁷⁰ But even in the short run Washington cannot afford anymore a de-involvement in the Middle East. Rice's criticism of U.S. priorities was shared by Martin Indyk^{xvi}: The "United States did not ignore political reform entirely; it just tinkered with it on the margins."⁷¹ This is not, as Indyk continued, the role of a neutral, even-handed mediator nor being naïve.⁷² Aaron David Miller saw Washington's Middle East policy as Gulliver in the Lilliputian role.⁷³

The question remains, whether Rice is able to pull out all plugs to ensure a large-scale success of the conference in Washington. If Palestinians and Israelis cannot overcome their stalemate, the Americans are determined to fulfil expectations that they are able to put pressure on the main parties. To date even the U.S. pretension of jumpstarting the negotiations is met by significant mistrust. But once, in 1991, Yossi Sarid of "Meretz" had warned his compatriots of the imagination that the Americans serve free meals irrespective of their national interests. The largest supplier of arms and allowances to Israel expects a political service in return, as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates provide an access to their oil resources.

IV. Palestinian Fallacies and Confusions

Rhetoric exercises in denouncing Mahmoud Abbas as a "puppet leader" (Gideon Levy of "Haaretz") or the bemoaning of "a nasty business" between Palestinian rivals who fell victim to American and Israeli manipulations (Ilan Pappé, Haifa / Exeter)^{xvii}, do not serve the political progress. Those judgements seem to believe that the Palestinians are nothing more than driven by hostile

^{xvi} Martin Indyk, born 1951 in London and afterwards a citizen of Australia, started as a research director at AIPAC and as the executive director at "Institute for Near East Policy" in Washington, D.C., before he began to serve as U.S. American ambassador in Israel (1995–1977 and 2000–2001). In the era of President Bill Clinton he was a close advisor to him. On the eve of the presidential elections on November 4, 2008, Indyk called upon the American Jews to vote for Obama.

^{xvii} After leaving the University of Haifa Pappé teaches history at the University of Exeter (U.K.).

history without any roots of political common sense of their own. Rashid Khalidi^{xviii}, instead, found out an interdependence between “out” and “in:” Decades of dismal Western alliances “with the reactionary, obscurantist, and illiberal Islamic tendencies” crafted an Arab set of political and intellectual leaders and encouraged the Islamist phenomenon in the region. Khalidi made the point that the Palestinian leadership in times of the British Mandate were not aware of a wide range of plausible choices of action to be exploited for the national cause, and rejected the notion that the Palestinian people under occupation since 1948 were only kept away forcefully by their enemies from realizing their legitimate aspirations, whereas all the neighbouring peoples succeeded. Walid Salem, formerly long-time responsible for the “Palestinian Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development” and now director of the “Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy” in Jerusalem, put his analysis of Palestinian shortcomings and failures this way:

“Regardless of the profound impact of external factors on the Palestinian case, the Palestinian political leadership—in contrast to the majority of leaderships of national liberation movements around the world—has, so far, failed to realize its goal of establishing an independent Palestinian state. In addition, there is the collapse of the Oslo process. The Palestinian leadership bears a large share of the responsibility in failing to bring the process to its logical conclusion—an independent Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel, which was supposed to take place in 1998^{xix}, i.e., five years after the signing of the Oslo agreement.”

The political leadership since Haj Amin al-Husseini to Arafat, Salem continued, “widely resorted to mechanisms of appointments and selections instead of elections.”⁷⁴ Sari Nusseibeh^{xx}—“the revolution’s philosopher”, as Faisal

^{xviii} The author holds the Edward Said Chair in Arab Studies at Columbia University (New York).

^{xix} In fact, the Oslo Accords did not stipulate the specific idea of a sovereign Palestinian state. All of its characteristics were submitted to the interim phase which finished in 1999.

^{xx} The author was chief representative of the PLO in Jerusalem 2001/02 and is now the president of the Al-Quds University and there a professor of philosophy.

Husseini^{xxi} had dubbed him fondly—draws his readers to another aspect: Relating to his father’s diary after the expulsion of about 750,000 Arabs from Palestine in 1947/48 “I underestimated the strength of my enemy and overestimated the strength of my own people... I thought too much in terms of the past glories of my people and wilfully blinded myself to present shortcomings. My approach to Palestine’s problem has been effort-saving and therefore fundamentally dishonest...”⁷⁵

For Khalidi, Nusseibeh, Yezid Sayigh (King’s College London), Khalil Shikaki (Birzeit and Nablus Universities), the authors of the “Arab Reform Bulletin” under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment, and recently the report of the “Palestine Strategy Study Group”⁷⁶ the relationship between domestic procedures, including the nature of the Palestinian state, and the objective to terminate the occupation was evident. For them to mobilize the Palestinian population to apply non-violent means is the acid test. After the establishment of the “(National) Palestinian Authority” ([P]NA)^{xxii} and the election of its president (Arafat) and of the representative Palestinian National Council (PLC) in January 1996, Sayigh and Shikaki recommended that in combination with the national aspirations “the Palestinian Authority must make extensive changes to ensure good governance—enshrined in a participatory political system, a democratically organized civil society, sustainable social and ecological developments, and a free market economy—during transition to a permanent settlement and beyond.”⁷⁷ Political parties provided precious little support to the reform process,” Nathan J. Brown confirmed.

“Indeed, most PLC successes actually boomeranged in the short term; they aggravated Palestinian authoritarian patterns instead of limiting them. As the PLC established itself as the body that initiated PA legislation, most efforts to

^{xxi} The Husseini family (fabulous rich”, as Nusseibeh relates) came from Mecca to Jerusalem 700 years ago and belongs to the five most important families of the city: the Khatib, the Khalidi, the Nusseibeh, and the Nashashibi family. During the last 150 years the Husseinis held almost consecutively the principal religious offices. Faisal was born in 1940 in Bagdad, where his father was exiled by the British. After the Six-Day War Faisal returned via Cairo and Damascus to Jerusalem. In spring 1993 he was the Palestinian chief-negotiator within the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to Israel in Washington, D.C. In May 2001 he suddenly died in Kuwait.

^{xxii} In the Oslo Accords the administration is called “Palestinian Authority,” whereas the Palestinians themselves have extended the name.

regularize PA authoritarian practices simply came to a halt. Authoritarianism itself did not actually diminish; it simply moved outside legal channels. When the president wanted someone arrested, the person was arrested; when a court ordered a detained released, prison officials – claiming that they answered to the president but not to the courts – simply ignored the court. Work that Arafat’s government had begun on a restrictive press law ground to a halt under the suspicious eyes of the PLC, but critical journalists were still harassed (and even arrested) completely outside any legal framework. In short, whenever the PLC did what it wished, the president also did as he pleased. The centrepiece of the PLC’s reform efforts – the Basic Law – sat on the president’s desk, unsigned for five years. Other critical pieces of legislation (such as judicial law) also stalled⁷⁸.”

Still, Khalil Ibrahim al-Wazir (“Abu Jihad”)^{xxiii}, Arafat’s second in command, preferred viable political structures instead of hijacking planes and stockpiling weapons.⁷⁹ According to Shikaki Arafat had blocked reforms and “did not want to embark on any serious initiative to address the PA’s ills”, while Sayigh charged Arafat of being “guilty of strategic misjudgement, with consequences for the Palestinians of potentially historic proportions”.⁸⁰ Sayigh drew the attention to Arafat’s “long career of an escape [to bear responsibility] by running forwards” (*al-huroub ila al-amam*).

So, resembling the behavior of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Amin el-Husseini in 1929 und 1936, Arafat was taken by surprise, when both Intifadas broke out. At the start of the Second Intifada Arafat furnished

“tacit assent to continued use of firearms, by refraining from issuing internal orders to ceasefire. An implicit ‘green light’ was signalled by Arafat’s choice to leave the country at this critical moment—in order to attend as pressing as a

^{xxiii} Sari Nusseibeh: *Once Upon a Country*. New York 2007, p. 195: „Abu Jihad was the only top PLO official who believed in creating viable political structures in the territories. While others were shoring up diplomatic ties, planning hijackings, or creating weapons stockpiles in Lebanon, Abu Jihad was designing a national education policy for the Occupied Territories as a way for the Palestinians to assert themselves against the Israelis. According to Ze’ev Schiff and Ehud Yaari (“Intifada. The Inside Story of the Palestinian Uprising that Changed the Middle East Equation,” New York 1989, p.167) Abu Jihad was “the one man with the talent and pragmatism to manage the rebellion from afar” and was liquidated on April 16, 1988 by an Israeli commando in his Tunis villa.

public rally in Tunisia and a seminar in Spain—making him conveniently unavailable to take command responsibility for the situation, while leaving [Prime Minister Ehud] Barak to ‘stew.’⁸¹

Already in 2002 a group of leading Palestinian personalities had issued an appeal of “national responsibility:”

“We the undersigned feel that it is our national responsibility to issue this appeal in light of the dangerous situation engulfing the Palestinian people. We call upon the parties behind military operations targeting civilians in Israel to reconsider their policies and stop driving our young men to carry out these operations. Suicide bombings deepen the hatred and widen the gap between the Palestinian and Israeli people. Also, they destroy the possibilities of peaceful co-existence between them in two neighbouring states. We see that these bombings do not contribute towards achieving our national project that calls for freedom and independence. On the contrary, they strengthen the enemies of peace on the Israeli side and give Israel's aggressive government under Sharon the excuse to continue its harsh war against our people. This war targets our children, elderly, villages, cities, and our national hopes and achievements. Military action is viewed are not assessed as positive or negative exclusively out of the general context and situation. They assessed based on whether they fulfill political ends. Therefore, there is a need to re-evaluate these acts considering that pushing the area towards an existential war between the two people living on the holy land will lead to destruction for the whole region. We do not find any logical, humane, or political justification for this end result.”⁸²

Until the Palestinians “conclude the evolution of their political system,” Robert Malley^{xxiv} completed, it would be hard for them to make concessions as part of an agreement with Israel.⁸³

^{xxiv} Robert Malley was a member of the “National Security Council” and an close advisor of President Bill Clinton in Camp David. In the meantime he works as the Middle East and North Africa Program director at the highly respected “International Crisis Group.” Being himself Jewish, Malley as an informal adviser to Barack Obama was recently accused of being “fanatically anti-Israel” by some right-wing Jewish bloggers. Other high-ranking Jewish diplomats like Samuel (“Sandy”) Berger (National Security Advisir 1997–2001), Martin Indyk (Ambassador

Abbas was driven by pain and distress that “murder and destruction” were blocking any peace solution and were liable to prevent the foundation of the Palestinian state, after this aspiration had become an axiom for the international community. He is convinced that every additional delay to negotiate a deal will lead to the minimization of Palestinian national achievements. The longer the time of indecisiveness lasts, the deeper Islamic trends will take root within the society. Arafat had struggled to keep the Islamists at bay, trying at the inception to co-opt, not confront them in order to keep doors open and not to foreclose options. After he had called for a *jihad* in a speech behind closed doors in Johannesburg (South Africa) on 11 May 1994, Arafat instructed his security forces six months later, on “Black Friday” of 18 November 1994, to gun down demonstrating Palestinians in front of the main mosque in Gaza-City leaving fourteen casualties on the place. This carnage did not thwart the Islamic Movement to gain public credit, on the contrary. All large

to Israel 1995 – 1997 and 1999 – 2001), Daniel C. Kurtzer (Ambassador to Israel 1997 – 2001 to Egypt and 2001 – 2005), Aaron David Miller (Deputy Special Middle East Coordinator 1993 – 2001), and Dennis Ross saw it fit to publish an Open Letter to Malley’s defense in March 2008; in his book of 2004 “The Missing Peace” (p. 106) Ross had declared that Malley “had a particular strong commitment to Israeli-Palestinian peace.” After the ferocious accusations Malley stepped down as Obama’s informal campaign associate. Amnon Lord, senior editor and columnist of the Israeli newspaper “Makor Rishon (First Source)” reported in the internet-edition of “bitterlemons” on March 30, 2009 that Malley “is close to both the president [Barack Obama] and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. He is also a professed enemy of Ehud Barak; he is the source of the legendary canard that Barak was to blame for the failure of the Camp David summit with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in July 2000. Thus it will appear that Barak and Netanyahu will face an adversarial team in the new US administration.” In March 2009 Charles (“Chas”) Freeman, retired Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security, withdrew his acceptance as the administration’s candidate to chair the “National Intelligence Council (IC)” – it collects the informations of all security agencies in the U.S.–, after members of the U.S. Senate (Charles Schumer, Pete Hoekstra, Joseph Lieberman) and the “Zionist Organisation of America (ZOA)” successfully accused Freeman of “improper opinions” and of being “a most virulent critic of Israel”. ZOA National President Morton Klein wrote: “Freeman has a long record of being [?] been viciously anti-Israel, indulging in the anti-Semitic tactics of accusing pro-Israel lobbyists as manipulating and distorting American foreign policy in the service of Israel and contrary to American interest. He has boasted of the MEPC [“Middle East Policy Forum” and formerly known as the “American Arab Affairs Council”], unlike other organizations, having republished the Mearsheimer-Walt anti-Semitic-Jewish [?] lobby tract which ZOA critiqued in detail at the time.” In 2007 Freeman was quoted with the words “The brutal oppression of the Palestinians by Israeli occupation shows no sign of ending.” In his message to substantiate his decision Freeman wrote: “I believe that the inability of the American public to discuss, or the government to consider, any option for US policies in the Middle East opposed by the ruling faction in Israeli politics has allowed that faction to adopt and sustain policies that ultimately threaten the existence of the state of Israel. It is not permitted for anyone in the United States to say so. This is not just a tragedy for Israelis and their neighbors in the Middle East, it is doing widening damage to the national security of the United States” (quoted by “The New Foreign Policy” March 10, 2009: “Freeman speaks out on his exit.”). in March 2009 Daniel C. Kurtzer on the contrary to ZOA called Freeman “a gentleman, he is a patriot, and he is a superb diplomat who has done [a] great service to our country.”

opposition movements in the Muslim world of today are Islamic in nature, but not all of them comprise and carry rigid doctrines and fanaticism.⁸⁴

To sideline Hamas as a supposedly monolithic bloc is a double-edged strategy wielding together diverging components. No security fences and no military incursions will protect Israel from Qassams. Hamas has displayed an amazing ability to collect money abroad and to dig tunnels for its military build-up. Due to press reports Hamas profitably extracted even money from the PA coffers and set aside cash that was intended for social programs. The capability of the Islamic Movement to procure ammunition in the West Bank is not exhausted either, and Fatah is not strong enough to defend this territory from a takeover by Hamas' "Sheikh Izzeddin Qassam Brigades"^{xxv} and with Islamic Jihad segments. To date Abbas "speaks as president of a hollow Palestinian Authority and chairman of a ghostly Palestine Liberation Organization," Hussein Agha and Robert Malley concluded: "Israel and the Palestinian Authority cannot make real progress on a peace agreement if they are determined to keep Hamas out... As long as Hamas is shunned, as long as peace talks are intended to further marginalize it, Hamas will perceive an alliance between Abbas and Israel as a mortal threat and react accordingly."⁸⁵ And if Abbas falls into the trap of accepting large amounts of military equipment from Israel and the U.S., he risks to be charged of being an accomplice of the "Zionist conspiracy."

Arafat's main political insult was that he brushed aside an agreement between "interiors" and "exteriors" about the political future. After his return from exile to Palestine in June 1994 was the marginalization of those leaders who had preserved the political responsibility of the PLO during the First Intifada and had sustained the burdens of the occupation: Hanan Ashrawi, Faisal Husseini—owner of the power center of Palestinian national politics with its "Arab Studies Society" in the East Jerusalem Orient House—, Sari Nusseibeh, Ziad Abu

^{xxv} Sheikh Izzeddin Qassam—the Qassam rockets are recalling his name—was a Sunni village clergy in the Syrian mountains who with his gang terrorized Jewish settlements and British installations, until he was executed by the British in 1935.

Zayyad, Hanna Siniora^{xxvi}, Haydr Abd el-Shafi in Gaza^{xxvii}, and others. There was no natural competition, political scientist Manuel Hassassian continued later, but a covert and sometimes open rivalry.⁸⁶ A memorandum, published in November 1993, expressed dissatisfaction

“with the political leadership’s method of work in this stage, either in form of running the difficult and delicate negotiations with the Israeli side or in terms of the preparations to embark on the state of national construction in the interim period [until 1999]. It is obvious to everybody that the political leadership is practicing its role in a manner that is close to improvisation and without prior preparation for the necessary practical steps toward embodying the national interests through a planned implementation of our obligations to what was signed [Oslo I].”⁸⁷

From those deficiencies the Palestinian national movement did not recover. The demand of the Palestinian Government Platform to the cabinet failed “[t]o abide by principles of good governance and to pursue reforms on the path of building the state of law and institutions.”⁸⁸ For the Arab Thought Forum^{xxviii} the loss of authentic leadership had caused gaps and fissures:

^{xxvi} Hanna Siniora, a member of the Palestinian National Council since 1990, has a long and distinguished history of public service. He was the first Palestinian to officially meet Secretary of State George Schultz as a representative of the occupied territories, facilitating President Reagan's official recognition of the PLO. He served as a member of the Palestinian Jordanian delegation to the international peace conference in Madrid in October 1991 and advised the Palestinian delegation in the early 1990s. He is the founder and publisher of the Jerusalem Times, a weekly English-language Palestinian paper, and founder and co-chair of the Israeli-Palestinian radio station "All for Peace."

^{xxvii} Haydr Abd el-Shafi (1919–2007), a physician by profession, was a co-founder of the PLO in the 1960s and created the “Palestinian Red Crescent Society” in Gaza in the 1970s. Abd el-Shafi was the Palestinian leader within the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Madrid Peace Conference in October 1991 and the subsequent negotiations with his Israeli counterparts in Washington, D.C. (spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi). He was deeply offended by the secret negotiations between Yossi Beilin and Achmad Qureia (“Abu Ala”) behind his back which led to the Declaration of Principles in September 1993 (“Oslo I”). As a member of the “Palestinian Legislative Council” from its start in 1996 he resigned in protest against Arafat’s open contempt for the parliament and against features of corruption within the Palestinian Authority. For Ashrawi he embodied the Palestinian national struggle.

^{xxviii} The „Arab Thought Forum“ was established 1977 in East Jerusalem as an independent Palestinian organization whose work and publications are based on democratic principles with the aim to develop strategies for nation-building within the Palestinian society and their agencies.

*“Structural deficiencies (that) make it [the political system] unable to find a solution to the political crisis it is undergoing. The deficiency and inefficiency in the political system are apparent in the political performance, whether in its inability to launch political initiatives or to take any practical steps. Moreover, this reality reflects itself in the street and in the inability of the public to respond to this leadership...”*⁸⁹

Demands to a clear agreed-upon political agenda came too late. Nasser al-Qidwa^{xxix}, Ghassan Khatib of the “Jerusalem Media and Communication Center,”^{xxx} and others demanded a comprehensive Palestinian program at all levels.⁹⁰ Khatib suspected that the “bloody clashes between the armed groups came at the expense of the needed political efforts from the PNA and its various institutions.”⁹¹ One of the leading Palestinian intellectuals, Ali Al-Jerbawi, confirmed in view of the turmoil in Gaza that “[w]e seem to have lost our sense of direction. This situation didn’t erupt out of the blue, it is the cumulative effect of years of faulty policies and mismanagement of the national cause. In the final diagnosis, this is the result of having an ‘authority’ without real authority, without sovereignty and without statehood.”⁹² A long critic of Arafat, since she and her delegation were sidelined by the “*raís*” after the Madrid peace conference, when he conducted clandestine negotiations on the back-channel track, Hanan Ashrawi—who headed of the Executive Office of the PLO National Committee to orchestrate the conference in Annapolis—emphasized that acting outside the law and kidnapping foreign journalists are at complete odds with setting up a state.⁹³ For Daoud Kuttab^{xxxi} the rebuilding of legal, judicial, and local security institutions would be a tremendous accomplishment.⁹⁴ When Olmert in July 2007 gave up the formal control of

^{xxix} Nasser al-Qidwa was the representative of the PLO at the U.N. Headquarters in New York and Arafat’s foreign minister.

^{xxx} The “Jerusalem Media and Communication Center” (JMCC) was established in 1988 by a group of Palestinian journalists and researchers to provide sources about events in the West Bank, in East Jerusalem and Gaza. Its offices in Jerusalem and Ramallah cover a wide range of services to journalists, researchers, international agencies, individuals and organizations interested in obtaining reliable information in the Palestinian territories.

^{xxxi} Daoud Kuttab is one of the most prestigious Palestinian political analysts. In 1997 he was detained by Arafat’s Security Service for “violating journalism regulations.”

cities in the West Bank, the PNA confessed its inability to impose law and order.

The central requirement to surmount the enduring obstacles remains the revival of a national dialogue by a democratic “power-sharing” scheme which would eliminate the fault lines of the Mecca Understanding in February 2007. To the desire of the respected author Amos Oz who in August 2007 wanted to make out a “historical peace chance,” if Gaza and the West Bank take separate roads⁹⁵, no Palestinian government can agree if it wants to survive that the state of Palestine would be curtailed to less than 22 percent of the country.⁹⁶ The inviolability of the territorial and political unity and the preservation of its integrity as an imperative—provided in Article IV of the Declaration of Principles⁹⁷ and repeated in Article XIII (4+5) of the Interim Agreement⁹⁸—must be protected.

In July 2007 rumours of a confederation between Jordan and the West Bank were floated and reportedly “studied” by members of the Palestinian Authority. Abdullah II. hastened to announce that the “concept of [a] Jordanian-Palestinian confederation or federation is not in our dictionary, and we won’t tackle this issue for the time being”⁹⁹—a formulation to keep the back door open. Under the prevailing conditions of Israeli occupation and Palestinian powerlessness more than forty percent of the population showed their approval for such a plan. With regard to the future of Gaza an advisor to Haniyeh, Ahmed Yousef, found it suitable to remind his interlocutors of the “Egyptian guardianship” before 1967 to cultivate the conclusion that “Egypt is the best candidate to play a vital role in uniting the Palestinians.”¹⁰⁰ What is absolutely unthinkable for the immediate future is a revival of Faisal Hussein’s^{xxxii} proposal for a confederation between Israel and Palestine.¹⁰¹ In any case, the first step to independence is the foundation of a Palestinian state.

^{xxxii} Faisal Hussein (1940–2001) belonged to the most influential Palestinian family. Its roots lead back to the fourth caliph Ali Ibn Talib, the grandchild of the Prophet Mohammed. In the last 150 years the family occupied the most important agencies in Palestine: the office of Mufti, of “Sheikh of the Holy Sites,” and of “Head of the Haram al-Sharif.” During the First Intifada Faisal belonged to the underground National Steering Committee and was later the representative of the PLO in East Jerusalem, followed by Sari Nusseibeh.

V. The Palestinian Refugee Problem—Some Misapprehensions

Beyond Jerusalem the Palestinian refugee problem is the most difficult issue, constituting the widest gap between the parties. Early key U.N. pledges like Resolutions 181, 194, 242, and 338 have long lost their exceptional importance for pragmatic conflict regulations. Although in diplomatic communications they are quoted incessantly, the main parties stick to conflicting and irreconcilable interpretations by taking advantage of the resolutions' carefully worded built-in ambiguities and due to political developments since the time of their promulgation. After World War II the Arab states did not spare efforts to manipulate and to exclude the Palestinian leaders from the decision-making process that culminated in the Partition Resolution 181 which predicated 57 percent of Mandatory Palestine to the Jewish state with an Arab "minority" of more than 40 percent. One year later, in December 1948, Resolution 194 neither mentioned the name of Israel nor do we find there a stipulation of a right of return (*haq al-awda*) for the Palestinian refugees. Instead, in Paragraph 11 it resolved that

*"refugees wishing to return to their homes and to live in peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible."*¹⁰²

The Arab governments took for granted that they would "restore Arab pride by defeating the Zionist Crusaders" in the near future, Sari Nusseibeh, summarized the popular temper in the 1950s. Their intention was the destruction of Israel, a destiny that delivered evidence to the Israelis that their neighbors were not ready to recognize a Jewish entity in their midst. Boutros Boutros-Ghali was quoted with the Arab suggestion that a complete boycott of Israel would be a useful instrument to force Israel to her knees and to show the world that her duration is short-lived in a hostile vicinity.¹⁰³ When it was

discovered that Israel was strong enough to survive, the resolution was discounted.

Resolution 242 confirmed the necessity “to achieve a just solution to the refugee problem”—the reason of the “Palestinian National Council” (PNC) in 1974 to oppose it, because it obliterated the national character of the refugee problem. But without addressing the refugee problem explicitly the Palestinian National Charter (*al-mithaq a-qawmi al-filastini*) of July 17, 1968 called in Article 9 to liberate the whole of Palestine by armed struggle.¹⁰⁴ Six years later and four years after the “Black September” (!) King Hussein offered Arafat to be his deputy prime minister, because he feared a Palestinian government in exile and its attempts to establish an independent Palestinian state, endangering the unity of the Hashemite Kingdom. Anwar Sadat wanted to get rid of Egypt’s Palestine obligations and welcomed the declaration of the Arab Summit in Rabat that confirmed the right of the Palestinian people “to establish an independent national authority under the command of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in any Palestinian territory that is liberated.” Without taking recourse to Resolution 181 the conference affirmed “the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to return to their homeland.”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the resolution avoided to stress a “national” self-determination as well as to pronounce the name “Israel”.

Even in its “Declaration of Independence” of November 15, 1988 the PNC did not mention the refugee problem specifically: In a Palestine with two states the resolution (with reference to the Partition Resolution 181 which once had been rejected and now without mentioning Resolution 194) wanted to “ensure the right of the Palestinian Arab people to sovereignty and national independence ... including the Right of Return.” The destiny of return was not described.¹⁰⁶ For Eyal Benvenisti, the distinguished expert in international law at Tel Aviv University, the problem was neglected until then. Since Palestinian historians perceive the right of return to date as the most pressing issue, it is a curiosity that the “inalienability” of the right of return is historically a young phenomenon—a tactical tool in view of the hardships emanating from the occupation.

Only Hamas in its mainstream seemed dead set to ignore all these peculiarities and reservations by insisting on a selective reading of Resolution 194 in order to confirm its conviction that the right of self-determination is a basic tenet on modern international law and not dependent on legal limitations. The validity of the sentence “the majority has majority right” shall prevail in the whole country, Palestinian negotiators were reminded. Nusseibeh who left the official arena in dismay over the Palestinian policy, confronted the right of return with the right to live in peace and independence, whereas for Uri Avnery the clause had become a monstrosity in Israel and was lurching out of any rational discourse. Its perseverance—apart from possibilities for family reunion designs¹⁰⁷—has nothing to do with dreams of “one state for Jews and Arabs.” On the eve of Israel’s sixtieth anniversary he presented an enlightening résumé of the events and their inconsistencies in 1947-48¹⁰⁸. Beilin admitted that Israel cannot dictate that the Palestinians forgo the right of return, but warned that they cannot change Israeli minds after fifty years of demographic and political development. Reflecting the inner contradiction between the right of return and the two-state solution Beilin’s GI-colleague Yasser Abed Rabbo argued that the right should “not adversely affect the Jewish nature of the state of Israel.”¹⁰⁹ In the same fashion to reduce Israeli sensitivities Salam Fayyad emphasized the Palestinian position in an interview with “Haaretz”: The refugee problem would not thwart peace between the two peoples. Arafat himself recognized Israel’s worries and espoused his willingness to implement the right of return

“in a way that takes into account such concerns. However, just as we Palestinians must be realistic with respect to Israel’s demographic desires, Israelis too must be realistic in understanding that there can be no solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, if the legitimate rights of these innocent civilians continue to be ignored. Left unresolved, the refugee issue has the potential to undermine any permanent peace agreement between Palestinians and Israelis.”¹¹⁰

A solution cannot mean, Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erakat continued, that “4 million refugees parachuting from the sky to Israel one early-morning hour.”¹¹¹ The call “to find a just and agreed-upon solution to the issue of [!] refugees on the basis of Resolution 194” was reiterated in July 2007 by the

“Platform of the 13th Government.” Opinion polls suggest that only ten percent of the refugees in the West Bank, in Gaza, Jordan, and Lebanon want to return to Israel and apply for Israeli citizenship.¹¹² It is not very attractive to live under Israeli rule, the Arab/Palestinian citizens of Israel can attest.

A change of paradigm on this salient issue was gaining speed in Israel, too: After “new historians” Benny Morris (Beerheva), Avi Shlaim (London), Ilan Pappé, and Tom Segev had delivered ample evidence for the causes of the flights and their reasons, Ephraim Sneh—until recently deputy minister of defense under Amir Peretz and by no means a “dove”—was convinced that most Palestinians would not return to Haifa and other locations in Israel.¹¹³ But Amos Oz acknowledged in April 2007 that the “time has come to openly admit that we are partly responsible for the plight of the Palestinian refugees; not exclusive responsibility or exclusive guilt, but our hands are not entirely clean.”¹¹⁴ In the same direction of partial responsibility argued Ruth Gavison^{xxxiii} who proposed to exchange “the right of return” by “the desire to return” which Israel would recognize eventually,¹¹⁵ whereas the GI-document replaced “the right to return” by “a solution to the refugee problem” explicating several options.¹¹⁶ Both formulas abstained from connecting a Jewish attachment to historical, political or cultural rights to the whole country. “Justice will be achieved when both sides ... concede the political right without losing the bond. Israeli society must also learn to be satisfied with the desire to return to parts of the Land of Israel, without the attachment alone, without any intention of turning it into the political right of return,” the legal editor of “Haaretz” concluded.¹¹⁷ When Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni confirmed in August 2007 that the Israeli government must not compromise on or even discuss the numbers of refugees, since it harms Israeli legitimacy,¹¹⁸ this was a non-starter in diplomatic terms.

Already in an essay of 2003 a Palestinian and an Israeli expert had disputed the isolated conference manners of handshakes and accords. According to Sami Adwan (University of Bethlehem) and Dan Bar-On (University of Beersheva) the creation of a just and stable peace requires joining hands on

^{xxxiii} The conservative Ruth Gavison is one of the most eminent Israeli professors of law and philosophy of law, teaching at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

“educational curricula that challenge existing stereotypes and perishing aspects of hatred. Even the most honest, good faith implementation of political agreements cannot repair the charismatic psychological, emotional and educational fault lines opened after years of conflict.”¹¹⁹ Former Secretary General of the Foreign Office in Jerusalem, David Kimche, demanded:

*“We must not let up in our struggle against our enemies from outside—whether it be Hamas in the south, Hisbullah in the north, or those in Tehran calling to wipe us off the face of the map. But at the same time we must pay more attention to the enemy within our gates. There is much to do to improve, and the first step must be to overhaul our decaying education system, and to motivate our teachers and the young generation to want to be teachers.”*¹²⁰

Two other professionals, Yoav Peled and Nadim N. Rouhana, pleaded for “transitional justice”: “to conceptually decoupling the right of return from the negotiations over the means of actual return of refugees,”¹²¹ to prepare the avenue for Israelis and Palestinians to get ready for humanizing each other. In July 2007 Education Minister Yuli Tamir approved school books for Arab speaking students in Israel that—withstanding inconsistencies and biases in favor of the Jewish addressees—contain the Palestinian commemorating narratives of the “catastrophe” (*nakba*).

VI. The Legal Battle about the West Bank

Partition Resolution 181 was turned down by the Arab and Palestinian delegates, because the U.N. allegedly exceeded its competence (*ultra vires*) and violated international law. One year later Israel did not see any reason to renounce the territorial enlargement of the Jewish state. “The scales of Statehood were tipped by a sword,” Law Professor Yoram Dinstein of Tel Aviv University argued, rejecting the notion that the resolution was the cornerstone for the establishment of Israel.¹²² The Israeli-Jordanian Agreement of April 3, 1949 was no peace treaty: Articles V and VI fixed the armistice demarcation which was later on called the “Green Line” according to the colour on the maps. In April 1950 King Abdullah I. of Jordan annexed Cisjordan (West Bank) to his

kingdom. Two weeks later the Council of the Arab League registered its dismay of the „annexation of Arab Palestine by any Arab State [that] would be considered a violation of the League Charter, and subject to sanctions.” Just Iraq, Pakistan, and Great Britain recognized the step. Most Arab states took diplomatic revenge for the military victory the king had marshalled in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and for the secret collusion the Jordanian ruler had tried out with the Zionist adversary since 1947.¹²³ In a countermove Egypt institutionalized an “All-Palestinian Government”—according to Nusseibeh a “sham product of internecine Arab squabbles”—to rule over Gaza.

Pursuant to the 1967 War the Israeli government was reluctant to endorse the provision of U.N. Resolution 242 that prohibited the acquisition of territory by force—enshrined in the preamble with no binding legal obligation.¹²⁴ Instead, the cabinet strengthened the stipulation in the same sentence of the right “of every state in the region ... to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.” This provision took recourse to Article 35 (1) of the U.N. Statute of Rules of Court which addresses “states parties.” In other words: The Palestinians cannot make a claim.

Constitutional questions and religious convictions overlapped each other and became a real power to be reckoned with. For the legendary poet Nathan Alterman the victory in 1967 “erased the difference between the state of Israel and the land of Israel”.¹²⁵ Religious authors espoused messianic faith of sorts, when they recognized a final vocation of the Jewish people as a whole: the unification of body and soul, the return of God into His Land, without it He cannot exist anymore.¹²⁶ In the parliament Minister of Justice Yaacov Shimshon Shapira gave credit to the interpretation “that the legal conception of the state of Israel—an organic conception adjusted to the practical political realities—has always been rooted in the principle that the law, jurisdiction, and administration of the state apply to all those parts of Eretz Israel which are de facto under the state’s control”—a reminder of Ben-Gurion. Israel withdrew to a consciously isolation and returned to the metaphor of “a people that dwells alone” (Numbers 23.9).

Additionally, Israeli jurists stressed that the Hashemites had forfeited their rights of territorial sovereignty over the West Bank by joining the Egyptian and Syrian war coalition. Considering Nasser's announcement of "total war" and the Khartoum resolution of August/September 1967 the Israeli government confirmed that "No one can be allowed to reap advantage from his own wrong" (*nullus commodum capere de sua injura proprio*).¹²⁷ Other authors maintained that in view of the call for a "just and lasting peace" Israel must be allowed to change the armistice line of 1949 to make the country secure before the occupation comes to an end. Yehuda Z. Blum of the Hebrew University and later ambassador to the United Nations, devoted his professionalism to the status of the West Bank in his interpretation of international law. In 1974 he connected the history of the Jewish people to "Judea and Samaria" with the recognition of the League of Nations Council on 24 July 1922:

*„[N]o state can make a legal claim to Judea and Samaria (including East Jerusalem) that is equal to that of Israel, this relative superiority of Israel may be sufficient, under international law, to make Israel's possession of those territories indistinguishable from an absolute title to be valid erga omnes [legal obligation toward all].”*¹²⁸

Blum considered it insignificant that the British Statement of Policy of June 1922, the Colonial Office under Winston Churchill dismissed that "have been used such as that Palestine is to become 'as Jewish as England is English.' His Majesty's Government regard any such expectations as impracticable and have no such aim in view." One year later, on 15 May 1923, a British memorandum laid down the territorial boundaries of the Mandate that crafted the Hashemite Emirate. The Anglo-Transjordanian Treaty of 20 February 1928¹²⁹ finally fixed the British influence onto the Emirate.

For Henry Siegman^{xxxiv} the impediments to implement Resolution 242 were an invitation to an indefinite continuation of Israel's occupation¹³⁰—and for Arab rejectionists a recipe to dissociate at least from a tacit recognition of Israel. Within this reasoning the president of the Supreme Court Meir Shamgar (tenure

^{xxxiv} Henry Siegman was Director of the "American Jewish Congress" and is now President of the "US/Middle East Project," formerly the "Council of Foreign Relation."

1983–1995) added that no legal sovereign had ruled over these territories,¹³¹ and Ehud Barak picked up that thread: A Palestinian state had never been created on this land, “Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza after it was attacked, and once again it won”¹³²—revolting against his party predecessor Rabin who had recognized the Jews had not returned to an empty land and that “the Palestinians were not in the past, and are not today, a threat to the existence of the state of Israel.”¹³³ Statements of the Supreme Court that Israel holds the West Bank since the Six-Day War in “temporary belligerent occupation” to serve national security needs and military exigencies,¹³⁴ were pushed aside.

Baruch Kimmerling (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) identified the Israeli intention as a Palestinian “politicide.”¹³⁵ Jerusalem torpedoed the regulations of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the ground that they are not applicable to the Palestinian Territories *de jure* because of “the lack of recognition of the territory as sovereign prior to the annexation by Jordan and Egypt [sic!].” Indeed, Article 2 in its second paragraph determines that the Convention only applies to “occupation of territory of a High Contracting Party,” and since according to the Israeli High Court of Justice the Convention constitutes treaty law as opposed to customary law, it is not fully recognized in Israeli courts, Eyal Benvenisti commented¹³⁶. Thus, to fend off Palestinian national claims the Supreme Court ruled in 2004 that the army fights against “terrorists: They are not members of a regular army; they do not wear uniforms; they hide among the civilian Palestinian population in the territories, including inside holy sites; they are seconded by part of the civilian population and by their families and relatives.”¹³⁷ By this ruling the promise to observe humanitarian provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention¹³⁸ was obsolete. Three years later, in a ruling about the shortening of electricity and fuel supplies to Gaza, the Israeli High Court of Justice stated that the state of Israel “bears no general obligation to concern itself with the welfare of the residents of the Strip ... according to the international law of occupation,” since it has no “effective control over what takes place within the territory of the Gaza Strip.”¹³⁹ The Palestinian Commission of Jurists “al-Haq” responded that Israel by its “[n]umerous large scale incursions, air strikes and artillery attacks” has demonstrated her “ability to assume physical control of any part of the area at any time it desires.”¹⁴⁰

Correspondingly, Israel denied the creation of *faits accomplis* by its settlement policy and the erection of the separation wall/fence/barrier^{xxxv} and disputed the right of the International Court of Justice in 2004 to have jurisdiction,¹⁴¹ i.e. to deal with Israeli internal affairs. The Israel Foreign Ministry emphasized:

“The West Bank and Gaza Strip are disputed territories whose status can only be determined through negotiations. Occupied territories are territories captured in war from an established and recognized sovereign. As the West Bank and Gaza Strip were not under the legitimate sovereignty of any state to the Six Day War, they should not be considered occupied territories. The people of Israel have ancient ties to the territories, as well as a continuous centuries-old presence there. These areas were the cradle of Jewish civilization. Israel has rights in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, rights the Palestinians deliberately disregard.”

In his address to the Knesset in November 1977 Anwar Sadat made it clear to the Israeli public that “there can be no peace without the Palestinians.”¹⁴² But when Egypt and Israel signed their peace treaty in Camp David (September 5-17, 1978) the Palestinians had not been involved in the negotiations. The PLO rejected the blueprint of granting full autonomy to the occupied territories, whereas Jordan was invited to counsel. Ten years later King Hussein’s handover of the West Bank to the control of the PLO was of shattering disadvantage for the national strive of the Palestinian, since it moved the territorial responsibility to an organization that was not recognized internationally as a reasonable and reliable partner for negotiations. It did not upgrade the claim of the Palestinians, when the U.N. General Assembly granted “Palestine” a special status as an observer and specified that “the designation ‘Palestine’ should be used in place of the designation ‘Palestine Liberation Organization’ in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the

^{xxxv} According to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in Den Haag this is a route of 974 square kilometres taking 16.6 percent of the West Bank east of the Green Line with 400.000 Palestinians between the armistice border of 1949 and the fence and 200.000 who are dependent on Israeli permits to farm their land. According to the “Arab Reform Bulletin” 5(November 2007)⁹ the wall/fence/barrier comprises twelve percent of the West Bank. At the same time “The International Herald Tribune” (Steven Erlanger on November 25, 2009) reported that 65,000 Israelis live east and 209,000 west of the wall/fence/barrier.

observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice.” To console the international audience Foreign Minister Peres elaborated in 1992 that the Palestinian state was at least partially a reality, and benevolently conditioned that the fulfilment of all national aspirations rely on the good behavior of the Palestinians.¹⁴³

The Declaration of Principles one year later avoided the term “Palestine” and returned to “PLO.” Neither the name “Palestine” nor the destination to establish a Palestine state at the end of the interim period, are mentioned. Until today the papers of the “National Palestinian Authority” bear a double letter-heading: for itself and for the PLO. Four weeks prior to his assassination Rabin—not a traditional peacenik, since neither he nor Peres were very keen on that (Shlomo Ben-Ami)¹⁴⁴—repeated his purpose to escape the shaping of a Palestinian state in all parts of the West Bank: “We view the permanent solution in the framework of State of Israel which will include most of the area of the Land of Israel as it was under the rule of the British Mandate, and alongside it a Palestinian entity which will be a home to most of the Palestinian residents living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.”¹⁴⁵

VII. Olmert’s Tentative Offers

Like all his predecessors Ehud Olmert tried to reserve the right to conduct Israel’s foreign relations on his personal account. His announcement of May 21, 2008 to renew the Israeli-Syrian negotiating track was only the last example to preserve major diplomatic efforts without consulting Washington, even though the Administration had placated Damascus as belonging to the “axis of evil.” By his initiative Olmert followed the precedents of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty of 1978 and the negotiations with the PLO in 1993 to conclude the “Declaration of Principles.” In both cases Washington was kept outside the range of preparations. Uri Avnery reminded his readers that Olmert’s steps towards Syria were the grist to the mills for John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt with their theory that the Israeli lobby totally dominates US foreign policy¹⁴⁶. In other words: All Israeli governments did not care about the strategic interests of

America and the endeavors of AIPAC and other Jewish organizations in case of promoting their own wishes and goals.

When the Cambridge-educated Abba Eban addressed the U.N. General Assembly in the 1950 convincingly, David Ben-Gurion congratulated him with the sentence: “Until I read your speech, I did not know how much we were right.” In the 1960s Levi Eshkol admired Eban’s skill in diplomacy, but called him in his good-humoured way “the clever fool.”¹⁴⁷ From Golda Meir the story is related that Eban was the last person who was informed.¹⁴⁸ He took revenge with the quip that Meir used only two hundred words, although her vocabulary extended to five hundred words. Rabin tried to keep Peres away from the diplomatic arena, until the foreign minister was forced to inform him in February 1993 about the secret deliberations with the PLO. David Levy (tenure 1996–1998 and 1999–2000) played a second role alongside Netanyahu and Barak, and Peres (tenure 2001–2003) was once again marginalized by Sharon, even though they were befriended with each other since decennia. Nobody in Washington hit on the idea that an Israeli foreign minister is responsible completely within the range of his official mission. Olmert says that without a Palestinian state Israel would be “finished,” but in reality he is undermining any seriousness to make the negotiations successfully go on. Political scientist Menachem Klein complemented that the defense establishment has always taken a lead over the foreign ministry in formulating Israeli foreign policy.¹⁴⁹

For Tzipi Livni a report of the “Reút Institute” was painful which certified that “Israel has no foreign policy” and that “[t]he Foreign Ministry does not have the skill, authority or minimum requirements to deal with matters of national security.”¹⁵⁰ When in 2007 Livni tried cautiously to “surgeon” the traditional Israeli prejudice about the Palestinians with the intention to bolster her diplomatic account, the prime minister edged her out. TV-coverage of the cabinet left the impression that Livni and Olmert were not even on speaking terms, even though they are strategically not far away. It was she who pushed the prime minister forward to present his plan for an “Agreement of Principles,” before Olmert took the leadership again and Livni herself bogged down and hastened to request “realistic goals.”¹⁵¹ Her approach was to find “the widest common denominator between both sides” without commitments to resolve the

clue components.¹⁵² But viewpoints remained ambivalent: Before the Israel Council of Foreign Relations she mocked that “[f]or many years now we have been repeating phrases, let’s not call them slogans, such as ‘two states, living in peace’, and warned that the “pragmatic elements” among the Palestinian parties “grow increasingly weaker and are almost disappearing in some places.”¹⁵³ In an op-ed for the pan-Arab oriented and Saudi-sponsored newspaper “Al-Sharq al-Awsat” (The Middle East) she put the Jewish and the Palestinian endeavors on the same historical level:

“The establishment of Israel provided the answer to the historic national aspirations of the Jewish people, those living in the Holy Land and those outside it, those refugees fleeing the horrors of the Holocaust and those that left or were expelled from Arab and other lands. This must also be the true calling of the future State of Palestine—to be the solution to the national claims of the Palestinian people, those in the West Bank and Gaza and those in the Diaspora, those languishing in refugee camps and those who enjoy equal rights as citizens in other states. The establishment of Palestine must itself constitute the answer to the Palestinian claim of return—it cannot remain as an open wound that keeps the conflict alive. The principle that both states must live in peace and security, is equally self-evident.”¹⁵⁴

A commentator presumed that her father, who had belonged to the “Irgun” underground before 1948, would have sent her for a psychiatric examination. Only in September 2008 Livni climbed the ladder to leadership by a razor-thin victory in the primaries of her party, after Olmert had declared to step down because of his corruption affairs. Now we will see whether his successor will follow suit to her political announcements. Israeli commentators generally were cautious with regard to the fulfilment of Livni’s ambitions, taking into account the political and financial demands and expectations of prospective coalition partners.

Leaving the smoke screen of conventional admonitions behind to crack down Palestinian terrorism prior to any negotiations, Olmert advocated a peace deal dissenting deliberately from the Roadmap with its introduction that “[a] two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will only be achieved through an end

to violence and terrorism”—a “principal requirement”, the Israeli government had repeatedly demanded in the past. The points of departure were now designated to culminate in the parallel realization of a tripartite strategic program: to pale Hamas and to enhance the Palestinian Authority, to secure the regional support of the Arab states for the political process, and to acquire international assistance. At the same time Olmert desisted from any timetable. Due to the internecine Palestine strife since June 2007 and the Israeli military incursion in Gaza the auspices of an Israeli-Palestinian accord are far from being evident and clear. He can not resist demands of his Minister of Defense Barak to give the army “freedom of operation,” unless he can accumulate a resounding diplomatic achievement. The sentence of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook^{xxxvi} from the 1980s that prepared the reason for Rabin’s death is not forgotten: He who does not care for the country, the country does not take care of him.¹⁵⁵ The repetition of Rabin’s destiny may be come true especially in case of a division of Arab Jerusalem even though senior politicians admitted that most Israelis rarely visit the Palestinian parts of Jerusalem and know that a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty is a slogan that does not reflect realities.¹⁵⁶ Amos Gil of the circle “Ir Amim”^{xxxvii} paid attention to the factual division of Jerusalem with reference to the supply of working places, education and health services, social and cultural integration, and environmental issues: “Israel provided evidence that it is not interested in a united Jerusalem. What is still missing is the official authorization,” was concluded.¹⁵⁷ In an Open Letter to Hillary Clinton author Gershon Gorenberg asked the Democratic candidate “that what you really mean by ‘undivided Jerusalem is what your closest adviser [husband Bill Clinton] laid out in his parameters for an Israeli-Palestinian peace at the end of his term in January 2001^{xxxviii}: Jerusalem should be an open undivided city but the capital of two independent states, with Palestinian parts of the city under Palestinian rule.” But even Haim Ramon’s proposals for Jerusalem in autumn 2007 were bludgeoned, wrung out, crushed and diluted by

^{xxxvi} Zvi Yehuda Hachohen Kook (1891–1982, acronym „Haratzi“) was the son of the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi in Palestine, R’ Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935). He was the spiritual mentor of the settler movement “Gush Emunim” (“Block of the Faithful”) that was established in February 1974.

^{xxxvii} Cf. p. 48.

^{xxxviii} The parameters were transmitted by Clinton on December 23, 2000.

his adversaries in the government and in parliament. The race among options and preferences is not over.

VIII. Abbas' Agenda

The death of Arafat in 2004 did not turn the scales of the political universe to transform the deadlock, as Dennis Ross had presumed.¹⁵⁸ First of all, the internal and external legacy of the *ra'ís* had urged Abbas to weigh his options: to tolerate the managerial chaos within the Authority, to heal the political and ideological rivalries between different factions and / or to swallow the creeping encroachment of the Palestinian territories by Israel that could not be stopped militarily. He chose a forward defense tactic and triumphed over his long-time hesitancy in hard decision-making: He installed Fayyad with his credentials as a former World Bank director, indicated a hard posture vis-à-vis Hamas and displayed political sincerity towards Olmert. From his viewpoint he had no other choice: In January 200p he will finish his last presidential term officially. A public opinion poll among Palestinians in October 2006, belatedly published, revealed that 81 percent thought that the preparedness of concessions is exhausted. So, Abbas insisted to adopt a “framework that deals with the principles of every element of the final-status issues.”¹⁵⁹ After the outbreak of the Second Intifada not even Arafat would have been capable to sell an imperfect agreement to his people. So, Abbas announced his intention to hold a referendum on any peace treaty with Israel.¹⁶⁰

In the meantime in the West Bank a projected new Palestinian town for 70,000 people between Nablus and Ramallah is liable to cut off Jewish villages in the Jordan Valley and build two pairs of lanes east of Jerusalem providing a “transportational contiguity” within the Palestinian state for Jews and Arabs separately—the Israeli sovereignty rights would be preserved through a chain of bridges and tunnels. The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights “B'tselem”^{xxxix} reported of more than five hundred fixed and temporary checkpoints,¹⁶¹ the “U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs”

^{xxxix} Gen. 1.27.

(OCHA) in East Jerusalem counted even 532 checkpoints and roadblocks in August 2007.¹⁶² Military incursions and raids into the Palestinian Territories went on unabated. Between September 26-29, 2007 fifteen Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip by Israeli military fire, 49 were injured. 24 mortars and nine “Quassam”-rockets were fired towards Israel. Between 24 February and 4 March 2008 more than 120 Palestinians and three Israelis were killed. Abbas’ room of maneuvering is very small. Personal experiences of a “Jews for Peace in the Middle East” delegation resulted in the impression that the Palestinian public does not trust either Abbas or Haniyeh.

IX. Israeli and Palestinian Peace Groups – Peace through Security or Security through Peace?

What Reuven Kaminer^{xl} noticed in the 1990s is still compelling: It is difficult to fully identify and to measure the precise impact of the Israeli peace movement on the official policy in Jerusalem.¹⁶³ Furthermore, we have just a faint idea about what Palestinian peace activists can disseminate to their public. Every contribution to peace education in school is confronted with the expressive lop-sidedness of political and military power and destroyed by what students “learn” in daily life outside their classrooms. Sami Adwan (University of Bethlehem) and Dan Bar-On (University of Beersheva) have stressed that the main remedy would be the humanizing of the other and to finish the de-legitimizing of the other’s narrative in order to divorce from monolithic interpretations which until now define national identities.¹⁶⁴ To get out of this trap the main denominator of the civil society must be dialogue and interaction.

The public trust in its political leadership is low. But at the same time the peace movements are not strong enough to change the political landscape from scratch. In both countries innumerable important gatherings, conferences, public council and community meetings, rallies, educational enterprises for adults and youth, guided tours to focal points of inter-communal discord and conflict, training workshops and seminars, regular visits to local and national party branches, invitations to journalists and communication specialists, to political scientists, business people, architects, lawyers, and to lawmakers as well as performing people-to-people programs, advertising and banner campaigns in newspapers did not terminate what for Israel the US-American sociologist Lawrence Davidson has labelled as a “closed information circuit” on Orwellian level.¹⁶⁵ In spring 2007 Gideon Levy of “Haaretz” went on to describe Israel as a “society in coma,”¹⁶⁶ after he had complained a growing apathy.¹⁶⁷

^{xl} Reuven Kaminer is one of the most impressive activists within the Israeli peace movement since its inception: determined, independent, and unpretentious. Together with Latif Dori of “Mapam,” the writer Yael Lotan, and Eliezer Feiler of Kibbutz Yad Hana (death in 1993) he belonged to the small delegation that met for the first time with PLO representatives in November 1986 in Romania to break the “Israeli Law Against Contact with the Enemy” which was adopted by the Knesset three months before. All of them had to stand trial, but finally the case was transferred to the High Court of Justice. No judgement was promulgated.

Avraham (“Avrum”) Burg condemned the “sticky majority” that appears to be unable to decide on matters of morality and state.¹⁶⁸ For him Israel has locked up itself in a jail under the remembrance of the *Shoah*: “The holocaust is more present in our lives than God”.¹⁶⁹ This trauma is contemporarily not only Hitler’s special “legacy”, since it was applied to Arafat and to Ahmadinejad, either. Finally, former Vice-Chair of the Knesset Noemi Chazan (“Meretz”) summarized that “Israelis don’t realize (or don’t want to think about) the idea that the current situation is untenable and that failure to achieve a solution in the near future will lead to the end the State of Israel as we know it.”¹⁷⁰

To aggravate convincing public presentations, the peace groups differ rather fundamentally in their political assessments and strategies. The “end of occupation” is a general option, but when it comes to the details the harmony is over—with the effect that the governments happen to ignore the results of public opinion polls. The observation is minced by a tremendous blend of conflicting perceptions, motivations, and egocentrism which is not new: Mark A. Heller and Sari Nusseibeh studied long ago “an abstract desire for peace, but there has generally been far less enthusiasm for a negotiating process.”¹⁷¹ The formula “peace through security” still hampers the more reasonable attitude “security through peace.” To behave and to operate like protest movements indefinitely, however, is the recipe of just short-term victories on protest demonstrations and press reports.

Bad fences make bad neighbours^{xii}. Since the media rarely cover the living conditions of the Palestinian population, an Israeli TV program like that of Haim Yavin „Land of the Settlers“ in May 2005 triggered a surprising public echo. But the excitement was soon exhausted—not about the settlers and their behavior, but about the television anchorman: Yavin was asked why he had been silent

^{xii} This sentence is regularly quoted in order to justify the separation wall/fence/barrier, but its US-American author Robert Frost (1875–1963) originally wrote: “Good fences may not make good neighbours. But they may help from being constantly at each throat.” Former Israeli Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami (“Scars of War, Wounds of Peace,” p. 25) quoted a similar sentence of Zionist Leader Berl Katznelson (1887–1944): “A distant neighbour is better than a close enemy.”

on the screen for almost thirty years. Whenever Dror Etkes of “Peace Now”^{xlii} presented his findings about the expanding and fledgling settlement network—including the outposts that are small new settlements, former legal advisor the Sharon, Talia Sasson, remarked¹⁷² — the public attention remained vague. A reporter of “Yediot Ahronot” visiting the refugee camp Deheishe confessed that he did not know that at the height of the summer heat-wave the inhabitants had no water for bathing: “What happens there, beyond the wall that rises between us and the neighbors in Bethlehem, is completely hidden from [our] view.”¹⁷³ The same journal reported from Elon Moreh near Nablus that the settlers cut the water pipeline of the village Dir el-Khatab for their swimming-pool and diverted the drainage back to the pipe polluting the drinking water of the Palestinian residents there.¹⁷⁴ “Israel’s splendid security forces know how to find the [Palestinian] people they want to. But where violence by settlers is concerned, the process of bringing people to justice falls short,” “Haaretz” moaned.¹⁷⁵ The anthropologist Yehudit Kirstein Keshet describes in her book “Checkpoint Watch—Testimonies from Occupied Territories” (London 2006)¹⁷⁶ countless examples of the practice of suppression and humiliation. The vibrant political discourse of Israeli intellectuals opposing the occupation policies does not exert significant influence in the short run.

The conflict is near by, but the knowledge about the Palestinian daily life is low. Ami Ayalon (currently Minister without Portfolio in the Olmert Government) confessed after nearly four decades in positions as navy commander and chief of intelligence:

“Looking back, I know that during all my years in the navy I didn’t know the first thing about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Even when I was an admiral and took part in meetings of the General Staff and signed papers, I didn’t know anything. It’s not that I’m dumb and don’t understand, it’s something that you also find in other senior officer. When you’re in the army, you’re familiar with the army angle. It was only when I came to the Shin Bet that I learned for the first

^{xlii} In September 2007 the outgoing director of Peace Now’s Settlement Watch was replaced by Hagit Ofran, a 32 years old member of “Meretz/Yahad” and the granddaughter of the legendary Yeshayahu Leibowitz. Ofran grew up in a observant religious family in Jerusalem and stressed her deep conviction that “the only way for the state of Israel to remain both Jewish and

*time that the military interface, in our relations with the Palestinians, is totally marginal.*¹⁷⁷

The Ayalon-Nusseibeh Understanding of 2003 was internationally appreciated, but locally it collected some hundred thousand signatures and did not take off. Belonging to a pioneering youth movement Meron Benvenisti remembered that he had “‘made the desert bloom’ by uprooting the ancient olive trees of al-Bassa to clear the ground for a banana grove, as required by the ‘planning farming’ principles of my kibbutz, Rosh Haniqra.”¹⁷⁸ Since Palestine was not a “virgin country”, the traces of Arab civilization were systematically obscured and wiped out.

The main impression abroad about the peace movement is wielded by advocacy groups like Uri Avnery’s “Gush Shalom”—which at the memorial rally for Rabin in November 2007 launched together with the Geneva Initiative representatives a graphic design with a bullet and a pen facing each other, and the caption “This is the time! Choose for peace!”¹⁷⁹—, “Combatants for Peace,” “Breaking the Silence” (soldiers’ refusal to serve in the Palestinian Territories), “Taayush” (Arab-Jewish “Partnership”), the “Architects Against the Wall,” “Ir Amim” (City [Jerusalem] of the [Israeli and Palestinian] Peoples), the “Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions,” the women’s networks of “Bat Shalom” (“Sister of Peace”), “Women in Black”, “Machsom Watch” (“Checkpoint” Vigilance), and “Yesh Din” (“There is a Law”). With their unwavering dedication they are widely acknowledged as “true bearers of Jewish-Israeli ethics”—exerting a rather limited impact on the public discourse in Israel. An American-Jewish commentator assumed that peace activists like Israel’s “Anarchists Against the Wall” with no official leaders, no office and no paid staff “have managed to accomplish more than many well-oiled NGOs and social movements.”¹⁸⁰ Indeed, the peace camps have no authorized and politically overall respected spokespersons. Instead, they at best represent a “network that seeks to encourage its members, each on its own individual way, as well as collectively (as a sum greater than its part) to promote the end of occupation,

democratic is to pull out of the [Palestinian] territories ... and to end the conflict between us and the Palestinians. I believe it is possible.”

through a mutually agreed resolution of the conflict, which ensures the dignity, liberty, and security of both peoples.”¹⁸¹

In view of Sharon’s withdrawal policy from Gaza Yossi Beilin described the dilemmas and contradictions of both Israelis and Palestinians as follows:

“We [Israelis] cannot have a solution requiring partition of Jerusalem; the Palestinians cannot have a solution without a Palestinian state and a capital at Al-Quds. We cannot accept a situation involving a Palestinian state with an army; the Palestinians cannot accept a situation in which their refugees are left in limbo and their state cannot absorb them. We cannot countenance entitlement of refugees to choose between compensation and return to Jaffa, Haifa or any other place under our sovereignty; the Palestinians cannot countenance an arrangement whereby all Jewish settlements remain under Israeli jurisdiction. We have no use for a solution whereby 140,000 people [settlers] are evicted from their homes; the Palestinians have no use for a solution whereby Israel annexes most of the West Bank and leaves just a few scattered and isolated sectors at their disposal; and we cannot live with a solution that takes us back to the pre-Six-Day War lines without suitable security guarantees.”¹⁸²

To avert the accusation of “national treason” Beilin had offered the GI-draft before its presentation to Sharon. His suggestion was answered one and a half year later with the insult that the Israeli team had collaborated with the enemy behind the government’s back, what is absolutely untrue. When a settler organization called the signatories “traitors” and demanded to put them on trial, Attorney General Menachem (“Mani”) Mazuz did not realize a criminal offense. The “architect” of Oslo—albeit he tried to shrug off this title—is still regarded and respected abroad as the anchorman of the Geneva Initiative. He is one of the few people in Israeli politics who thinks three steps ahead,¹⁸³ he was complemented: “With Beilin, nothing happens by coincidence.” It took Ben-Ami to remind his readers that “the Israeli peacemaker is always condemned to break national unity and split the nation if he wants to conclude a difficult agreement.”¹⁸⁴ Everywhere in the world governments cannot rule against the professional elites. The only question is how long they can resist their counsel.

For Menachem Klein the Geneva Initiative was nevertheless “the first step of a long journey that will change the relationship between two peoples who have been hurting each other for more than a century.”¹⁸⁵ He predicted “that 90 percent of the final deal will duplicate the Geneva Accord.”¹⁸⁶

X. Promises beyond Pessimism

In view of the preparations for the “international peace meeting” (Bush) in Annapolis Hanna Siniora, with Gershon Baskin^{xliii} Co-CEO of the “Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information” (IPCRI), detected “feverish local, regional, and international deliberations,”¹⁸⁷ which did not leave the right-wing and the dovish organizations within the Jewish community unaffected.¹⁸⁸ The newspaper “Al-Quds” noticed “a race” to hash an agreement of principles.¹⁸⁹ Experts, public figures, and journalists came out with assessing and examining the chances of success and failure. The flood of their articles resembled an unparalleled contest between intellectual rivals. Some of them predicted fiasco and anarchy or a reprint of wishful thinking and disillusionment, another zero-sum game lay ahead. Yoel Marcus of “Haaretz” reminded his readers that ten prime ministers since 1967 did not evacuate one single millimeter in the West Bank. Palestinian geographer Khalil Tufakji and Birzeit Vice-President Ghassan Khatib paid attention to the fact that Israel was continuously building for a future, eager to deepen the structural disparity. “The Middle East peace process may well be the most spectacular deception in modern diplomatic history,” Henry Siegman described the mood,¹⁹⁰ until he accused the West for its political and moral collaboration with the “huge lie” to abstain from a strong intervention because of its guilt for the Holocaust.¹⁹¹ But this temper did not prevent major peace groups to address the conference with the demand to aim at an agreement until the end of 2008. Another bilateral

^{xliii} Gershon Baskin co-founded IPCRI following years of experience facilitating Jewish-Arab relations within Israel, during which he worked for Interns for Peace, the Ministry of Education and the Institute for Education for Jewish-Arab Coexistence. Baskin has published books and articles in the Hebrew, English and Arabic press on a range of topics related to the conflict. During the premiership of the late Yitzhak Rabin, he served as an outside policy advisor of the peace process. During the Final Status Negotiations in 2000-2001 between Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat, Baskin was a member of the Jerusalem Experts Committee established by the Prime Minister's Office.

meeting organized by Spanish friends collapsed before taking off due to incompatible positions about a two-state or a unitary state solution¹⁹².

Nonetheless, for the usually gloomy Meron Benvenisti the process of crushing the Palestinian people was pulling into its last station.¹⁹³ IPCRI expressed even enormous confidence in building peace this year 2008, boasting its public unique work¹⁹⁴.

In hindsight it seems that Annapolis was an approach without bearing fruit. Insofar it joined past conferences with countless hours of debates and negotiations as well as dozens of international resolutions which cast a long shadow over every inch of the struggle for the two-state solution on equal terms of national sovereignty. Nevertheless, the letter of Zbigniew Brzezinski, Lee H. Hamilton, Carla Hills, Nancy Kassebaum-Baker, Thomas R. Pickering, Brent Scowcroft, Theodore C. Sorensen, and Paul Volcker to Bush and Rice in late November 2007 will exert its political impact.¹⁹⁵ In the meantime the Israeli government and Hamas stick to their guns at home and to disinformation rallies abroad. From Henry Kissinger the story was related that he brought peace to Vietnam the way, Napoleon brought it to Europe: by losing.¹⁹⁶ The thundering international silence about the Israeli policy undermined the political responsibility of the Western world. On the other side the Palestinian academic and writer Ghada Karmi^{xliv} complained about the Palestinian warring camps that exhibited a “shocking scenario” with infinitely more damages for the future of this people than for their enemies.¹⁹⁷ It might be that “Haaretz” editor Reuven Pedatzur proves right when he reminded his readers of the “Jordanian option” that refuses to die,¹⁹⁸ after—as Danny Rubinstein stated without exaggeration—the Palestinian national movement has almost ceased to exist.¹⁹⁹

XI. Some Concluding Remarks

^{xliv} Dr. Rhada Karmi is a researcher at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter (U.K.).

The four epicentres—the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iraqi gambit, the Iranian issue, and the tensions between a strong Syria and a tormented and paralyzed Lebanon—are intertwined with each other, “so that it is very difficult, maybe impossible, to find a solution to one of them without finding a solution to all of them,” UN Special Envoy Terje Røed-Larsen argued.²⁰⁰ To look at the confrontation from a bird’s-eye view is a nuisance. Required is a peace process on various tracks to set up a regional system of political confidence and reliance, mutual security, and economic cooperation. Communication does matter. Realizing the political weariness among their populations the Israeli and the Palestinian governments are forced to tell their public how far they are prepared to go on the avenue to compromise with the enemy. All prime minister with a military background—Rabin, Barak, and Sharon—failed to deliver peace. But nobody can rule out that the established collaboration between ministerial departments and organizations in Israel attached to the settlers and to the national-religious camp and the influence of Hamas on many segments of the Palestinian population will employ all means at their disposal to curtail far-reaching peace deal. “Our worst enemies do not live in Ramallah, nor even in Gaza. No, they can be found in Tel Aviv, in Jerusalem, in Haifa. They live in our midst. They are motivated by greed, by avarice. They wear expensive suits, don the latest ties,” former Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry David Kimche remarked.²⁰¹ The outbreak of the Palestinian power struggle might have been welcomed by Israel, but it was also bad news: In the end the rivalry will obligate the government in Jerusalem to come to terms with a movement with deep roots in the Palestinians society. This is equally true with Mahmoud Abbas who cannot ignore Hamas in his set of calculations. “We have forced the elections in the Palestinian Territories, and what we got was Hamas,” former US Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton confessed.²⁰²

When a German senior official told us that there is no chance to shore up decisive contributions as long as the Americans do not convey their unambiguous approval to what ever is necessary, and when an European diplomat who commuted for many years between Washington, Jerusalem, and Ramallah expressed in drastic words his frustration about the enduring inconsistencies of his principals, the governments should be fair enough to confess candidly their powerlessness rather than piling up their cupboards with

sophisticated and exhausting papers. To prevent such development the European and the German obligations are twofold: to take the Israeli government by its word:

*“My delegation does not ask for special treatment. Israel, like any other country in this hall [at the United Nations], should be subject to review and constructive criticism on a fair and impartial basis. All we ask is that the international community stands by its own values and lofty principles, if it is to be truly effective in achieving its goal of promoting and protecting human rights around the world.”*²⁰³

If this is the case, the Middle East Quartet should follow the advice of U.N. Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Palestinian Territories, John Dugard, to pay ultimately attention of the Israeli “human rights violations inflicted on the Palestinians—military incursions, arrests, the all, checkpoints, settlements, and the humanitarian crisis.”²⁰⁴ Secondly, to stop running behind American illusions to implement Western models of democracy and hard-core interest in the Arab world which have been exposed by U.S. scholars and senior members of the Administration themselves as doomed to fail. Instead, Washington and the EU should pay attention to a group of distinguished former U.S. officials and ambassadors—including Thomas R. Pickering, Samuel W. Lewis, Edward S. Walker Jr., Robert H. Pelletreau, and Frederic C. Hof^{xiv} who served in Tel Aviv and in Arab capitals. In their position paper for Condoleezza Rice they advised her to prepare intently to “an outcome that creates the momentum for continued progress and movement toward a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict” giving several recommendations on the way to peace including a dialogue with Hamas.²⁰⁵ Another impressive set of proposals was presented by former U.S. Ambassador to Cairo and Tel Aviv, Daniel C. Kurtzer, on behalf of the “Israel Public Forum” in January 2008. When Rice tries hard to preserve the momentum of political progress between Israelis and Palestinians, the European governments cannot behave unimpressed.

^{xiv} Thomas R. Pickering was undersecretary of state and ambassador to Israel. Samuel W. Lewis and Edward S. Walker Jr. served as U.S. ambassadors to Israel. Frederic C. Hof is a Mideast official in the Pentagon.

With the reception of Abed Rabbo and Beilin at the Foreign Relations Committee on January 14, 2004 the Deutsche Bundestag had tried to exhibit audacity and courage. “Geneva” took Berlin “by storm”, the press reported.²⁰⁶ One month later the Foreign Office discarded drafts of a joint resolution to salute the document as an operational groundwork, even though the carefully worded motion recognized the leading role of Washington. The factions wanted to have a sentence included with an appeal to their government and the Presidency of the European Union to activate their Near East diplomacy alongside the Geneva outlines:

“The German Bundestag welcomes initiatives from Israelis and Palestinians which contain concrete proposals for a peaceful solution. It particularly welcomes the Geneva Initiative. The Geneva Initiative presents details proposals to resolve the most important points of controversy. ... The Geneva Initiative is not a counterproposal to the ‘Roadmap’; it rather complements it by adding a concrete dimension. The German Bundestag welcomes the positive comments from members of governments within the ‘Quartet’ and hopes that the Geneva Initiative will contribute to the renewal of the ‘Roadmap’ process. ... The German Bundestag is aware that the proposals of the Geneva Initiative were negotiated informally and without a representational mandate and are therefore not binding on any government, and that it does not prejudice an official peace settlement. Yet the Initiative shows clearly that, even for the most difficult issues, compromises can be found which are acceptable to representatives on both sides. ... The United States of America has a special responsibility for the peace process in the Middle East. Without a decisive participation this process will not succeed. If efforts for a permanent and just peace settlement in the Middle East are to be successful, the ‘Quartet’ must act in the greatest possible unison. This will remain an essential task for German and common European foreign policy.”

The Israeli Embassy intervened efficiently. Its staff had the fourteen “reservations” in mind Sharon introduced to the Roadmap, whereas the German Foreign Office wanted to counter such a binding commitment, since it was afraid of—or unwilling to—presenting it in Brussels as a political recommendation. On the international level it turned out that the political

sympathy did not exceed goodwill to evaluate the chances incorporated in this document. In the end everybody waited for the other to take the initiative.

The recent estimation of the Bundestag that German foreign policy is “respectable,” can not be applied to the Middle East. The high ambitions in autumn 2006, when Europe was awarded the role of a prime factor in the region by Hans-Walter Steinmeier, were of no avail. The prophecy of Mark Leonard, ingoing director of the “European Council on Foreign Relations” (EFCR) in Brussels, that Europe will run the 21st century²⁰⁷ might be a “way the world works” in the future, but is far from reality now. But in case of the realization of Chancellor Merkel’s dreams that Germany becomes a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, Berlin will be forced to show convincing colours of political determination and to reconsider its role within the European Union next to Great Britain and France as veto powers. It will not be sufficient anymore to repeat “the special historical responsibility of Germany for the existence of Israel,” to whip to death the diplomatic formula of the “vision of two states in secure borders and in peace.”²⁰⁸

The overriding international task is to convince Israelis and Palestinians of the benefits to energize their own peace ideas with regional backing. To such a model belongs to accompany diplomatic follow-up processes by a shift of focus from exclusive government-to-government interactions to procedures that explore and utilize other long-range strategies and ventures on the ground. “I think there is only one power in the Middle East that can get some movement going, and that is public opinion,” Israeli ambassador in Berlin, Avi Primor (tenure 1993–1999), was convinced. The peace camps have lined up to inspire and to present viable and practical alternatives in contrast to governments and their agencies that often utilize and squander the metaphor of peace with the pathos of decency, but injure the very ideas of national coexistence. For the purpose of their own standing the peace forces must coordinate their activities in terms of attractive coalition management to overcome the political mistrust and lack of apprehensiveness in their public. This, too, is a precondition to be recognized as valuable heavy-weights abroad.

Sari Nusseibeh has professed: “I believed then [once], as I do now, that the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews are natural allies, not adversaries.”²⁰⁹ The time is running out for this prediction to come true. One of the major questions remains whether Israeli and Palestinian intellectuals are influential enough to challenge in a sustainable way the combination of long-standing imaginations and prejudices which are contaminating large parts of the public opinions and official political strategies that are detrimental to any peaceful settlement. The full-fledged built-up and enlargement of a “culture of peace” (Baskin / Siniora) is the necessary prerequisite for resolving the conflict by political means. For the implementation of this aim more than financial layers are necessary. What is foremost required is a comprehensive political strategy to convince public opinion. “The Annapolis process, like the sterile road map and myriad other stillborn initiatives before it, will only lead to peace in our time if, for once, there is a determined international effort to achieve it before the receding window of opportunity slams shut in our timorous faces,” British Middle East scholar Tony Klug advised additionally²¹⁰. Offering pleasantries to both sides—political restraint and financial assistance—are not enough to produce tangible results toward a two-state solution, since it glosses over decisive details: borders, Arab Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the refugee problem. Irrespective of the denial of resources and opportunities to the Arab-Palestinian population in Israel herself—a “ticking bomb” or even an “existential challenge”, Israeli commentators are afraid of—the peace process has collapsed. But under the prevailing conditions of fundamental asymmetries and the persisting violence the one-state solution would be a disaster, either.

¹ Dennis Ross: Condi’s Keys, in “The New Republic” October 8, 2007.

² Glenn Kessler: *The Confidante. Condoleezza Rice and the Creation of the Bush Legacy*. New York 1007; Elisabeth Bumiller: *Condoleezza Rice. A Biography*. New York 2008.

³ Ari Shavit: The man without substance, in “Haaretz” March 27, 2008.

⁴ That this support and coordination is necessary was the conviction of a paper of the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University: *Israeli-Palestinian Working Group Policy Paper—Creating Roadmap Implementation Process Under United States Leadership*. February 2005. To the drafting team members belonged well-known Palestinian and Israeli figures under the chairmanship of Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian. Former President Jimmy Carter reminded in March 2006 his audience that in the early 1990s Baker forthrightly declared: “I don’t think there is any greater obstacle to peace than [the Israeli] settlement activity”: Jimmy Carter: *Peace Versus Democracy in Palestine: A Conversation with Jimmy Carter*, March 2, 2006, at the “Council on Foreign Relations.”

⁵ Seymour D. Reich, Peter A. Joseph and Nick Bunzl: Israeli Policy Forum Letter to Secretary of State Rice of March 21, 2008:

Dear Madame Secretary:

We are writing to urge you to continue and intensify your efforts to end the violence along the Israel-Gaza border and to help establish conditions that would enable Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas to implement any agreements they may have reached in their bilateral discussions. Clearly, until all violence ends, any Israeli-Palestinian agreement, no matter how acceptable to the respective sides, will languish on the shelf.

With your determined and sustained personal involvement, a Hamas-Israel cease-fire and a border agreement among Israelis, Egyptians, and Palestinians could be reached. This could facilitate the conditions for reaching a Final Agreement on Permanent Status by the end of the year.

This requires finding a way to bring Hamas into the process. While we share your concerns over direct engagement with Hamas, we believe that it is impossible to achieve an agreement on any of the key issues—including the release of Corporal Shalit—without engaging Hamas through some means, simply because Hamas is the governing authority in Gaza.

Furthermore, no progress can be made with a divided Palestinian polity. Abbas cannot make peace alone. Nor can Israel reach a binding agreement with the Palestinian Authority while at war with the de facto Palestinian government in Gaza. Israelis cannot be expected to make the sacrifices needed to establish peace if Hamas, the most violent actor, is not included, at least tacitly.

Accordingly, we support your actions encouraging Arab states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar or whichever interlocutor you deem appropriate, to determine Hamas's willingness to establish a cease-fire and to help stabilize the current situation. We say this with the recognition that—as in the case of Israel's indirect dealings with Hamas to free Gilad Shalit—no progress can be made if Hamas is totally excluded from the process.

Should a ceasefire be established, we urge you to craft a new mechanism for protecting the ceasefire, either through international monitors, a multinational force on the Gaza borders, or at least through better coordination among Israel, Egypt, and the Palestinians. A ceasefire must not only be created; it must be sustained.

This is a moment of decision. An immediate end to the Israel-Hamas violence and a rejuvenated peace process are of critical importance to the Israeli and Palestinian people, and to American interests in the Middle East. This is an essential step on the difficult road leading to Israel living in peace and security alongside a stable and peaceful Palestinian state.

The Bush administration should act decisively to help bring an end to the deaths and suffering on both sides and to immediately revive the peace process. Otherwise, the initial gains of Annapolis and the President's trip to the region in January will be lost, and the current American policy will have failed.

Sincerely,

Seymour D. Reich
President

Peter A. Joseph
Chair

Nick Bunzl
Executive Director

⁶ Zeev Maoz: The Strategy of Summit Diplomacy, in Shimon Shamir and Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (eds.): *The Camp David Summit—What Went Wrong?* Brighton, U.K., 2005, p. 203.

⁷ Reiner Bernstein: *From Gaza to Geneva. The Geneva Peace Initiative of Israelis and Palestinians.* Schwalbach/Ts. 2006, Afterword (in German).

⁸ Amos Oz: *Die Frau im Fenster. Dankesrede zum Prinz-von-Asturien-Preis*, in „Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung“ November 5, 2007 (in German).

⁹ Tony Karon and Tom Engelhardt: *Despite Backlash, Many Jews Are Questioning Israel*, via <http://antiwar.printthis.clickability.com> September 17, 2007.

¹⁰ The Christian Democrat was Karl Lamers.

¹¹ *Why Israel could disappear from the map* (interview with Meir Shalev), in “Spiegel”-online September 1, 2007 (in German).

¹² Yossi Klein Halevi: *Iran's German Enablers*, in “Opinion Journal”, supplement of the “Wall Street Journal” September 24, 2007. The author is a senior fellow at the Adelson Institute for

Strategic Studies at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem (directed by Netanyahu's confident Yoram Hazony) and the Israel correspondent for the "New Republic."

¹³ Interview with Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in "Frankfurter Rundschau" March 21, 2003 (in German).

¹⁴ Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer before the General Assembly of the U.N. in New York, September 14, 2002.

¹⁵ Aluf Benn: Tips for Tony, in „Haaretz“ June 28, 2007. Benn reported about Blair's trip throughout the West Bank.

¹⁶ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung: Israel Days, 9-10 May 2005, p. 110 (in German).

¹⁷ Robert Kuttner: A conversation with Zbigniew Brzezinski, in "The American Prospect" May 20, 2007.

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier: An Action Plan for the Middle East, in "Handesblatt" October 15, 2007 (in German).

²⁰ El-Hassan Bin-Talal: From Player to Payer in the Mideast, in "JordanTimes" November 16, 2007: Between 1995 and 2006 the EU pumped approximately 20 billion Euros as grants and loans into the Palestinian Territories.

²¹ Quoted by Shlomo Ben-Ami, Shlomo: Scars of War, Wounds of Peace. The Israeli-Arab Tragedy. Oxford 2006.

²² Statement to the press by Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni and US Secretary of State Rice, Jerusalem 30 March 2008.

²³ Rex Brynen: Buying Peace? A Critical Assessment of International Aid to the West Bank and Gaza, in "Journal of Palestine Studies" # 99, XXV(Spring 1996)3, pp. 79.

²⁴ Ian Black: Brown says Palestinian economy is key to revival of peace process, in "The Guardian" (London) September 18, 2007.

²⁵ Akiva Eldar: Investing in Fayyad (a conversation with Fayyad), in "Haaretz" March 21, 2008.

²⁶ Sharmila Devi: West Bank policy not aiding peace, says UN, in "Financial Times" August 30, 2007.

²⁷ President Bush Discusses the Middle East, Washington, D.C., July 16, 2007, via www.whitehouse.gov/nesw/releases/2007/07/20070716-7.html.

²⁸ Aaron David Miller: The Much Too Promised Land. America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace. Bantam Books: New York 2008, p. 337.

²⁹ [U.N.] Secretary General SG/2130, July 19, 2007: Statement by Middle East Quartet, via www.un.org/News/Press/docs/20007/sg2130.doc.htm.

³⁰ Let Blair Be Blair, in "The New York Times" July 9, 2007.

³¹ Aluf Benn: Tips for Tony, in "Haaretz" June 28, 2007.

³² Shahr Smoocha: 'All the dreams we had are now gone' (interview with James Wolfensohn), in "Haaretz" July 21, 2007.

³³ The call for a suspension of the treaty is something else than a decision like that of the British University and College Union and the British Trade Union (in the meantime suspended) to impose an economic and cultural boycott on Israel, because the Israeli government signed the

treaty. That's why Yossi Sarid's reproach of one-sidedness and the call for a blacklist that has to be extended to Islamic and Christian fundamentalists or to Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Venezuela, does not apply. See Yossi Sarid: Ladies and gentlemen, you make me laugh, in "Haaretz" June 22, 2007.

³⁴ Richard N. Haass: *The Opportunity. America's Moment to Alter History's Course*. New York 2005, p. 67.

³⁵ Brent Scowcroft: Getting the Middle East Back on Our Side, in "The New York Times" January 4, 2007.

³⁶ Ambassador Samuel Lewis on the 40th anniversary of June 1967 panel in Washington, D.C., June 11, 2007.

³⁷ At the conference "An Agreement Within a Year" in Herzliya, 13-14 January 2008.

³⁸ Chuck Hagel: A Less American Face for Mediation in Iraq, in "Financial Times" July 3, 2007.

³⁹ Claude Salhani: Rice: 'Iraq was harder than I thought,' in "Middle East Times" March 28, 2008.

⁴⁰ MJ Rosenberg: Bantustans for the Palestinians," in Israel Public Forum" June 29, 2007.

⁴¹ John Edwards: Reengaging with the World, in "Foreign Affairs", September/October 2007.

⁴² [Hillary] Clinton: IAF 'attack in Syria' justified, in "The Jerusalem Post" September 27, 2007.

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⁴⁴ Daniel Kurtzer: What Might We Expect from the Obama Administration, in "Brit Tzedek v'Shalom" Internet Service March 11, 2009.

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- IPCRI is the only joint Israeli-Palestinian public policy think and "do-tank" in the world.
 - IPCRI was created in 1988 to build support for the "two-states for two peoples" solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
 - IPCRI is pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian and sees no contradiction in that statement

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- IPCRI has established **negotiating support teams** to provide professional assistance to the negotiators on both sides making use of hundreds of studies and proposals that have been developed over the years by researchers around the world to provide alternative solutions to the issues in conflict.
 - IPCRI brings together hundreds throughout the year leading Israeli and Palestinian peace and democracy educators in workshops, conferences and meetings to share lesson plans, curricula programs, films, stories, and methods for advancing peace education in Israeli and Palestinian schools.
 - IPCRI is working on a program to develop new peace education text books for Israeli and Palestinian schools.
 - IPCRI is working with residents of Palestinian rural villages to solve problems of sewage that pollute the shared mountain aquifer which provides fresh water for Israel and Palestine.
 - IPCRI conducts public debates and discussions for Israelis and Palestinians to confront the main issues of day. These meetings are attended by hundreds of participants including journalists, leading academics, public leaders and international diplomats.
 - IPCRI has now founded and launched the Israeli-Palestinian Business Forum which will soon be opening offices in Tel Aviv and Ramallah to provide business support services for Israelis and Palestinian who wish to develop business across the divide.

This is only a small part of what IPCRI does and what IPCRI could do if there were more financial resources available.

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