

**PLO'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS A
NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL:
FROM INTIFADA TO OSLO ACCORD
(1987-1993)**

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CERTIFICATE

CERTIFIED that the dissertation entitled *PLO's Attitude towards a Negotiated Settlement with Israel: From Intifada to Oslo Accord (1987-1993)* Submitted by **Niranjan Chichuan**, is a bonafide work to the best of our knowledge. It has not been submitted earlier for any other degree of this or any other university. We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the Degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**.


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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

As the mandate power between 1922 and 1948 the British policy towards the Arab community in Palestine was marked by a refusal to recognize its existence, either in Palestine or as part of a larger Pan Arab States. All legislative and executive powers in Palestine were in the hands of British government which precluded the Arabs from participating in the administration. At the same time however, in tune with the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which declared British support for a national home in Palestine the Jews community in Palestine enjoyed a special status. Through a White Paper in July 1922, the British declared that they did not contemplate the conversion of the whole of Palestine into a Jewish homeland but such a home should be founded in Palestine.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Arabs of Palestine tried to close ranks, organize politically against the Zionists and persuade the British to discontinue their support for a Jewish homeland. Hampered by division within their ranks, their leadership refusal to cooperate with the mandatory government and the Zionist success in building strong political, social and economic institutions, the Palestinian Arab failed to combat the British or the Jews. increasing radicalisation of Palestinian activities, culminating in the

general strike and revolt of 1936-39, accelerated Britain's retreat from idea of a partitioned Palestine.¹

In fact, while the Arabs were demanding the scrapping of the Balfour declaration, termination of the mandate and the halting of the Jewish immigration, the Jewish community was urging British to live up to the commitment made in the Balfour declaration. In June 1937 the Peel Commission concluded that the Palestine mandate was impossible to sustain and suggested that the partition of Palestine into separate Arab and Jewish states. Increase in Jewish immigration only intensified the Arab opposition to the British policies in Palestine and exposed the failure of the mandate power to please either of the contending parties.

Following a request from Britain in May 1947, the United Nations formed a special committee charged with investigating conditions in Palestine and recommending action to the General Assembly. The eleven member of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) were Sweden, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Australia, Canada, India, Iran, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru.² But the committee was split with seven members opting for the partition of Palestine while remaining three (India, Iran and Yugoslavia) called for a federal Palestine with Jerusalem enjoying special status.

¹ Charles D. Smith, *Palestine in the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1922), pp. 94-95.

² *Ibid*, p. 137.

Britain did not wait for the debate in the General Assembly, scheduled for November. On 26 1947 September Britain declared that it would withdraw from Palestine, ending the mandate unilaterally and handing the matter over to the United Nations. On 29 November 1947 the United Nation voted for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab, with Jerusalem as an international city. On 14 May 1948, the eve of British pull out from Palestine, Zionist leaders met in Tel Aviv and proclaimed the Jewish state of Israel.³

The formation of Israel led to the first Arab-Israeli conflict, which ended following a series of bi-lateral armistice agreement between Israel and neighbouring Arab countries. the conflict however, did not end and all neighbours were mutually suspicious of each other's territorial ambitions. Jordan had annexed a larger partition of area, which was allotted to the Palestinian Arabs under the partition plan.⁴

This conflict has two dimensions; one, the inter-state conflict between Israel a neighbouring Arabs and the other the clash between Jewish and Palestinian nationalisms. The later has always been major issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially because Jewish and Palestinian national movements denied each other the right to self-determination. The idea of Palestine and the plight of the Palestinian people have enormous emotional appeal at the popular level rooted in the common feeling that the injustices

³ Ibid, p. 139.

⁴ Moshe Shemesh, *The Palestine Entity: 1959-1974, Arab Politics and the PLO*, (London: Frankcass & Co. Ltd., 1988), p. 8.

and suffering of the Palestinian people are a blow and humiliation to the Arab nations as a whole.

The emergence of independent Palestine groups like Fatah and the Arab nationalist movement (ANM) however, could not make up for their weakness with their dependence on Arab support. These groups still lacked broad support either among Palestinian or the Arab masses. The perception that Palestinian guerrillas might trigger on unwanted war with Israel through uncontrolled attacks compelled the Arab regimes to control the pace and focus of Palestinian political activity.

In his bid to make Egypt the centre of pan-Arab nationalism and heart of the Arab world Nasser wanted to demonstrate his commitment to the Palestinians, yet keep them subordinate to Egypt's own interests. Also ten years after Egypt had sponsored the government of all Palestine, Nasser established the Palestine national union in Gaza.⁵ These Palestinians were encouraged to maintain their identity and to set up a Palestinian legislative council. He also supported fedayeen raids against Israel when it suited Egypt's interests and sought to control them when it did not.

Out of this complex environment of inter-Arab rivalries and rising Palestinian frustration and activism led to the creation in 1960 of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). this was largely the result of Nasser's bid to

⁵ Ibid, p. 12

check growing Syrian influence over Fatah and to better manage the Palestinian issue. The PLO deferred to Egypt's interests and was headed by Ahmad Shukairy, a pro-Egyptian Palestinian attorney. Nonetheless, it reflected the growing importance the Arab states were forced to accord to the Palestinian issue and demonstrated an increasing political awareness among Palestinians. It created the framework and institutions for the contemporary Palestinian national movement, a Palestinian National Congress (PNC) a charter: and a Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA).⁶ Moreover, it accelerated the effort of those independent Palestinian groups, particularly Fatah, and six months after the PLO's first congress in east Jerusalem, Fatah launched its first military operation against Israel.

Israel's devastating defeat of the Arab armies in June 1967 had a profound impact on the Palestinian national movement and shaped its strategy and tactics for the next decades. In the years before the war the Palestinians had lacked a convincing and inspiring ideology and popular base. The magnitude of the Arab defeat not only discredited Arab military power and political ideology, but also created an ideological and political vacuum that Palestinian guerrilla tried to fill. The Palestinian Fedayeen, called for "armed struggle" and the increasing frequency of operations in the first few years after the Arab defeat seemed to offer a psychological lift to disillusioned Arab public and Palestinian refugees.

⁶ Alwain Z. Ruibinstein (ed.), *The Arab-Israel Conflict*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984), pp. 90-91.

The growing prestige of the Palestinian resistance movement was reflected in the decline of the Shukairy-led PLO and the rise of Fatah and smaller groups. Fatah's clash with a much larger Israeli forces at Karamch, Jordan, in March 1968 dramatically raised its popularity. Fatah's success, however, should not mask the obstacles that the Palestinian resistance movement continued to face due to its dependence on Arab support, lack of unity, and vulnerability to Israeli's military power. By 1970 the Israeli's were striking at Palestinian base in Jordan and Lebanon, further complicating the PLO's relations with Arab hosts.⁷

In September 1970 a bloody confrontation with the Jordanian authority led to the end of the Palestinian's independence political and military base in Jordan. This crisis, triggered by the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Palestine (PFLP) hijacking four international airliners to Jordan, was an effort to undermine the Jordanian regime and sabotage Egyptian and Jordanian tentative acceptance of a US-sponsored initiative to end the Egyptian-Israeli war of attrition.⁸ Events in Jordan left the Palestinian movement divided, embittered, and Palestinians found themselves more vulnerable and dependant on Arab support. Fatah, eager to avoid an open conflict with Arab states, turned to a more secret strategy of terrorism against Israel.

⁷ John W. Armos II, *Palestinian Resistance Organisation of a Nationalist Movement*, (New York: Pergamon Press Inc., 1980), pp. 43-44.

⁸ Riad El-Rayyes & Dunia Nahas, *Guerrilla for Palestine*, (London: Croomhelm Ltd., Portico Publications, 1976), pp. 61-62.

However, in response to these changing circumstances the PLO began to formulate a strategy designed to outflank King Hussein and consolidated Arab support and to cultivate a moderate image abroad. To strengthen its role the Fatah succeeded in selling the idea of establishing a "national authority" on any part of Palestine "liberated" from Israel. Moreover, in November 1974 at the Arab Summit in Rabat, the Arab states granted the PLO the status of sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and thereby denying King Hussein, Arab support on this issue. The same month in November Yasser Arafat spoke before the UN General Assembly and the PLO was granted an observer status in the UN.⁹

The debacle of 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon split and demoralised the Palestinian army. It legitimised protest movement and in a paradoxical way it put the Palestinian question in the centre of public consciousness. On the one hand a new, younger and more PLO-oriented stratum of West Bank and Gaza leaders emerged. They seemed to enjoy broad popular support and were willing to meet the Israeli public in an effort to explain Palestinian positions and such meetings were to become much more frequent during the intifada. The Israeli-PLO contacts suffered greatly after Sartawi's death in 1983 as there was no politician of equal stature and energy to succeed him. The PLO itself passed through a prolonged phase of disunity and feebleness after the Lebanon war that was not conducive for a dialogue with Israel.

⁹ Smith, n. 1, pp. 231-232.

The Israeli governments between 1984 and 1990 were, of course, ill-fitting combinations of Labour and Likud, divided against themselves on the Palestinian question. They reflected an increasingly polarised society, pitted against itself over the occupied territories and the Palestinians. Israel had to deal simultaneously with the competing authorities both of whom claimed to represent the territories, the PLO and Jordan. Simultaneously the Palestinians switched to the two-state solution and Jordan and a weakened PLO realised that neither would be able to achieve its goal without the other. Hence, Hussein and Arafat agreed for political co-ordination and for the formation of a future Jordanian - Palestinian confederation.

The outlook of the intifada in December 1987 signalled the beginning of a new era in Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. The PLO's official adoption of the two-state solution and the concomitant recognition of Israel by the PLO for the first time created a possibility of a negotiated Israeli-Palestinian peace. The intifada also encouraged pre-negotiation contacts, although these were primarily aimed at changing Israel's government of national unity rather than changing its policies. Initially, Shamir and Rabin reacted defensively to the intifada and unimaginatively sought to contain Palestinian resistance by military means. The intifada soon increased a tendency toward negotiated settlement on both sides and in November 1988 the 18th PNC in Algiers

declared the independence of the state of Palestine and recognised Israel's right to exist.¹⁰

The Gulf War in 1991 produced a new major step toward Israeli-Palestinian accommodation. The PLO had become so weakened by its pro-Iraqi stance that its diplomatic manoeuvre was severely curtailed. Hence the Palestinians went to the Madrid conference as part of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Until Madrid all Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy had of necessity been track two diplomacy and from now on the two tracks could begin to coexist and cross fertile¹¹. Many Palestinian delegates negotiating in the bi-lateral and multi-lateral peace talks.

In January 1993, Israel lifted the official ban on contacts with the PLO.¹² Although the government formally continued to refuse talking with the PLO, a series of secret initiatives tried to brought about precisely such a dialogue that was as 'Oslo channel'. With the long deferred mutual recognition and with the signing of the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993. Israeli-Palestinian dialogue had come full circle.

¹⁰ Palestine National Council, "Palestinian Declaration of Independence", Algiers, 15 November, 1988, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington DC), No. 70, Winter, 1988, pp. 213-216.

¹¹ Avi Shlaim, *The Oslo Accord: Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington DC), Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1994, pp. 24-25.

¹² Frederick A. Lain and Gregory S. Mahler. "Israel in the Nineties: Development and Conflict, Miami: University Press of Florida, 1996, Pefer Demant, *Unofficial Contacts and Peace Making: Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, 1967-1993*, p. 93.

CHAPTER - I

ARMED STRUGGLE (1948-1987)

The Arab-Israeli conflict has pre-dominantly been a military conflict. Its history has been governed and punctuated by seven wars,¹ fought between 1948 and 1982. During the first 25 years of this period (from 1948 to Camp David), all efforts to resolve, regulate, or stabilize the situation had failed, and the cease-fires, armistices, and other arrangements made of the end of each Arab-Israeli war merely became a prelude to the next encounter.

The war of 1948-49 transformed the Arab-Jewish struggle in and over Palestine into an Arab-Israeli conflict. The different names given to it by Israelis and Arabs reflect not only partisan viewpoints but also the divergent perspective of the conflict. The Israelis refer to it as the war of independence or the war of liberation, thus emphasising the importance they attached to the revival of independent Jewish statehood in the ancestral homeland. For the Arabs it was the Palestine war, the war in which part of Palestine was lost and the notion of an Arab Palestinian entity destroyed.

The escalation of the conflict in the early 1950s bred the notion of a second round. In its Arab version it would be a full-scale war designed to

¹ They are: the de facto civil war that was waged from the adoption of the UN partition plan on November 22, 1947 to the official end of the Britain mandate on May 14, 1948; the first full scale war from May 15, 1948 to the signing of armistice agreements on January 1949; the Suez war of October 1956; the June war, 1967; the war of attrition, fought from December 1968 to July, 1970; the October war 1973; and the war in Lebanon, June 1982.

undo the consequences of 1948-49 and destroy the Israeli state. According to the Israeli version it would be a limited war, calculated to strengthen Israeli's strategic position (seen as inadequate in view of the Arab state's hospitality and improving military capacity) against an anticipated Arab attack, or to acquire strategic superiority.²

In October 1956 Israel, in collusion with Britain and France, attacked Egypt. Several factors combined to determine the war's timing and nature. One was Egypt's evolution under Gamal Abdel Nasser's regime into a regional power, leader of a revolutionary brand of pan-Arab nationalism and a friend of the Soviet Union. As part of this process Egypt undertook to lead the Arab struggle against Israel. Its growing influence in Jordan and Syria magnified the impact of Britain's evacuation of the Suez Canal zone and the 1955 Czech (Soviet)-Egyptian arms deal and threatened, from Israel's point of view, to endow Egypt with significant strategic advantages.³

United Arab League Council (ALC) brought up the issue of the Palestinian entity for the first time on 29 March 1959. Once presented with the problem, the Arab league council decided on a high level Arab Conference to deal with "the stages of development of the Palestinian problem and the reorganization of Palestinian people, highlighting its entity as a unified people

² Charles d. Smith, *Palestine of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, London: St. Martin's Press, 1992, p. 152.

³ Alvin Z. Rubinstein (ed.), *Arab-Israeli Conflict Transformation: External Determinants*, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1984, p. 77

rather than mere refugee, whose voice would be heard in the inter-Arab arena and in the international level, through representatives elected by the Palestinian people.”⁴ By bringing up the idea of a Palestinian entity, Egypt hoped to facilitate the establishment of independent political institution, which would represent the Palestinian as a people.

The Egyptian initiatives

The Palestinian issue, in its widest sense, was one of Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser’s central concerns. He considered the war against Zionism as the second goal of Arab nationalist, comparable in importance to the “war against imperialism”.⁵ The Egyptian initiative aimed at reviving the Palestinian entity, marked a historical turning point in Egypt’s efforts to solve the Palestinian issue.

There were several reasons why Egypt made this move at this time. The United Arab Republic (UAR) and the Arab world were militarily unable to impose a solution for Palestinian issue or to prevent Israel from diverting the Jordan River. Thus, the UAR felt the need to take steps in lieu of military ones, which would demonstrate the resolve to the Arab world vis-à-vis Israel.

The basic policy behind Nasser’s strategy in 1959 was not to get involved in a war with Israel as long as Arab victory was not assured. He felt

⁴ Moshe Shemesh , *The Palestine entity – 1959- 1974 Arab politics and the PLO*, London: Frank Cass, 1988 p.1

⁵ Ibid – p.3

that “under no circumstances would war be initiated against Israel until we have completed building our military forces to decisive superiority.”⁶ Nasser believed that he should decide on a time and place for war, only when “we are in a state of full preparation”⁷

Nasser also believed that Israel with western aid was trying to liquidate the Palestinian issue by presenting that the Arab-Israel conflict was between Israel and the Arab states rather than between Israel and Palestinians. Nasser openly admitted, “the aim of the establishment of a Palestinian entity was to frustrate Israel’s effort to eliminate both the Palestinian problem and right of the people”⁸

Two events aroused Egypt’s fear of the “conspiracy to eliminate the Palestinian problem.”⁹ In February 1959 Egypt envisaged a massive immigration of three million Jews to Israel from the eastern bloc. This immigration would mean a doubling of Israel’s manpower and reinforcement of its motivation for territorial expansion. The UAR predicted that such a wave of immigration would render impossible the implementation of the UN resolutions regarding the return of the Palestinian refugees to their land.¹⁰

⁶ Ibid – p.3

⁷ Ibid – p.3

⁸ Ibid p.5

⁹ Ibid – p.4

¹⁰ Ibid – p.5

The second event was the June 1959 report of UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to the General Assembly, in which he recommended the absorption of Palestinian refugees by the West Asian states. President Kennedy's despatch on 11 May 1961 to the head of the states, in which he emphasized his country's readiness to solve the Palestinian refugee problem. For Nasser the total picture was of a western plan for "the elimination of the Palestinian problem by liquidation of the Palestinian refugee problem."¹¹

Therefore, Egypt sought to establish representative Palestinian institutions, which would prove the existence of a Palestinian element with national aspirations. This factor would bestow legitimacy to the Arab struggle against Israel by authenticating the Egyptian claim that the basic conflict was between Zionism and the Palestinian people. The plan for the revival of the Palestinian entity was thus designed to turn the Palestinian into a separate factor in the Arab-Israel conflict.

The emergence of Fatah

The official founding of Fatah is usually dated from the beginning publication of *Filastinuna* ("Our Palestine") in 1959. Because it was originally banned by all Arab states, the *Filastinuna* was circulated secretly. Its editorial thrust was a call for the revival of the Palestinian entity.

¹¹ Ibid – p.6

It is one of the basic demands of the Palestinian Arabs "It is our legitimate right and stems from the conscience of our people.... Our people reject all kinds of guardianship, whether by the Arab states or others. The Palestinian people believe in the revival of this free entity, which is non-subservient, non-subjugated and non-oriented."¹² Filastinuna also advocated the thesis that armed struggle was the only way to liberate Palestine, and that slogan "Arab unity is the way to Palestine" should be replaced by the formulation "Palestine is the road to Arab unity"

Following were the main objectives of Fatah.

1. Revolutionary violence is the only way to liberate their homeland.
2. This violence must be exercised by the popular masses.
3. This revolutionary violence has its goal the liquidation of the Zionist identity in all the occupied territories of Palestine, in its political, economic and military forms.
4. This revolutionary action will be of long duration
5. This revolution is Palestinian in origin and Arab in development. ¹³

¹² John W. Amons 11 – *Palestinian resistance organization of a nationalist movement*, New York. Pergamon press, 1980, p.56

¹³ Ibid- p. 56

These aims were spelled out in greater details by the Palestine National Council, when it met in Cairo in July 1968 and have remained more or less unchanged since then. *Al-Asifah*, Fatah's military arm, was organized about five years later. In 1964, although some Fatah sources trace its origins to the Gaza commandos, the creation of *Al-Asifah* due to the Syrian influence on Fatah and the Syrian are generally considered to be the prime movers behind the development of Fatah's military capability. More specifically, Syrian military intelligence began to organize, train and plan missions for Fatah. The head of Syrian intelligence, lieutenant colonel, Abd-al-Karim al-Jundi was directly involved in these operation.¹⁴

Fatah organization as it has evolved, is based on a combination of cells and committees. This organizational pattern has become the more or less standard model for other commando groups. At base is a system of cells (the first were created in Kuwait and west Germany)¹⁵ in all refugee camps, in universities abroad with Arab students populations and among workers. At the top or regional level is the regional committee, which controls all activities within its area. Regional commanders generally combine political and military authority in their office.

¹⁴ Ibid – p.58

¹⁵ Ibid- p.59

Most scholars would attest to the “organic” relationship between the Palestinians and Arab national liberation movement.¹⁶ Such a relationship derives in the main from the circumstances surrounding the loss of Palestine (1948) and the subsequent dispossession of the Palestinian people (1948-49). From its perception of the organic relationship with the Arab liberation movement, the PLO derived its tactical and strategic goals until the defeat of the Arab armies in the June 1967 war. This amounted to the total reliance on the Arab states to further cause of Palestinian people. Yet sponsored at its birth by the Arab states (1964) the PLO depend upon them for financial, military assistance, operational base as well as political and diplomatic support. The PLO was from its inception a hapless victim of its Arab environment.

While Arab states support had the effect of undermining Palestinian revolutionary freedom (1964-67) the regional and international power balance of the mid 1960's was also not conducive to the independent development of the PLO. Gradually the PLO has changed its strategies and began to influence the Arab states.

However, the PLO from its inception found itself more in sympathy with progressive states (namely, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Algeria) than conservative bloc (namely, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon and pre-1969 Libya). Such a power

¹⁶ Alain Gresh – *The PLO- The struggle within towards an independent Palestinian state*, London, ZED book Ltd. P. 18

configuration severely limited PLO options especially in areas such as, the recruitment of Palestinians within the conservative bloc. Indeed afraid that that the PLO might become a vehicle of militant nationalism they were also reluctant to recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

With the defeat of the Arab armies in the June war, their military strategy was ruined and discredited. The Arab states had few valid options for sustaining the conflict with Israel and to save the military potential of the PLO and the emerging fedayeen groups. Israel's occupation of substantial Arab territories, including the remaining portion of Palestine on the West Bank and Gaza, permitted new and challenging options for military operations deep inside enemy territories, in area of large concentration of Palestinians.¹⁷

Because of power and muting of the progressive and conservative rift, the growing involvement of the conservative oil rich states against Israel enabled the PLO to maximize its tactical options. While the multipolar configuration (1967-70) more easily from state to state in pursuit of economic, political and military assistance to utilize bases in frontline states close to enemy territories of also had unsuspected danger of the PLO.

¹⁷ Bassam Tibi – *Conflict and War in the Middle East (from interstate war to new security)*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1989, p.69.

The PLO institutions were transformed in February 1969, with the fidai organizations or "Palestinian Resistance" (PR) becoming main component of the Palestinian national charter. Supporting the Palestinian resistance became the sole point of consensus at the Rabat summit. However, in deference to an Arab strategy outlined at pan-Arab level, relations between the fidai organisation and the Arab government or parties became both bilateral and clandestine.¹⁸ The Arab states began to compete for influence within the PLO and this paradoxically led to conflict between the Palestinian Resistance and the "confrontation states" especially Jordan and Lebanon where armed clashes took place. In this period the core of political and military support for fidai organizations shifted from Syria to Egypt. For the leader of Fatah, Egypt now became "the first the strongest and the chief support" and Nasser their "Greatest ally in the region"¹⁹

As far as the military sphere is concerned, aid to fidai organizations including Fatah, commenced in late 1967. But the fourth Palestinian National Council (10-17 July 1968) was able to amend the Palestinian national charter to reflect the new emphases. Seven new articles were inserted into the charter. The article nine asserted that:

¹⁸ Shemesh, n. 4, p. 128.

¹⁹ Helena Cobban –*The PLO – People, Power and Politics*. Cambridge university press, London 1984, p. 267

Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. Thus it is the overall strategy not merely a tactical phase. The Palestinian Arab people assert their armed struggle and to work for an armed popular revolution for the liberation of their country and their return to it. They also assert their right to normal life in Palestine and to exercise their right to self-determination and sovereignty over it.²⁰

It was institutionalised after a meeting between Nasser and the Fatah leaders. In furtherance of its traditional ties with the Arab Nationality Movement (ANM), Egypt also extended military aid to the Popular Front for the Liberation Palestine (PFLP) founded in late 1967. This did not last especially following PFLP's conversion into Marxism–Leninism and its criticisms of Nasser's effort for a political solution. The PNC as revised by fourth PNC meeting, July 1968, drove a wedge between it and Egypt. The result was a complete divorce from Nasserism" and Egyptian aid to the PFLP ceased in June-July 1969.²¹ Two other pro-Egyptian fidai organisations received Egyptian aid. The Arab Palestine organisation (APO) led by Ahmad Za'rur, and the active organisation for the liberation of Palestine (AOLP) led by Issam Sartawi.

However, the bulk of military aid went of course, to Fatah. As early as in late 1967 and early 1968, a group of Fatah personnel underwent basic

²⁰ Ibid, p. 267.

²¹ Shemesh, n. 4, pp. 106-7.

military training at Egyptian bases. The training of Fatah personnel was stepped up after April 1968. There were intelligence, commando and marine sabotage courses and advanced officers training courses at Egyptian academies. In 1968, Egypt also flew weapons, including small arms and sabotage materials to Fatah forces in Jordan without any prior coordinating with Amman. More than once, the Jordanian authorities protested against this aid. In fact, operational cooperation between Egypt and Fatah was particularly conspicuous in Jordan, at a time when Egypt was eager for fidai actions against Israel from Jordanian rather than Egyptian border.²²

Moreover, in the political sphere the turning point in Nasser's policy vis-à-vis the Palestinian Resistance was in his speech of 10th April 1968, delivered after he had crystallized his attitude towards Fatah. He declared that the Palestinian Resistance was 'legitimate' and that Egypt was "fully prepared to support and arm the Palestinian Resistance Movement". On 1 February 1969 he told the Palestine National Council (PNC) that Egypt would extend to the Palestinian Resistance all material and moral support "unstintingly, unreservedly and unconfidentially".²³

In July 1968, he also "secretly" included Arafat to his entourage to the Soviet Union, and arranged Arafat's first meeting with the Soviet leadership on 3 July 1968. In fact, it was clear that when he spoke of the Palestinian

²² John II, n. 12, p. 58.

²³ Cobban, n. 19, p. 24.

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Resistance, he mainly meant Fatah. The PLO chiefs and especially the Fatah leaders had clearly assessed the importance of Nasser's total support for the Palestinian Resistance and for the PLO, and of Egypt's position as the "centre of gravity of the Arab region in both peace and war". They had almost absolute confidence in Nasser and admitted that he had helped them "in time of defeat" and "in time of trouble" He was "father, pioneer and commander ... as no Arab leader before him had been".²⁴ It meant that "the armed struggle as the sole means" of achieving their objective.

The PLO and its orientations

Immediately, after the June War, a series of Palestinian groups sprung up in the occupied territories. The impetus for their formation came from Fatah, the Baa'th the ANM and RAKASH, (newly formed Israeli Arab Communist Party I 1965) and others with the above five principal (Fatah objectives) agreement to resist the Israeli tactics.

Militarily the PFLP has achieved fame for its special "foreign operations" involving parties not directly concerned in the West Asian conflict and against the reactionary regimes. The foreign operation was initiated with the hijacking of an El AL airliner to Algeria in July 1968. Israel released 16 Palestinian prisoners in return for the aircraft and its passengers but the front's most famous operation was the hijacking of four international airliners

²⁴ Shemesh, n. 4, p. 108.

in September 1970, which took place on the eve of the Palestinian fighting with the Jordanian army. An American Boeing 747 was blown up and other three planes with their crew and passengers were taken to 'Revolution airport' near Zarqa.²⁵ The PFLP justified such operations pointing out that the Palestinian cause lacked support at the international level, and argued that foreign operations served to keep the problem alive in a way that no limited guerrilla operation in the occupied territories could do.

When Fatah began military operations in Israel at the beginning of 1965, there was some short-lived cooperation with the Popular Liberation Front. However, in October 1967, Jibril's group joined in the formation of the PFLP. The merger lasted only a year and in October 1968, the Jibril faction broke away and formed the PFLP-General Command. He reaffirmed his group's total opposition to any peaceful settlement and declared his intention of organizing increasing spectacular suicide operations to disrupt any attempt to reach a political settlement with Israel.²⁶ He also added that the PFLP-GC would prefer to see a Palestinian state of only 180 square miles from where it would carry out armed struggle against Israel.

Since the October war, the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) has openly aligned itself with Fatah within the PLO. It

²⁵ Riad El – Rayyes & Dunia Nahas, *Guerrillas for Palestine*, London: Croom Helm Ltd., London, 1976, pp. 41-42.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 50.

shown itself to be a staunch supporter of the resolution of the Palestine National Assembly in June 1974, which favoured the establishment of a national authority from territories liberated from Israeli occupation.²⁷ However, the front continued to assert that political and military actions are complementary and that organisation would not stop out military operations inside Israel.

The creation of Sa'eqa fulfilled several requirements of the Syrian Ba'ath party. It launched its first military operations against Israel from stationary bases in Jordan. From the beginning it presented itself as an alternative to Fatah, and has never quite gave up its aspirations to make the running in the resistance movement. It attempted to resist Fatah's growing control of PLO, resisted Fatah's support of two small commando groups – the Palestine Popular Libation Front and the Galilee organisation, and then proceed to form an alliance of those opposed to Fatah.²⁸ It also gained wide popularity among non-Ba'athist Palestinians by launching a large number of operations against Israel. In this, it managed to score points against the Iraqi Ba'ath backed Arab Liberation Front, which mounted only a few operations and failed to win mass support. It also played a leading role in the friction between the Lebanese authorities and the resistance. Clashes between Palestinian commandos and the Lebanese army had taken place on a

²⁷ Ibid, p. 47.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 87-88

number of occasions in the south, and Sa'eqa found itself in a privileged position to conduct the operations.

Jordan

The Jordanian civil war (1970-71) ended with the liquidation of the Palestinian guerrillas in Jordan. On the one hand, it had an adverse impact on the Palestinian resistance directed against Israel and on the other, it affected the inter-relationship of the Palestinian resistance movements within the framework of the PLO. Both factors have radically altered the overall PLO strategy. In April 1972, the 10th Palestinian national council adopted a new strategy to counterfoil the Jordanian King's scheme, and in 1973, the Palestinian National front was formed in the occupied territories with a view of reviving the Palestinian resistance from within to liberate the areas occupied by Israel in 1967.²⁹ It also sought to protest the legitimate natural rights of the Palestinians and to counteract the Israeli and Jordanian solutions for the Palestinian issue.

In face of these intensive and determined measures taken by the Palestinians leaders, the Jordanian influence in the West Bank dwindled. The Palestinian Liberation Organisation gained momentum through participation in international forums, attendance at the UN General Assembly meetings, coupled with strong publicity and propaganda campaign to speak for the

²⁹ Cobban, n. 19, p. 26.

Palestinian cause. The agreements between Egypt and Jordan put a temporary halt to fighting. The Palestinian resistance largely regarded the agreement as a truce to save lives before the struggle against the Jordanian regime was resumed. But King Hussein's strategy was to isolate the commandos in the Jerash-Aje-loun area before eliminating together and by July 1971 a series of battle between the resistance and the army had succeeded in total destroying the commando presence in Jordan.³⁰

In this feverish atmosphere, Fatah held a general congress in Damascus in August and September 1971. Two distinct groups emerged, composed of extremists drawn largely from the younger commandos who had escaped the Jerash-Aj loun rout and "moderate and practicalists"³¹ The extremists insisted that the organisation should give up the policy of coexistence with the Arab regimes it had pursued since 1965.

The Black September groups had launched a series of operations, but its stunning operation was in 1972 at the Munich Olympic games. Eleven Israeli athletes were seized by September guerrillas and an ambush by West Germany police ended in the death of all of them in addition to five commando and German policeman.

³⁰ Alain Gresh, n. 16, p. 112.

³¹ Nahas, n. 25, pp. 82-86.

Three other commando were arrested but later released when a Lufthansa airliner was hijacked on a flight from Beirut to Frankfurt on 29 October. The world reaction to the Munich operation was extremely hostile. Again on 28 December 1972 Palestinian guerrillas seized the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok, taking six hostages. But the operation ended peacefully with the commandos releasing their hostages. In fact, this operations represent a new tactic in planning and execution as well as providing additional focus for the Palestine problem.

Moreover, the main base for the guerrillas was in the Anjlun Mountains and the Jordan Valley.³² With their expulsion, the entire episode of independent, Palestinian armed action in Jordan ended following the army's campaign. The guerrilla movement lost hundreds of man in battle, while similar numbers demoralized, about the same time the PLO lost its base. Similar developments were occurring in Syria and Lebanon, the other two "confrontation states" which hosted the guerrilla movement, that led to near-total suspension of cross border activity against Israel.³³

In Syria, the new government quickly imposed strict security measures and made a bid for influence within the Palestinian movement. Meanwhile, in Lebanon, in September 1970 presidential election brought in a "law and order" President Sulayman Franjiyyah, who favoured seriously limiting the

³² Gresh, n. 30, p. 86.

³³ Ibid, p. 105.

Palestinian armed presence.³⁴ Israel soon adopted a policy of “active defence” in South Lebanon, carrying out a series of commando assaults and air raids, followed in the 1972 by two large search and destroy ground operations. Israeli counter-guerrilla action contributed to the internal tension in Lebanon, leading in May 1973 to a “rehearsal” civil war and an imposition of military restrictions and suspension of guerrilla activity against Israel from South Lebanon³⁵.

Unable to provide effective responses to the loss of secured bases and open borders and unable to develop quickly on the alternative politico-military strategy, the Palestinian guerrilla movement entered a difficult period. Politically it became vulnerable to internal dissension and to external attempts at subordination and strategic containment.³⁶ Militarily it suffered from near total lethargy, as it could regain neither political nor strategic initiative. At the same time, despite official reconfirmation of the principle of armed struggle and of its accompanying tenets, such politico-military concept as “guerrilla warfare” and “people’s war” were effectively discarded.³⁷

It is noteworthy that during the 1967-73 period, Palestinian armed action was characterized more by a stubborn persistence than by military effectiveness and efficiency. Indeed, as the number of guerrilla operations

³⁴ Yezid Sayigh – “The arm Struggle means and ends”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Autumn, Washington D.C, Vol. XV, No. 4, 1986, p.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 100.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 100.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 100.

and casualties rose, Israeli losses dwindled.³⁸ Yet, the mere fact of independent Palestinian armed action that would not disappear, created two political facts. The Palestinians both regained their sense of national identity (and with it the specific recognition of the PLO/Palestinian Resistance Movement as the embodiment of that identity) and reasserted their existence internationally.

As the objectives were achieved, two new developments brought about a subtle shift in the PRM's estimate political aims. The first was the PLO's expulsion from Jordan in 1970-71 and the widespread political disorientation and democratisation that followed in its wake. The second was the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war and subsequent Arab and international recognition of the PLO the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinians in 1974³⁹.

Between 1974 and 1982, the uses of the Palestinian military instruments reflected the PLO leadership's three main objectives at a practical level. The first of immediate goals without which pursuit of the larger ones would not be possible was self-defence. The PLO felt it needed sufficient military strength to defend its main headquarters in Beirut, primarily against Lebanese officials or paramilitary agencies when it came to defence

³⁸ Ibid, p. 100

³⁹ Gresh, n. 30, p.65.

against stronger forces, such as Syrians, the PLO hoped that its regional political umbrella would compensate for its own weaknesses.⁴⁰

The second was the preservation of the PLO's political status and to safeguard the progress it had made both internationally and within the Arab and Palestinian arenas in gaining political recognition. The third was inducing movement towards resolving Palestinian problem through a weakening of Israeli political will.⁴¹ In the PLO's view, a military capability was needed to persuade the Americans and ultimately the Israelis that there would be no end to armed conflict and political instability until they had made territorial concessions (after having first recognized the PLO)

The pursuit of these three immediate objectives, Palestinian military action took several different forms. In the area of self-defence, the PLO opted for the maintenance of a full time, semi-regular force that could decide the bottle quickly by virtue of its ability to concentrate and employ heavy firepower. In its view, the mere presence of such a force would have a deterrent effect lacking in the small, low profile guerrilla units.

This outlook developed because of clashes with various Lebanese factions and from the experience of July 1981, when it was PLO artillery shelling of Israeli settlements in retaliation for Israeli raid of Beirut that finally

⁴⁰ Sayigh, n. 34, p.83.

⁴¹ Ibid, 87

induced the IDF to accept a joint cease-fire.⁴² There was an enormous disparity of strength between the PLO and IDF, but the PLO's ability to inflict an unacceptable (through not massive) level of dislocation in northern Israel or casualties in the IDF helped deter Israel from invading Lebanon at will. The PLO came to see its artillery and more generally its semi-regular military institutional base in Lebanon, as a major bargaining asset in the context of a broad political settlement.

the short-term objective defence of the PLO's political status was pursued through two other forms of military action, principally involving small forces. The first was that of dramatic raids carried out inside Israel by suicide squads from Lebanon, in which a number of Israeli were killed or taken hostage. Much of these incident, which took place in 1974, 1975 and 1978, also coincided with the exclusion of the PLO from any diplomatic contacts. The PLO's purpose in carrying out such actions was to remind other parties of its presence and to indicate both its rejection of specific suggestions and its intention to subvert any initiative that deprived it of a role.⁴³

The PLO operations could even derail or delay specific initiatives by starting a chain reaction that would restore the state of tension in the area, as the case in March 1978 when the IDF invaded South Lebanon in supposed retaliation for a Palestinian raid on the Tel Aviv-Haifa highway, there by

⁴² Sayigh, n. 34, p.102.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 102.

stalling Egyptian-Israeli peace talks for several months.⁴⁴ This type of military operation also served to boost morale in the Palestinian Diaspora and inside the occupied territories and to help to justify the PLO's existence in Palestinian eyes. The PLO was concerned with safeguarding its legitimacy in Palestinian eye and with reminding the Arab and international actors of its presence and interests. The opposition was trying to undermine the PLO leadership politically; externally by rejecting diplomatic contacts with Arab countries such as Jordan and Egypt or the US and internally, by rebuilding support networks among the Palestinians of Lebanon and the occupied territories.

Egypt and Camp David

Unlike previous peace plans, the Camp David peace agreement following President Anwar El-Sadat's peace initiative were concerned with the settlement of a two-tier problem (Egypt-Israel, Palestine-Israel). However, the bitter row over this diplomatic problem has attracted on intensive degree of international attention in the wake of the 1967 war, when the Arab agreed to create and support a Palestinian organisation to prepare the Palestinian people for the battle of liberation by directing military activities. Within a short span of time, the incoherent coterie of Commando cell turned into a formidable resistance organisation, which conducted commando operations inside as well as outside occupied territories.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.103.

Against this gloomy situations and many peace mover made now and than to no avail. President Sadat took upon himself to initiate a peace plan that would solve both components of the long dragged out conflict. imposing Israel and recognition of the legitimate rights of Palestinian people which it used to deny all through the past thirty years and at the same time forcing it to cede the Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war.

At the end of the Marathon summit between Sadat, Begin and Carter from 5 to 17 September 1978, the Camp David framework for peace agreement was signed. Essentially they concerned with peace between Egypt and Israel and the future of the West Bank and Gaza. The first ended in signing of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in Washington in March 1979. This provided for three-year implementation phase, its partial demilitarisation, dismantlement of Israeli settlement; and normalization of relations between the two countries.

As to this second point (the future of the West Bank and Gaza), the Camp David framework for peace agreements confirmed by the treaty of Washington envisaged a five year transitional period during which "full autonomy" would be granted to the inhabitants of the occupied territories. In addition, the Israeli military government and civilian administration would be withdrawn as soon as the inhabitants of these area have freely elected a self-

governing authority.⁴⁵ The key questions remained unsettled; the refugee problem and their right to return, status of Jerusalem, role of Jordan etc., Still more serious, the most basic question remained pending the issue of a Palestinian state. Moreover, Egyptian-Israeli remained precarious, partial, separate, and controversial. It did not resolve the Arab-Israel conflict, but rather determined the agenda and the timetable for the continued conflict.

However, the PLO spokesperson Mohammad Labbadi commenting on the accords immediately after their signature said that it would not bring peace in the region because the absence of the PLO. Bassam Abu Sharaf of the People's Front asserted that peace in the region should only reign when justice is maintained. This he said would certainly mean the recognition of the Palestinian peoples right to repatriation, self-determination and the formation of a democratic and secular state where the Palestinians and the Jews would enjoy equal rights.⁴⁶

In fact, the most important result of the events of 1982 and 1983 was the effective division of the Palestinian national resistance movement (PRM) into two distinct camps: the PLO, still enjoying some political and institutional independence by virtue of being in Arab exile, but geographically distanced from Israeli and the opposition closer to the battle field but lacking form and

⁴⁵ Gresh, n - 44, p 230.

⁴⁶ William Yossef Kosman, *Sadat's Realistic Peace Initiative*, New York, Vantage Press, 1981, p. 37.

cohesion and subject to Syrian will⁴⁷. Each party has been propelled by its own physical and practical circumstances to seek alternative military methods to serve its political strategy. The PLO leadership used to fielding heavy weaponry in South Lebanon but unable to do so many more, has resorted to sending naval squads across the sea to attack Israel, to recruit secret members in the occupied territories or infiltrating Lebanon's refugee camps.⁴⁸ The opposition has been able to do more because it has been subject to Syrian control. However, its units did little against the occupying IDF in Lebanon, even when they enjoyed a certain freedom of action in 1983. The opposition forces shown the same predilection for heavy weaponry as the PLO mainstream and as a result the tendency has been not to engage in combat unless tanks and artillery could safely be deployed. Thus these forces have seen action against the near by Israeli.

Despite many obstacles between 1977 and 1982 the PLO in Lebanon continued to receive arms shipments by sea or overland in normal circumstances, and was able to attack Israel by directing artillery fire over the border strip or by sending guerrillas who were able to pass undefeated through it. Thus, the PLO retained a credible option of initiating military action.

With the mass evacuation from Beirut and the occupation of the southern half of the country by Israel, the Palestinian military base in Lebanon

⁴⁷ Sayigh, n. 34, pp.101-102.

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 102-3

was completely dismantled. This radically changed the situation of the PLO. Whereas before June 1982 its forces had been concentrated in Lebanon by the end of 1982, roughly half of its manpower had been dispersed throughout the Arab world in Algeria, Tunisia, the Sudan, Yemen and Iraq.⁴⁹ previously most PLO men had been based outside Syrian-dominated areas but now several thousand men were in east and north Lebanon and Syria itself. They were subject to the direct control of the Syrian army and intelligence service. This dispersal and division of forces laid the foundation for the subsequent split within the PLO in the spring of 1983, and for the whole pattern of subsequent Palestinian military and diplomatic activity.

At dawn on 6 June, exactly 15 years and one day after the 1967 war, Israeli tanks rolled into southern Lebanon. The declared aim was, as the name of the operation indicated, to restore 'peace in Galilee' and to remove the threat of 'Palestinian guns' hanging over northern Israel. The true aim of the Begin government was threefold.³

1. To destroy the PLO
2. To block the whole peace process
3. Make Lebanon swing over to the Israeli side

⁴⁹ Levran, Ahraon, Zeev Eytan A. Levran, *The Middle East Military Balance, 1987-88. A Comprehensive Database and in-depth Analysis or Regional Strategic Issue*, London, Westview Press, 1988, pp. 197-99.

However, faced with defeat the PLO was forced to evacuate and moved its headquarters from Beirut to Tunis.⁵⁰ Syria's was one of the frontline state. For more than ten years of PLO had been a factor in the Lebanese crisis, which closely affected Damascus. However, on 11 June 1983 Syria signed a cease-fire, which left the PLO and the Lebanese national movement alone to face the Israeli army. outraged by this abandonment Arafat when he had to leave Beirut, refused to go to Syria but instead moved to Tunis to set up his headquarters. Nevertheless, later he began to develop his own political strategy, then Damascus did not support for military solution in the West Asia.

⁵⁰ Gresh, n. 16, p. 280.

CHAPTER - II

THE *INTIFADA* AND POLITICAL SOLUTION

The Palestinian uprising or *intifada* that broke out in the Gaza strip on 8 December 1987 was a spontaneous eruption of hatred and frustration of the Palestinians. It was on that day that an Israeli tank transport truck crashed into several Arab cars in the Gaza city, killing four Palestinians and injuring several others.¹ The demonstrations that erupted during the funerals of victims were the first signs of an upheaval that spread rapidly to the West Bank. The roots of the struggle can be traced back to the late 19th century, which witnessed the rise of Zionism, the movement aims at establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine.² However, *intifada* represented a degree of anger directed mostly at Israel but to some extent at the external Palestinian leadership also. This resentment continued because of economic as well as political grievances and much of anger resulted from personal and non-political factors such as daily harassments, arrests and beating that the ordinary Palestinians and had faced for years.³

Twenty years of occupation

The root cause of uprising was embedded in the twenty years of occupation and Israeli policies aimed at undermining the national existence of the Palestinians in their historic land, under the guise of maintaining its

¹ Amar Abu Ziad "The Intifada: Causes and Factors of Continuity", *New Outlook*, (Tel Aviv), vol.32, No. 5 (December 1989), pp.7-11.

² Ed. Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock, *Intifada: Palestine at the Cross roads* (New York: St. Martins Press 1992), p. 291.

³ Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israel Conflict*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1992), p.291.

security, Israel had confiscated Arab land and launched an aggressive settlement policy, which left the West Bank, and Gaza fragmented both geographically and demographically. Israeli 'Iron fist' policy marked by repressive measures and human rights violations, have resulted in loss of life, imprisonment, detention, house or town arrest, house demolition, deportation, fines, interrogation, travel, restrictions, curfews, closer of educational institutions, unjust taxes, economic hardships and the like.⁴

Israel's attempt to undermine the material existence of the Palestinian people was compounded by continuous Israeli denial of Palestinian national aspirations, self-determination and an independent Palestine state in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians perceive Israeli denial as a deliberate attitude that bluntly ignores international recognition of Palestinian legitimate rights.

In 1986, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir proclaimed that his government would proceed to consolidate "the Jewish presence in all part of the land: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria (the West Bank), and Gaza, twenty one of them laid out (but not yet populated)."⁵ After twenty years of occupation, many observers asserted that for all political purposes that the West Bank with its 60,000 Jewish settlers and its 800,000 indigenous Arabs had been annexed which was also a major cause. Benevenisti, a former deputy major of Jerusalem and Israel's most prominent authority on the occupied territories,

⁴ Ziad, n. 1, pp. 7-11.

⁵ Don Peretz, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising* (London: Westview Press, 1990), pp.27-37.

had argued that a gradual processes of consolidation had taken place since Israel captured the territories and that with termination of the six day war in June 1967 “the second Israeli Republic” was established in the land of Israel.⁶ Since 1967 when it came under military rule, a vast majority of Israeli were determined to preserve the Jewish character of the second republic, whereas the Palestinian were united in their “desire to destroy Jewish hegemony.”⁷ In the words of Abu Amar Ziad,

National and political awareness among the Palestinians had gradually evolved throughout twenty years of Israeli occupation. The Palestinian nation building has contributed to the evolution of this awareness. Finally, the twenty years of discontent ripened into an uprising.⁸ Says Abu Amar Ziad.

Moreover, *intifada* occurred nearly forty years after the partitioning of Palestine and the creation of Israeli state and twenty years after the Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza. It represented their mass based popular revolt. It is a historical product of the previous efforts to restrict dispossession and suppression of Palestinian national identity. It constituted the third major movements in defence of the Palestinian homeland. The first was the 1936-39 revolt against authorities of the British mandate, second was the 1947-48

⁶ Ibid - 27-37.

⁷ Ibid, p. 29.

⁸ Ziad, n. 1, p.7

resistance to the partitioning of Palestine. Unlike the previous movements, third was the PLO's expulsion from the Beirut in 1982. The *intifada* have been successful in joining together, young and old, men and women, city-dwellers and villagers, Muslim and Christian, poor and rich, and all political parties forming a genuine movement.⁹

ii) Lebanese War and Occupation

The 1982 war between Israel and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was not an accident, nor was it launched in response to major military provocation or crisis. The war resulted from a deliberate, well planned Israeli policy. The second government of Menachem Begin, which took office in August 1981 was dominated by people who firmly believed in finding military solutions to Israeli security concerns and strongly upheld the invisibility of the "Land of Israel" They claimed that the PLO's military presence in Lebanon constituted a serious threat to Israel's security. On June 1982, the Israeli cabinet declared war against the PLO and announced that the military aim of its operation in Lebanon was to create 25-mile security zone in southern Lebanon free from PLO men and artillery. The plan was named "Operation Peace for Galilee."¹⁰

Individually and collectively the Arab states did not go much beyond verbal condemnation of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and overall U.S.

⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁰ Emile, F. Sahliye, *The PLO after the Lebanon war*, (London: Westview press, 1986) p. 17.

support for Israel's war aims. Egypt and Jordan had remained silent toward Israel. The signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979 neutralized Egypt, which had been the largest and most powerful of these Arab states. Although King Hussain was alarmed at the outbreak of the 1982 Lebanese war, he adopted neutral stand. In fact, since the 1967 June war Jordan had established a policy of avoiding direct military entanglement with Israel.

Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon's goal was to destroy the PLO military Infrastructure and if possible, the PLO leadership itself. This meant attacking West Beirut where the PLO's headquarter and command bunkers were located. Israel believed that as long as the PLO had its autonomous political and military base in Beirut and South Lebanon, no alternative leadership could be fostered in the West Bank and Gaza¹¹.

The defeat of the PLO in Lebanon and forced evacuation to Tunis, the invasion led to the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Maronite militia allied with Israel. The Arab states failed to intervene in Lebanon or take other actions that might deter Israel and Palestinians regarded "the Arab conspiracy of silence" as treacherous. It was even compared to the Palestinian defeat in 1948. Palestinians were seen isolated and lonely as distinct from other Arabs and many were thus led to feel "shame for being an Arab, but pride of being Palestinian."¹² |

¹¹ Ibid, p.18

¹² Peretz, n. 5, 19-20.

The war had a sobering impact on the Arab States in general and the Palestinian in particular. By destroying the PLO's military infrastructure in Lebanon and denying its territorial base for attacks on Israel, the Lebanon war drove the Palestinians towards the political path. This culminated the PLO's historic decisions in November and December 1988 to accept UN Security resolutions 242 and 338 and to recognize Israel's right to exist.¹³

A strong impetus to these decisions was provided by the eruption of the *intifada* in December 1987. This popular uprising did more to redeem Palestinian dignity and self-esteem than the two and half decades of PLO's terrorism. Frustrated with the long standing negligence and manipulation of their cause by Arabs and Israeli alike, the Palestinians in the occupied territories proved capable of becoming self-reliant and rebuffing the Israeli occupation as never before¹⁴.

THE IMPACT OF THE *INTIFADA* ON ISRAEL LIFE

The Israeli public, like its leadership, was unprepared for the shock of the *intifada*. Israelis had become accustomed to the periodic eruptions of violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Yet what average Israelis perceived to be the country's perilous situation in a region necessitated the

¹³Michael Curtis, "The uprisings impact on the options for peace", *Middle East intentional*, (London), vol. 21, no.2 (winter 1988) pp.5-7.

¹⁴Victor. Cygielman - "The impact of two years of Intifada", *New Outlook*, (Tel Aviv), vol. 32, No.5. December 1989, p. 5.

continued occupation, surrounded by enemies and in a world hostile to the Jewish state.

Despite the tendency of many Israelis to perceive the *intifada* as a huge media event, it had a traumatic impact on a large number of soldiers who served in the territories. The effect was so serious that it led many officers and observers outside the IDF to be concerned about possible deterioration of military efficiency.

A former IDF psychologist, Dr. Reuven Gal, now head of the Israel Institute for Military Studies, identified three types of stress. "Moral stress, caused by pangs of conscience at being in the territories at all and the methods employed to put down the Intifada; psychological stress arising from the stunning encounter with violence and aggression; and operational stress in the field where soldiers are required to carry out duties they were not trained for" ¹⁵

However, to the Israeli public and the international community, the uprising was characterized by the daily confrontation between the stone throwing Palestinian youths and Israeli occupation forces. Early in March 1988 a CBS television crew in Nablus filmed four Israeli soldiers beat two Arab youth who were sitting on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs. The soldiers kicked the Arabs in the head and Chest, and then beat

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 127.

them on the arms and legs with heavy rocks.¹⁶ According to the CBS Israel bureau chief, the beating lasted about forty minutes. Within a day the television clip was being shown throughout Europe and the United States and the incident aroused a storm of protest and Israeli embassies in Washington, London, Paris and Amsterdam were flooded with angry calls. In some countries the incident sparked anti-Israel demonstrations and even supporters of Israel were shocked.¹⁷

The army's drive to eliminate the "hardcore activists" were seen as responsible for keeping the uprising alive, enforcing strikes and boycotts, organizing demonstrations, and harassing and killing collaborators. Chief of General Staff Dan Shomron referred to 700 "bingo", that is, the Palestinians whose ID card numbers appeared on lists carried by soldiers and who are believed to be the hardcore of the *intifada*.¹⁸

In January 1988 media suggested the existence of special army units targeting street leaders called "Samson" in Gaza strip and "cherry" in the West Bank. Citing security sources *The Jerusalem Post*, reported that these units had "verbal order to shoot to kill fugitives" with blood on their hands"¹⁹. On 18th October, IDF Advocate-General Amnon Straschnow endorsed the army's expanded open fire guidelines, claiming that masked youths "have

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 36

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 38.

¹⁸ Joost R. Hiltermann - "Israel's strategy to break the uprising", *Journal of Palestine studies*, (Washington DC), vol. XIX, No. 2 (winter 1990) p. 92-93.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.93

become a serious problem. They are the hard core facing the security forces in their war against the uprising."²⁰ The killing of Palestinians leading demonstrations and enforcing strikes escalated in September 1989 when the army command authorized soldiers to open fire on anyone who was masked.²¹

Israel followed a very widespread strategy and technique to stamp out the *intifada* including imposition of curfews on individual cities or whole area, arrest of those thought to be the leaders of the uprising, outlawing 'popular committee' set up in the territories, closing down professional associations, demolition of houses, suspension of fuel deliveries and services, attempt to break strikes, deportations, travel restrictions, restricting the influx of money from outside, school closures, introduction of permission from the military authority for a wide ranges issues such as to travel abroad, to print and publish, to start a business, to build a house, to have a telephone installed, to obtain a driving license, to change one's place of residence, to register a baby on one's identity card, and so on.²²

²⁰ Ibid, p.93

²¹ Ibid, p.93.

²² Ibid, p. 93

THE IMPACT ON GREEN LINE

The pre-1967 border separating Israel from its Arab neighbours is referred as the "green line." During the twenty years between the June war and the outbreak of the *intifada*, those part of the green line running between the West Bank and Gaza on the one hand and Israel on the other hand, Israelis were becoming increasingly familiar with the West Bank and Gaza in which they had had unrestricted access since 1967. As a result of this situation, they increasingly come to feel at home in the occupied areas and the number of Israelis living there increased steadily, on the eve of the *intifada* the number reached *more than 70,000* (excluding East Jerusalem). Many important economic and institutional linkages established between Israel and the territories since 1967 gave many and perhaps most Israelis a feeling that there was no natural connection between their country and these areas.²³

This situation has changed since December 1987, when the *intifada* broke out and an important consequence of the Palestinian uprising has been the resurrection of the green line in the consciousness of most Israelis. The territories are now zones of insecurity, which Israeli civilians avoided as much as possible and where even soldiers would prefer not to serve. As Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin explained in September 1988, when asked to

²³ Mark Tessler, "The *Intifada* and Political Disclosure in Israel", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington D.C.), Vol. XIX, No.2, Issue 74, Winter 1990, pp.44-45.

comment on the fact that the number of Israelis killed in the territories had actually declined since the beginning of the uprising, "Jews simply do not visit the territories as they used to, no one is wondering around the garages of Gaza any more these days."²⁴

The *intifada* had forced Israelis to recognize certain truths about the occupied areas, the Green Line resurrected in their consciousness. Palestinians were determined to let Israelis know that occupation was not cost free, and that political leaders who state otherwise were either ignorant or deliberately lying about Arab grievances and demands.

Emergence of Peace Camp

A number of organizations came forward with peace agenda. Although their total membership was not large, they had higher visibility and were often influential beyond their number. In April 1998 the Hebrew daily Ha-aretz published a list of forty-six groups. Another account by Mayron S. Aronoff estimated that some two-dozen emerged after the outbreak of the *intifada*.²⁵ Explaining the rationale for one such group The Council for Peace and Security, Aharon Yavir, director of the Tel Aviv-based Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies (JCSS) remarked that continuing occupation was eroding the strength of the IDF, draining its power and inviting a new bigger war. The group called on the government to negotiate with any representative body of

²⁴ Ibid, pp.46-47.

²⁵ Peretz, n. 5, p.49.

the Palestinians including the PLO, if the latter was willing to recognize Israel and enter into peace talks.²⁶

The options before the Israeli government were limited. If it persisted with not negotiating with the PLO, it had five other options: unilateral withdrawal from the whole or some of the occupied territories; granting of autonomy, or functional division of power in the territories; implementation of some form of the Allan plan; an international conference under the auspicious of the UN; or a series of bilateral negotiations between Israel and the various parties to the conflict. The options before the Palestinians were also limited: the proclamation of a provisional government in the territories; declaration of government in exile and of a Palestinian state; or the UN administration of the territories.²⁷

Whereas, from Israel's standpoint, other options might have been preferable, they are not feasible. The same holds true for the Palestinians. The courses set forth here may constitute a realistic path for resolving the problems posed by the West Bank and Gaza for Israel and hope for progress towards a better future for the entire region. The problems confronting Israel in the West Bank and Gaza are extremely grave. They do not lend themselves to risk-free solution. Indeed, as is the case with all options and

²⁶ Ibid, p.50

²⁷ Document, "Israel, the West Bank and Gaza: Towards a Solution" *New Outlook*, (Tel Aviv), 32, no. 5 (January 1989), pp. 2-4.

possible courses of action, the path suggested here comprises a mix of risks and opportunities.

The *intifada* has simultaneously raised the emotional threshold of the Palestinian cause, gained greater international support, increased the economic and moral cost of occupation for Israel, put Israel on the political defensive and engendered new (but unsuccessful) initiative for peace process by Secretary Schultz and also the startling decision about the West Bank by king Hussain.

The Territorial Compromise

The *intifada* underscored the need for mutual compromise and recognition of each other's existence. Many Israeli realised the need to negotiate with the PLO. But the political right saw the *intifada* as a continuing Arab effort to bring one end to Jews and rejected any territorial compromise. After PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was denied a visa to enter the US, the UN General Assembly met in Geneva for a special session and on 13 December 1988 adopted a resolution calling for the international peace conference on the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right in self-determination.²⁸

²⁸ Tessler, n. 25, pp 44-45.

Speaking on the occasion Arafat called for the placement of the Palestinian land occupied by Israel under temporary supervision of the United Nation and for the deployment of international forces”, to protect our people and to supervise the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from our country.” He assured that

the PLO will work for the achievement of comprehensive settlement among the parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the state of Palestine, Israel and other neighbouring states, within the framework of the international peace conference on the Middle East on the basis of security council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) so as to guarantee equality and the balance of interests, especially our people’s rights to freedom and national independence and respect for the rights of all the parties to the conflict to exist in peace and security.²⁹

The US President Ronald Reagan issued a statement acknowledging the contents of Arafat’s speech and authorized the State Department to “enter into a substantive dialogue with PLO representative is an important step in the peace process”. However, as the *intifada* was continuing, in September 1989 Defence Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, an architect of Israeli effort to suppress the *intifada*, acknowledged that Israel conflict was with the Palestinian not with the Arab world in general and that there will be no peace”

²⁹ Dr. Khalid El-Sheikh, “The Palestine Catastrophe: Fifty Years Since Al-Nakbah, (New Delhi, Embassy of the State of Palestine, 1988), pp. 131-132.

without starting some sort of process between us and Palestinian.” More precisely, Rabin declared that whereas he had formally believed “the best path for Israel was to keep the conflict and solution within the framework of Israel’s relation with the Arab states... the reality to day is that the only partner with whom Israel can, perhaps enter into a political process is the Palestinians... and whomsoever does not see this is not reading the map correctly.”³⁰

The Palestine National Council met in Algiers for its 19th session and on 15 November 1988 declared the State of Palestine. It also adopted a political programme endorsing the United Nations resolutions 242 and 338 as basis for a comprehensive political settlement to the question of Palestine. The declaration of independence stated:

Despite the historical injustice done to the Palestinian Arab people in its displacement and is being deprived of the right to self-determination following the adaptation of General Assembly Resolution 181 (11) of 1947, which partitioned Palestine into an Arab and Jewish state, that resolution nevertheless continue to attach condition to international legitimacy that guarantees for Palestinian Arab people the right to sovereignty and national independence.³¹

³⁰ Palestine National Council Summit (Washington D.C), *Journal of Palestine Studies*, No. 69, Winter 1998, pp. 272-275.

³¹ The Declaration of Palestine Independence, *New Outlook*, (Tel Aviv), Vol. 32, no. 1 (287), Jan 1989, pp. 10-13.

United Nations since 1947, and “through the exercise by the Palestinian Arab people of its right to self-determination, political independence and sovereignty over its territory. The Palestine National Council hereby declares, in the name of God, and on behalf of the Palestinian Arab people, the establishment of the state of Palestine in the land of Palestine with its capital at Jerusalem”³²

Framing the characteristic of one future state of Palestine the Declaration stated.

The state of Palestine shall be for Palestinians, wherever they may be, therein to develop their national and cultural identity and there in to enjoy full equality of rights. Their religious and political beliefs and human dignity shall therein be safeguarded under a democratic parliamentary system based on freedom of opinion and the freedom to form parties, on the heed of the majority for minority rights and the respect of minority for majority decision, on social justice and equality and on non-discrimination in civil rights on grounds of race, religion or colour or between men and women, under a constitution ensuring the rule of law and an independent judiciary and on the basis of true fidelity to the age old spiritual and cultural heritage of Palestine with respect to mutual tolerance, co-existence and magnanimity among religions; it also emphasises; “The state of Palestine shall be an Arab state and

³² Ibid, pp. 10-13.

shall be an integral part of the Arab nation, of its heritage and civilization and of its present endeavour for the achievement of the goal of liberation, development, democracy and unity.³³

THE IMPACT OF *INTIFADA* UPON PALESTINIANS

Leadership of the *intifada*

By early January 1988 it had become clear that an organized leadership had taken control of the uprising and was attempting to coordinate the series of spontaneous demonstrations and protests that erupted in December. The infrastructure for an organisation to lead the resistance already existed in the scores of committees and self-help groups that had been established by Palestinians since the beginning of the occupation. They were organised both horizontally and vertically along geographic lines at the villages, towns and districts level; and on functional basis in groups of women, physicians, medical technicians, lawyers, students, teachers and other professional or trade union organizations. These groups also represented political and religious interests. Some others affiliated with PLO functions such as, Fatah, Popular Front for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and others affiliated with the Palestinian communist party or other Islamic groups.³⁴

³³ Ibid, pp. 10-13.

³⁴ Peretz, n. 5, pp.181-182.

With the outbreak of *intifada* and imposition of Israeli curfews, the committees served as a model for coping with the new situations. As the committees grew, their activities and objectives expanded and 'local neighbourhood committees' became responsible for alternative education, health needs and agriculture. They have become the backbone of the uprising, comprising as many as hundred small committees in each of the major cities and up to ten in every refugee camp and village. The process of leadership developed from the base.³⁵ According to Daud Kuttab, the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) emerged from those groups and became responsible for making the major national decisions and producing and distributing the periodical leaflets. In fact, individuals inside the territories led the uprising without directions from or consultation with PLO leadership abroad. But after a few weeks, lines of communication were set up between leaders of the *intifada* in the territories and the PLO headquarters in Tunis. They enabled both sides to coordinate their political statement and strategic planning.³⁶

The PLO did not takeover the management of the *intifada* nor did the leaders in the territories become a mere agents of the PLO. Rather a partnership evolved in which the unified national leadership of the uprising assumed a much more prominent role in the decision making process of the

³⁵ Ibid, pp. 87-89.

³⁶ Peretz, n.5, p.191-92.

PLO. According to some authoritative Palestinians the UNLU was organised with fifteen rotating members, three each from Fatah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

The role of the Islamic groups has been uncertain. At times they cooperated with the Unified National Leadership for Uprising (UNLU) at times they opposed its position. Now the Palestinians in the territories commanded as much political weight as the PLO leadership in the Diaspora.³⁷ Finally, Israel was even unable to identify the top leadership of the *intifada* but made attempts to strike at lower leaders through administrative detention and arrested thousands of activists.

PLO's POLICY

As we have seen, the *intifada* originated as a spontaneous outburst of anger, undirected by any higher committee or organizations. As such it spread rapidly from Gaza to the West Bank and sustained itself through the cooperation of local committees and neighbourhoods who organised for mutual assistance. It was only a month later that any semblance of direction from PLO headquarters in Tunis appeared, although local committee heads affiliated with various PLO factions had contacted them once the uprising began. At its heart the *intifada* was an uprising of the poor and the youths, the

³⁷ Beverly Milton Edward, *Islamic Politics in Palestine*, London, I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1996, pp. 147-148.

less advantaged sections of the population who organised the popular committees, which PLO representatives then sought to direct.³⁸

Various decisions had been made in spot. One was to protests to demonstrations and stone throwing, and not to use weapons such as knives and guns. But a political agenda quickly appeared, inspired and instigated from Tunis, with the "fourteen points" which were initially announced by individuals not connected to the *intifada* but with directions from Tunis, the "fourteen points" became the official agenda of the *intifada*.³⁹

By the summer of 1988, the plans were fixed for a meeting of 448 members of Palestine National Council (PNC) also known as the Palestinian Parliament in exile. Rumour spread that the organisation would issue a declaration of independence in conjunction with a number of political changes including recognition of Israel, renunciation of violence (terrorism) out side the territories. However, internal disagreement loomed so large that the leaders of the organisation feared a full-scale meeting would disrupt the Palestine National Council. After several postponements, the Palestine National Council was finally convened in an emergency session in Algiers during November 1988. In a speech on November 15 to 19 session of the Council called "*intifada* meeting" Arafat proclaimed "in the name of God, in the name of the

³⁸ Smith, n. 3, pp. 131-132.

³⁹ Fourteen Points *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington D.C.), No. 67, Spring 1988, pp.63-65.

people, of the Palestinian people, the establishment of the state of Palestine on our own Palestinians with its capital in the holy Jerusalem."⁴⁰

The Palestine National Council (PNC) also issued a political programmes calling for a solution to the conflict based on United Nations Security Councils resolutions 242 and 338. It declared its willingness to negotiate with Israel in the context of an international peace conference, provided that Israel recognised Palestinian rights. It also paid respect to the special relationship between the Palestinians and Jordanian people.⁴¹

The current Palestinian peace efforts can be traced back to 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon. The failure of Israel to impose its will on the Lebanese people exposed the limits of its military power. At the same time, it ended the Israeli consensus concerning future military adventures while exposing its economic and moral weaknesses. Later on, Israeli success in forcing the Palestine Liberation Organization to leave Lebanon and controlled the Palestinian Organization to transfer itself from a military force into a political forces.⁴²

At the Amman Palestinian National Council (PNC) meeting in 1984, the Palestine National Council presented its policy and called for the PLO's longstanding policy of opposing contact with Zionists. In February 1985, King

⁴⁰ Palestine National Council Summit, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington DC), No. 69, Winter 1988, pp.272-275

⁴¹ Ibid, p.274.

⁴² Emile, n. 10, p.16.

Hussein and Arafat signed an agreement to work together for a negotiated settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The agreement called for trading land for peace and the establishment of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian entity.⁴³

In May 1985 Arafat declared in Tunis that he was ready to accept United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338 in return for US recognition of "the Palestinian right to self-determination." When the US Congress demanded renunciation of terrorism as a pre-condition to enter a dialogue with Palestine Liberation Organisation, Arafat was quick to renounce terrorism.⁴⁴

However, neither the US nor the Palestinians reached an agreement. While Israel continued to oppose the political settlement on the basis of the land-for-peace formula, the US was reluctant to use its influence to produce a credible and realistic Israeli negotiating partner. On the other hand, PLO's weakness and lack of Arab unity gave both a reluctant US administration and the rejectionists. Israeli government had an opportunity to play for time and avoid dealing with the sensitive issue of peace in the West Asia.

THE INTIFADA AND ARAB STATES

The *intifada* refocused the attention of the Arab World after the Iran-Iraq war. In 1988 many Arab states believe that one of the cause of the uprising was despair among the population in Gaza and the West Bank over

⁴³ Dr. Mohammad Rabie, *Towards a Palestine Israeli Peace, New Outlook*, (Tel Aviv), vol. 32, No. 5, September 1989, p.18.

⁴⁴ Peretz, n. 5, p. 230.

the indifference shown by the Arab league summit in Amman as the Palestinians were disappointed by the secondary place in their agenda. The courage of the Palestinians in resisting Israeli occupation after December 1987 was very significant.

All Arab countries joined to give at least verbal support to the intifada and an 'extra-ordinary' Arab league summit was convened in June 1988 in Algiers. This summit was attended by 17 heads of state from the twenty one member nations (the PLO was recognised as the 22 member) The PLO requested a \$300-400 million, "insurrection fund" to support the uprising and to provide assistance for those in the territories unable to work because of strikes and other labour stoppages. Instead of providing this sum, however, the League established a joint committee of the PLO and six other members to make political decisions and direct internal support to the uprising.⁴⁵ Many Arab states criticized the United States for its pro-Israeli bias and its antagonism to "Palestine National Right". It characterized the Secretary of State George Schultz's effort to negotiate a settlement as "slow, ineffective and incapable of standing up to the Israeli position." The League insisted that settlement could be attained only through an international conference under the UN auspices.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.181.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.181.

Most Arab governments did little about the *intifada* after the Algiers conference and were incapable of taking any tangible action, because of their special relationship with the United States. Egypt and Jordan attempted to persuade the US to intervene on behalf of the Palestinians and to ameliorate their plight. Other countries including Tunisia, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia joined with the Arab League representative in Washington to request greater US role and to pressure Israel to alter its policies in the territories. In fact, the ties between Israel and Egypt were severely strained by the uprising. Because Egypt was the only Arab country with which Israel had a peace agreement and diplomatic relations, this was a serious matter. Within the first week of the uprising, Egypt summoned Israel's Ambassador to Cairo to "protest" the brutality, oppressive measures against the Palestinian people" and the protest was repeated several times.⁴⁷

The uprising led to a wave of popular sympathy in Egypt for the Palestinians, expressed through demonstrations on campuses and in the streets and statements issued by professional organizations. Many urged the government to break all ties with Israel. President Mubarak resisted all these pressures and attempted to revive the West Asian international peace conference. At a meeting with President Reagan in Washington on January 1989, the two leaders urged Israel and the Palestinian to accept a six-month time to resume the peace negotiation.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p. 182.

This summit meeting (13 June, 1988) also committed itself to “support the uprising for consolidating its effectiveness and ensuring its continuation and escalation. It in the area of financial aid that the states moved from declamatory and diplomatic support to the commitment of scarce resources to the Palestine.

While financial aid was a bone of contention with the Arab states, the PLO did win important political and diplomatic victories in the Arab arena during 1989. Every Arab states including Syria recognized the newly formed Palestinian state. Only Syria withheld recognition of Arafat's selection as president of the new state. At the Casablanca Arab summit of May 1989, Arafat received a general Arab endorsement for the resolutions adopted by November 1988 Palestine National Council (PNC) meeting in support of the PLO diplomatic initiatives aimed at convening an international conference. The summit, supported the idea of elections suggested by Israel but demanded that they be held only under international supervision following Israeli withdrawal and only as a part of a process leading to a comprehensive settlement.

However, during the *intifada*, Jordan's reaction was very serious because Jordan was the Arab states most potentially threatened by the uprising, both in terms of its own foreign policy goals in the occupied territories and in terms of the Palestinian community resident in the West Bank. Moreover, on the eve of the *intifada*, Jordan-PLO relations were

characterised by mutual suspicion and fear that existed since “Black September” of 1970.⁴⁸ During the 1980s, King Hussain and Yasser Arafat made unsuccessful attempts to reach a joint position for entering into Arab-Israel negotiations. In February 1986 the King accused the PLO of bad faith over its refusal openly to accept UN Security Council 242. Jordan also closed down PLO offices in the country, sponsored rivals to Arafat for Palestinian leadership and reoriented Jordan’s regional policy towards West Bank.⁴⁹

Through the mediatory efforts of Mubark’s King Hussain once again recognized the PLO as the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.” During discussion on the international peace conference, Mubarak offered to visit Israel “if” it would lead to solve the problems. But because of his conditions including suspending Jewish settlement activity in the territories the visit did not materialise.

Finally, finding no international, regional, domestic support for a confined Jordanian role in the occupied territories. King Hussain took his historic step. On July 28, 1988 Jordanian Council of Ministers dismantled the Jordanian development fund for the occupied territories, citing its desire to enable the PLO shoulder its responsibility fully ‘as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.’ On July 30, 1998, the King

⁴⁸ Michael Curtis – “The Uprisings Impact on the Options for Peace”, *Middle East Review*, Vol. XXI, No. 2, Winter, 1988-89, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Rabie, n. 43, pp. 18-19.

dissolved the Jordanian Parliament, half of whose seats were allocated to West Bank representatives. The following day in a speech broadcast King Hussain told his country and the world that Jordan was severing its political and administrative link to the West Bank.⁵⁰

INTIFADA AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

Since the early 1970s the Palestinian cause has evoked wide spread attention. The United Nations, the European Union and Europe and other third world countries: from the very start of uprising in December 1987. Israel was the target of international criticism. On 22 December 1979 the UN Security Council passed a resolution condemning Israel over its handling of the *intifada*. The US did not vote the UN Security Council resolutions but abstained, allowing it to be passed by the council's foundation other members. The resolution like many previous one "strongly" deplored Israel for the violation of human rights in the territories. Now there was a specific condemnation of the IDF for the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilian. In June 1988 the US first supported, than abstained when the fourteen other UN Security Council members passed two resolutions calling on Israel to cancel plans for deportation of Palestinians and to those already expelled to return. It abstained the second resolution because

⁵⁰ Robert O. Freedman (ed.), *The Intifada, its Impact on Israel, the Arab World and the Super Power*, (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991). F. Gregory Gause, *The Arab World and the Intifada*, pp. 191-219.

“repeatedly rising the issue does not help the process of restoring order. Israel’s UN delegates complained that the organisation was so biased that “even if we threw rose petals at the motor cocktail showers, this body would find a way to condemn us.

However, the UN Security Council call for an investigation of the situation, the UN under secretary general, Murrack Goulding visited the occupied territories in June 1988. Although, he met with foreign minister Peres Prime Minister Shamir refused to see him because “he was interfering in Israelis internal affairs” Goulding reported that he had witnessed the incidences.

On 6 November 1973, at Brussels the European Union condemned the acquisition territories by force, and insisted on the need for Israel to put an end to the occupation of territories that it captured in 1967. It also called for the respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of all countries of the region as well as for their right to live within secure and recognized orders. More important still, the declaration also stressed that the establishment of a just and listing peace will have to take into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.⁵¹ On 29 June 1977, London Declaration stressed two essential points.

⁵¹ Nassar and Heacock, n. 2, pp. 228.

1) The Palestinian people's right to a home land and⁵²

2) That they should participate in negotiations "an appropriate manner".

The June 13, 1980 Venice declaration reiterated these provisions and went one step further and insisted on the need for "a global solution to the Arab Israeli conflict".

Following their meeting in Bonn on 8 January 1989, EU foreign ministers were "deeply concerned by the deterioration of the situation" in the occupied territories" and stressed the importance of an international conference under United Nations auspicious and exhorted" Israel to "fully respect" Security Council resolutions as well as the 1949 Geneva Convention of the protection of civilians in time of war.⁵³

Later that year the European community launched a major diplomatic offensive perceived as a hostile by Israel. "The state of Palestine declares its commitment to the purpose and principles of the United Nations, to the universal declaration of Human Rights and to the policy and principles of non-alignment⁵⁴.

"The state of Palestine, in declaring that it is a peace loving state committed to the principles of peaceful co-existence, shall strive, together

⁵² Ibid, p.258.

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 263-64.

⁵⁴ Peretz, n 5, p.259.

with all other states and peoples, for the achievement of a lasting peace based on justice and respect for rights under which the human potential for constructive activity may flourish, mutual competition may confer on life-sustaining innovation without fear of the future, since it bears only assurances for those who have acted justly or made amends to justice".⁵⁵

The conclusion to be drawn from this uprising is that the present state of affairs in the Palestinian occupied territories is unnatural and that Israeli occupation cannot continue forever. Real peace cannot be achieved except through the recognition of Palestinian rights including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil. At a press conference on December 14, Arafat clarified his Stockholm and UN pronouncement, appearing to fulfil all of the US demand; than secretary of state announced that he was unified. The PLO was complied with US conditions for direct talks and Washington was "prepared for substantial dialogue with PLO representative. In addition to Jordan also relinquished its administrative and political ties with West Bank.

CONCLUSION

After two years it appeared that the *intifada* was unlikely to end in the near future. Its final objective- an independent Palestinian state was still opposed by powerful forces, principally Israel's two dominant parties namely,

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 164.

Labour and Likud and the US government. Indeed as Palestinians became more resolute in their efforts to obtain their goal, Israeli military became more determined in their opposition to it.

The *Intifada* did bring the Palestinian question to the forefront of world politics and it again raised the Arab-Israel conflict in public consciousness as a critical and urgent item on the international agenda. But the division between mainstream Israeli and Palestinian leaders were so wide that there seemed little prospect for quickly resolving their difference. Rather the uprising by forcing all parties concerned to again confront the issues directly.

In 1988 both the parties reached an agreement on two-state solution by accepting each other existence.

CHAPTER - III

THE OSLO ACCORD: FROM REJECTION TO RECOGNITION

The 1990-91 Persian Gulf crisis resulted in one of the worst setbacks for the Palestinians in the modern times. By the time the seven month crisis ended in February 1991, the striving Palestinian community in Kuwait had been destroyed. Gulf finance and diplomatic backing that had sustained the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) for two decades had been withdrawn, international endorsement for Palestinian self-determination had declined and the Arab consensus established by the Alexandria protocol of 1944 in support of the Palestinians eroded.¹ Indeed, the organization was in rapid decline when the Israel-PLO accord of 13 September 1993 was signed in Washington. The agreement, however, did not immediately mitigate the damage to the PLO and Palestinians caused by the Gulf crisis.²

PLO reaction to the Iraqi invasion

The magnitude of the Palestinians setback was attributed to the PLO's policy during the crisis. The media, especially in the West portrayed the PLO as a supporter of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein even though the organization vehemently protested during and after the crisis, that its policy was deliberately distorted. In its first official statement on 9 August 1990, it said that there was "a planned and ferocious political media campaign against

¹ Mattar Philip, "The PLO and the Gulf Crisis", *Middle East Journal* (Washington D.C.), Vol. 48, November 1, Winter 1994, pp. 31-32

² *Ibid*, p.33.

its chairman and its leadership" as well as against "the Palestinian people and their (sacred) cause."³

At the end of August PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat complained of "an unjust and ugly campaign...waged against the Palestinian Organisation, the Palestinian leadership, and the Palestinian people because they have adopted this attitude which calls for a peaceful negotiated solution to the crisis within the Arab context."⁴ Responding to criticisms that the Palestinians did not condemn the invasion and did not demand the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, Nabul Shaath, the Chairman of the Palestinian National Council's (PNC) political committee, on 19 August 1990 stated: "In no way I am ignoring the rights of the Kuwait people to their land, to their legitimacy and to self-determination. And in no way would I ignore the people of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force."⁵

A day after signing the peace accord with Israel, Arafat said, "I did not support Saddam Hussein in the Iraqi war against ... in future, history will judge".⁶ In fact, PLO's position was not clear, only after the Palestinian Liberation Organization's first official statement on 19, August, and Arafat's first policy speech on 29 August, that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation

³ Ibid, p. 32

⁴ Ibid, p.32

⁵ Don Peretz, *The Impact of the Gulf War on Israeli and Palestinian Political Attitudes*, *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Washington D.C.) vol. XXI, No. 1, Autumn 1991, pp.17-18.

⁶ Mattar, n. 1, p.34

official position was announced. Both contained "four principles" that guided Palestinian Liberation Organisation policy until the end of the crisis.⁷

The PLO was "not a party to [the conflict] and does [Sic, does not] take sides with one party against another, hence our vote for reservation regarding the Arab League resolution, because it focused on condemnation and ignored any form of settlement. Arafat said on August 1990"⁸. The PLO cited the role that the Organisation had played successfully in 1973, when a similar dispute erupted between Iraq and Kuwait. At the Arab summit meeting on 10 August 1990, it proposed that a delegation go to Baghdad to negotiate with Saddam Hussein. He accused Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak of pre-empting Arafat by not allowing a vote on his proposal but instead preferring to put to vote the US-inspired sets of condemnatory resolutions.⁹

The PLO sought an Arab negotiated settlement in which "higher Pan Arab interests" including those of Kuwait and Iraq would be achieved. It however, is not clear what the "Arab solution" entailed, although the Libyan-PLO peace plan of 6 August may serve as an example: Kuwait would pay compensation to Iraq (presumably for the oil that Kuwait "illegally" pumped from disputed Rumayla Oil field), Kuwait would lease Warba and Bubiyan island to Iraq, Iraq would delineate its border with Kuwait, and Libyan and Palestinian troops would replace Iraqi forces in Kuwait.¹⁰ The PLO rejected

⁷ PLO Statement on the Gulf Crisis, *Middle East Journal*, August 19, 1990, pp.166.

⁸ Mattar, no. 1, p.33.

⁹ Ibid, p.33.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 34

foreign intervention fearing that it would lead to a destructive war harmful to the economic, human and military interests of the states, and "open the door to the Israeli expansion and imperial forces which seek to control the area's wealth and its destinies, eradicate the Palestinian issue, and Balkanize the area"¹¹. Consequently, it called for the withdrawal of US troops, and their replacement with UN forces.¹²

However, it supported the Iraq "initiative" of 12 August, which linked Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait with Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories¹³, including Jerusalem, from the Golan, and from Southern Lebanon, as well as Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. All the sanction and against Iraq would be suspended and instead sanctions would be imposed "against any country that refuses to withdraw from territories it is occupying".¹⁴

The statements of the PLO did little to mend the public relations damage. What was needed at this time were clear, categorical statements condemning the invasion and calling for the Iraqi withdrawal. There were elements within the PLO and the Palestinian Diaspora that advocated such measures. More than any one else Abu Iyad, a chief architect of the PLO understood the dangerous implications of the crisis to the Palestinians and he repeatedly but carefully spoke out against the occupation. "The principles

¹¹ PLO's statement, no. 7, pp.166-67.

¹² Mattar, n. 1, pp.36-37.

¹³ Finkelstain Norman, "Reflections on Palestinian Attitudes during the Gulf War", *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Washington D.C), vol. XXI, No, 3, Spring 1992, p. 55.

¹⁴ Mattar, n. 1, p.37.

violated by Saddam in his invasion of Kuwait" wrote Walid Khalidi in October 1990," were the very principles from which the Palestinian cause drew its moral strength ... In theory, a UN stand led by the United States against the aggression of an occupier was precisely the phenomenon that the PLO should itself be seeking".¹⁵ The failure of the PLO "to come out publicly, repeatedly and forcefully against the invasion of Kuwait and in favour of Iraqi withdrawal in accordance with UN resolutions has gravely damaged its political credibility and international standing".¹⁶

The Arab league convened two Arab league meetings on August 1990, and passed resolutions in relation to regional and international reactions during the first few days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The first sets of Arab league resolutions, voted by foreign ministers on 3 August condemned "Iraqi invasion" and demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.¹⁷ But it also called for an Arab summit to facilitate a negotiated settlement and "categorically reject any foreign intervention."¹⁸ Fourteen out of the twenty-two representatives were present and voted for the resolution; the PLO, Jordan, Mauritania, Sudan, and Yemen abstained, Iraq voted against the resolution and Libya absented itself.¹⁹

¹⁵ Peretz, The Impact of the Gulf War on Israeli and Palestine Political Attitudes, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington D.C.), Vol. XXI, No. 1 (Autumn 1991), p.20.

¹⁶ Mattar, n. 1, p. 37.

¹⁷ For the text of resolution, *Journal of Palestinian Studies* (Washington D.C.), vol. 20, no. 2 (Winter 1991), pp.177-78.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.177

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.178

Political consequences in the territories

In the occupied territories, the crisis only added to the frustrations of those disappointed by the course of the intifada and disgusted by nearly a quarter-century occupation. The intifada's non-violent tactics and major revisions in PLO's policies concretised in November 1988 Palestinian National Council (PNC) appeared to have done little to advance Palestinian cause. However, the trend was rapidly moving in the opposite direction. Israeli's right wing government was adamant about increasing the number of Jewish settlements in both the West Bank and Gaza.²⁰ Meanwhile, the Soviet immigration wave appeared to strengthen anti-Arab sentiment.²¹ According to a poll of Soviet Immigrants conducted by the east Jerusalem weekly, *Al-Bayader Assiyasi*, 73 percent of immigrants declared their support for Likud or parties to its right. Only 16 percent would give up the territories, but 18 percent backed "transfer" of Palestinians out of the territories²², *Al-Fajr's* editor, Hanna Siniora, summed up Palestinian fear as follows: "In the context of the lack of a political initiative to end the conflict and reach a solution, the Palestinians see Soviet Immigrants as a threat and part of a plan to transfer them from their homeland."²³ However, many Palestinian believed that Saddam Hussein's strategy would bring hope and change.

²⁰ Don Peretz, *The Impact of the Gulf war on Israeli and Palestinian Political Attitudes* (Washington D.C.), *Journal of Palestine Studies*, XXI, no. 1 (Autumn, 1991), pp. 17-35.

²¹ *Ibid*, p.18

²² *Ibid*, pp. 19-20

²³ *Ibid*, p.28

The end of the Cold War:

The collapses of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War have changed the global landscape and the dynamics of the international relations. In the West Asia, as elsewhere, these momentous events have created a new geostrategic reality that has altered fundamentally the balance of forces impinging on the region, the way in which the region relates to external powers, and even the configuration of forces within the region. In addition, the end of Cold war has increased the prospects for a lasting peace, between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

On 6 March 1991, seizing the opportunity created by the massive allied victory over Iraq, US President George Bush committed the US to pursuing a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and in the principles of land for peace and providing for "legitimate Palestinian political rights."²⁴ The US-led peace process soon focussed on effort to convene an International peace conference jointly hosted by US and the Soviet Union.

In March 1991, President George Bush proclaimed the existence of a New World order, guided by "principles of justice and fairplay ... (and to)

²⁴ Haifa a. Jawad (ed.), "The Middle East in the new World Order", New York: St. Martins Press Inc., 1994. Emma c. Murphy, *Israeli Conflict and the New World Order*, p. 81.

protect the weak against the strong."²⁵ Bush asserted that the national interests of the US depended upon a secure and stable Gulf, and its foreign policy towards the West Asia would hence forth be based on four component paths: regional disarmament, regional security, economic development and the revitalisation of the Arab-Israeli peace process.²⁶ The last of these paths was assumed to be benefiting from the "windows of opportunity" opened by Gulf war.²⁷

The new administration had to address two new basic elements: the continuing intifada in the West Bank and Gaza, and the declaration by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in December 1988 that met the three US conditioned for opening a dialogue, namely acceptance of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, recognition of Israeli's right to exist, and renunciation of terrorism.²⁸

In fact, the role of Israel as a strategic ally, which was particularly pronounced during the Reagan presidency, was dependent upon a foreign policy perspective, which prioritised stalling Soviet ambitions in any given region. Thus, American dealt with individual states not based on their bilateral needs and demands, but in terms of their relations with Soviet needs and ambitions. Under the Reagan presidency, Syria and the PLO were forgotten by US foreign policymakers as the prime vehicles for Soviet ambitions in the

²⁵ Ibid, p. 82.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 83.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 84.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 83.

region. Israel, meanwhile, capitalized on historical, cultural and demographic ties with the West to demonstrate its value to the US as a barrier against such intrusions. The reward for Israel was enormous: 40 percent of American military aid worldwide as well as extensive economic aid and unassailable support for its activities in Lebanon and the occupied territories.²⁹

The retreat from the region by Soviet policy makers under Gorbachev enabled America to reassess its evaluation of Israel's importance to its own regional interests. It was inevitable, and made plain by the Gulf war, that Israel's relative centrality to US policymaking could be down graded to facilitate less complicated dealings with the Arab states. From 1989, Gorbachev made it clear to president Hafez al-Assad that the USSR would no longer support the goal of strategic parity with Israel promising only strategic defence capability.³⁰

For most of the former West Asian client states of the Soviet Union, the writing on the wall was clear: as the Soviet union was no longer either willing or able to buttress a rejectionist state targeted by the one remaining super power and that Syria had to seek a reconciliation with the United states. This process was already underway before the 1991 Gulf war, as Assad manoeuvred his operations in Lebanon to meet with US approval.³¹ The Gulf war provided him with a unique opportunity to demonstrate a new Syria with

²⁹ Ibid, p. 85.

³⁰ Fredrick A., Lazin and Gregory S. Mahler (ed.), *Israel in the Nineties: Development and Conflict*. Ziva Flambhaft, *Israel and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process in the 1990s*, p. 58.

³¹ Ibid, p. 58.

whom America might find it useful and possible to cooperate. Since the PLO had accepted Israel's right to exist and rejected terrorism as a legitimate tactic of the armed struggle, this meant that the most immediate enemies of Israel, Syria and the PLO, were no longer targeted by the United States.

The end of Cold war had significantly changed the policies and strategy in the West Asia. The Gulf war only one of a series of events that had severely weakened the unity of Arab world. Egypt was defeated in 1967 war and the oil-exporting states, which had different agendas, became increasingly important. The Arab response to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon was muted because of the Iran-Iraq war and Syria's support for Iran. The reaction to the American bombing of Tripoli in 1986 was also restrained. There are at least a dozen border disputes in the Arab world. The internal differences contributed to the Arab world's failure to develop unity, and other external issues.

THE MADRID PEACE CONFERENCE

The US involvement in the efforts to achieve a settlement of the conflict in the region became more active in the beginning of nineties. Soon after the Gulf crisis has ended, President George Bush proposed a four-point plan in March 1991, initiating political negotiations.³² Secretary Baker pursued a shuttle diplomacy between the concerned parties to the conflict including

³² Cobban Helena, "The PLO and Intifada", New York, *The Middle East Journal*, Spring, 1990, pp. 223-24.

the Palestinian delegation from West Bank and Gaza, approved by PLO leadership. However, the step was short of a direct involvement of PLO whose direct participation was strongly vetoed by Israel. In fact, all Israeli governments whether led by the Labour alignment or the Likud bloc, have always steadfastly refused to negotiate with the PLO Chairman Arafat recognized Israel, accepted United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and 338, and renounced terrorism.³³ After Arafat's support for Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf crisis, especially when Iraqi scuds rained over Israel, the latter's position hardened further.³⁴

The Israel insisted that there could be no discussion about the final status of the occupied territories, but rather only discussion about an interim agreement for limited autonomy for the inhabitants of the territories under continued Israeli occupation. This was and is very difficult to accept, knowing as they do that the Shamir government categorically reject any withdrawal from the West Bank now or in near future and fully intends to press a claim for Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank without granting citizenship to the Palestinian inhabitants. Indeed Shamir said that he would refuse to negotiate over the territory for peace formula advocated by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions and by the Bush administration at conference.³⁵ Asking

³³ Kathlien Christison, "Splitting the Difference: The Palestinian-Israeli Policy of James Barker, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington DC), vol. XXIV, no. 1, Autumn 1994, pp. 39-50.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 46.

³⁵ Thomas R. Mattar, "The Bush Administration and the Arab-Israel Conflict, New York: *American-Arab Affairs*, Spring, 1991, p. 57.

the Palestinian to endorse such an interim agreement was an unrealisable option.

Through a memorandum submitted to Baker in March 1991 the Palestinians expressed their readiness to negotiate with Israel a peaceful solution on the basis of UN resolutions 242 and 338, as well as other relevant UN resolutions. It declared:

We confirm our commitment to the Palestinian peace initiative and political programme as articulated in the 19th PNC of November 1988, and maintain our resolve to pursue a just political settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis. Our objective remains to establish the independent Palestinian state on the national soil of Palestine, next to the state of Israel and within the framework of the two-state solution.³⁶

However, according to Jamiel Hillal, the director of the PLO's Information Department in Tunis, Arafat initially denied permission for the Palestinians to meet again with Barker in Amman on his seventh trip because Barker's answer did not satisfy "the minimum legitimate rights of the Palestinians." Addressing the Palestine National Council on 23 September, Arafat attempted to strike a balance between a moderate and radicals by saying "we review our readiness to work with all the international parties to

³⁶ Thomas R. Mattar, "The Arab Israeli Conflict: The Madrid Conference and Beyond", New York, *American Arab Affairs*, Summer 1994, pp. 8-29.

make the peace conference success."³⁷ Adding, however, "we reject the Israeli Blackmail and the and the Israeli conditions"³⁸. He seemed inclined to compromise, saying "we are ready to remove the obstacles which continue to prevent the holding of this conference, hoping that other parties also will make the same effort."³⁹

The Palestine National Council Resolution maintained "the right of the PLO to form its own delegation from inside and outside the occupied territories including Jerusalem, and to define 'a formula to insure the PLO's right to be the Palestinian frame of reference. The resolution called for a settlement freeze." in order to start the peace process, providing international guarantees to secure that" further more the resolution called for negotiation on the issue of Jerusalem, an exchange of land for peace, total withdrawal of Israel from the territories and from the settlements, recognition of the "national rights" of the Palestinian people, the right of refugees to return or be compensated, Palestinian sovereignty over land, water, and political, economic and social affairs during any interim period of autonomy, and protection of Palestinian people" by UN or US and Soviet observers during an interim period.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid, p. 30.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 30.

³⁹ Mattar, n. 1, p. 380

⁴⁰ Muhammad Muslih, "Towards Co-existence: An Analysis of the Resolutions of Palestine National Council, Washington DC, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. XXII, Summer, 1998, pp. 20.22.

When Barker arrived in Amman on his eighth trip, Palestinian met with Barker and informed him that they could not present him with their list of delegates until the PLO central council meeting in Tunis approved the names. Indeed, Arafat has secured majority support in the PLO central council for Palestinian attendance at the conference in a joint delegation (Palestinian - Jordan) the Palestinian then presented the US with a list of fourteen Palestinians, who were not formal member of the PLO or resident of east Jerusalem or from the Palestinian Diaspora and who were evidently designated or approved by the PLO.

Thus, a peace conference was convened on 31 October 1991 in the Spanish capital, Madrid with the participation of all concerned parties and the co sponsors of USA and Russian Federation. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir led the Israeli delegation to the conference. The conference adopted a formula recognising the "term of reference" for a settlement based on the exchange of land for peace and the UN security council resolutions 242 and 338. It also called for bilateral negotiation between Israel and other Arab states (Jordan, Syria, Lebanon) and the Palestinians to work out modalities for the establishment of peace.⁴¹ It also endorsed the formation of regional, multilateral tracks involving a number of countries on refugees, water, security and economic issues. While the multilateral track began in early January 1992 in Moscow, the bilateral negotiations took place in Washington.

⁴¹ Dr. Khalid El-Sheikh, *The Palestine Catastrophe: Fifty Years since Al-Nakbah*, New Delhi, *Embassy of the State of Palestine*, 1998, pp. 135-36.

THE ARAB STATES AND PLO

Despite Israeli's uncompromising positions, important Arab states openly welcomed the peace talks arranged by Barker and urged the Palestinian to seize the opportunity. Saudi Arabia's King Fahd openly praised Barker's diplomacy and promised that Saudi Arabia would work for success of the negotiations. The Saudi daily *Riyadh* wrote "Israel and the Arabs must put away their historic enmity and resort to the logic of interests".⁴² This open support for the process expressed by the normally quiet Saudi Arabia demonstrated the increased strength of that moderate country in the post war regional balance of power. Notably, Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Washington Prince Bandar ibn-Sultan attended the Madrid conference as a Gulf cooperation council observer.

Foreign Ministers from Jordan Syria, Egypt and Lebanon met with representatives of PLO and envoys from Saudi Arabia and Morocco met the Palestinian leadership in Damascus the week before the Madrid conference. As an Egyptian official said "all of us are in agreement on the one principle, land for peace. There is no question on that matter".⁴³ The representatives also agreed to call for a freeze of Israeli settlements, to demand the return of east Jerusalem along with the other occupied territories before a peace agreement could be signed, and to "guarantee the national and legitimate

⁴² Mattar, n. 36, p. 22.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 23.

rights of the Palestinian people in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region". On 19 September, President Assad said that every dimension of the problem had to be addressed. Every Arab speaker at the opening session of the Madrid conference stressed these issues.⁴⁴

The Arab states, while supporting the Palestinian cause, were also flexible on the issue of Palestinian representation. In September, Mubarak met with Arafat for the first time since the Gulf war, and the PLO was attempting to repair relations with the other Arab states that had joined the coalition against Saddam Hussein. Arafat in particular sought to end the economic boycott imposed on the PLO by Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich Gulf States for his support for Saddam Hussein during the Gulf crisis. Following the Madrid conference Assad allowed Arafat to open PLO office in Damascus, an apparent effort to bolster Arafat vis-à-vis Palestinian rejectionists. These states had supported Palestinian participation as a joint Jordanian-Palestinians delegation.

The opportunity for Arab-Israeli peace was manifest in the willingness of important Arab states to extend de facto recognition to Israel through direct face to face negotiations despite Israel's objection of the US-Soviet and Arab interpretation that UN security council resolution 242, which stresses 'the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war' applies to the Golan

⁴⁴ Ibid,

Heights, the West Bank and the Gaza strip.⁴⁵ However, after Shamir repeated his rejection of the principles of land for peace and his refusal to negotiate over Jerusalem in an address to the Knesset in early October, Egypt's foreign Ministers Amre Moussa said, "it must be understood that without the principles of land for, peace can't be achieved. Without recognising the right of all parties to security and self-determination, there can be no peace process."⁴⁶

This thaw in PLO relations with some Arab states did not mean, however, that these states would support direct PLO participation. Nor would the United States resume direct talk with the PLO. When the PNC dropped Abu Abbas from the executive committee at its September meeting in Algiers, Arafat said that the US State Department maintained that the original conditions for resuming the dialogue had not been met and that the US refusal to talk to the PLO was now also based on PLO support for Iraq during the Gulf war.⁴⁷

NON-PLO OPTION FOR ISRAEL

Turning to the Palestinian issue itself, the formal procedural position advanced by Shamir in May 1989, has been that Israel will negotiate an interim arrangement only with non-PLO Palestinian from the occupied territories, who would be elected to negotiate with Israel. Israel made the

⁴⁵ Mattar, n. 1, pp. 35-36.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 36.

⁴⁷ Mattar, n. 36, pp. 37.

same demand about the credentials of any Palestinian it might meet under Barker's procedural plan.⁴⁸ In the aftermath of the Kuwait crisis, Israel's insistence on the exclusion of the PLO was not met with much resistance from the prominent Arab states or from the US. However, this has been a difficult position for Palestinians from the occupied territories to accept because it has required Palestinians either to get permission from the PLO or the PLO and face the wrath of the organisation's leadership in Tunis and its followers in the occupied territories.

More significant was Arafat's assertion in Cairo that the PLO would exercise significant influence over the 14-member delegation "each and every person among the Palestinian people represent the PLO."⁴⁹ On the following day in Paris, he said, "everyone knows that the Palestinians will represent the PLO" and that "every Palestinian is a member of the PLO, inside and outside the territories."

However, when Shamir unenthusiastically indicated that he would ask for the cabinet's approval to send a delegation to Madrid, Sharon called for Shamir's resignation, claiming that Shamir had 'led Israel on a mistaken path and continues to anaesthetize the public against the truly terrible dangers Israel faces.'⁵⁰ But later, Shamir soon announced, and he would himself head

⁴⁸ Yehuda Litani, *Militant Islam in the West Bank and Gaza*, *New Outlook*, (Tel Aviv), vol. 32, no. 5, 1993, p. 41.

⁴⁹ Mattar, n. 36, p. 38.

⁵⁰ Beverley Milton Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine*, London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1996, pp. 155-57.

the Israeli delegation to Madrid. A spokesman, Ehud Gol, insisted that "this decision was based on the desire to give the utmost importance to the process" and accused the Arab heads of state of avoiding the highest level contact with Israel, although the state department had issued invitations to the foreign ministers, not to the heads of state.⁵¹

The Palestinian track had yielded no result despite ten rounds of hard negotiations and extensive pressure from US. The failure of the Madrid format land compelled the newly installed Labour government led by Yitzhak Rabin to explore alternative option and hence the Oslo process.

THE THIRD PARTY MEDIATION

The secret talks between Israel and the PLO began in late 1992 with the active encouragement of Deputy Foreign Minister, Yossi Beilin who enjoyed the backing of Shimon Peres. At first, Rabin showed little interest but throughout mid-1993, considerable steps were taken in the negotiation process, which changed his mind. Indeed, Rabin was in favour of peace but he was not sure on how to reach it.⁵² A new tactical shift changed the three "Nos" of Israeli foreign policy: 'no' to direct talk with the PLO, "no" to a Palestinian state, "no" to bartering land for peace.⁵³ In mid-1993, it became

⁵¹ Mattar, n. 36, p. 37.

⁵² Bulent Aras, Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process since Oslo: Reality or Dream?, New Delhi, *Strategic Analysis*, 1996-97, pp. 155-75.

⁵³ ISRAEL-PLO Declaration of Principles in Washington DC, 13 September, 1993 (Washington DC), *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, Autumn, 1993, pp. 115-21.

clear that the only Palestinian body, which was capable of reaching an agreement with Israel, was the PLO.

The secret negotiations were sustained by delegations in direct contact with Rabin and Peres in Jerusalem and with Arafat in Tunis. Norway hosted the parties during the secret negotiations. The Norwegian head of government and Foreign Minister both played an effective and reconciliatory role in the secret talk.⁵⁴ Initially, the talks began on economic cooperation but later were extended to establish a framework for a comprehensive agreement. The key player of the negotiation, two Israeli academicians and the treasurer of the PLO, Abu Ala. Away from the glare of the public eye and political pressure, they established a conceptual framework for the Israeli-PLO accord.

The failure of the tenth round of the Washington negotiation became the landmark of progress in the secret talks. All together after 15 sessions held over an eight month period, the parties reached a decision on mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO, and provided a limited government in the Gaza strip and Jericho.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Mausallam, Al Mausallam (ed.), *The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait: Saddam Hussain, his State and International Power Politics*: London, Westview Press, 1996.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 222.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION

Despite all its limitations and ambiguities, the declaration of principles on interim self-government arrangement for Palestinians in the Gaza and Jericho marked a major breakthrough in the century old conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine.⁵⁶ The declaration of principles was signed on the South lawn of the white house and sealed with the historic handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

It had been negotiated in Oslo and initiated there in late August. The "Oslo accord" is therefore a more fitting name for the historic document than the "Washington accord". The accord in fact, has two parts, both of which were the product of secret diplomacy in the Norwegian capital. The first part was mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO. It took the form of two letters, on plain paper and without letterheads dated 9 September but signed by Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Rabin respectively on 9 and 10 September. The second part, the declaration of principles (DOP) set on agenda for negotiations on Palestinian self-government in the occupied territories, beginning with Gaza and Jericho.⁵⁷

Nearly all the publicity focused on the signing of the declaration of principles but without the prior agreement on mutual recognition, there could

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 116.

⁵⁷ Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles in Washington DC, 13 September 1993, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington D.C), Vol. 23, no. 1, Autumn 1993, pp. 115-21.

have been no meaningful agreement on Palestine self-government.⁵⁸ In his letter to Rabin, Arafat observed that the signing of the declaration of principles marked a new era in the history of the West Asia. He then confirmed the PLO's commitment to recognize Israeli's right to live in peace and security, to accept united nation's security council resolutions 242 and 338, to renounce the use of terrorism and other acts of violence, and to change those parts of the Palestine National character which are inconsistent with those commitments. In his terse, one sentence reply to Arafat, Rabin confirmed that in the light of those commitments, the government of Israel had decided to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the representative of the Palestinian people and to commence negotiations with the PLO within the West Asia peace process.⁵⁹ Rabin in a statement made at the signing of the letter to Arafat noted that this was first agreement between the Palestinians and Israel, "its an historic moment" he said, "which hopefully, will bring out an end to 100 years of bloodshed, misery between the Palestinian and Jews, between the Palestinian and Jews".⁶⁰

The declaration of principles (DOP) contains a set of mutually accepted general principles for the five year Interim period. The aim of the declaration of principles is defined in article 1 as -

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 22.

⁵⁹ Avi, Shlaim, *The Oslo Accord (Washington D.C)*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. XXIII, no. 3, Spring 1994, p. 26.

⁶⁰ PLO-Israeli Letters of Mutual Recognition, Tunis and Jerusalem, of September 1993, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington DC), vol. 23, no. 1, august 1993, pp. 114-15.

among other things, to establish a Palestinian interim self-governing authority, the elected council for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaze strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years. It is understood that the Interim arrangement was an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 and 338.⁶¹

The declaration of principles covers two stages: an interim stage and a permanent status stage. The first is supposed to last five years.⁶² Negotiations on the permanent status are to begin no later than at the beginning of the third year of the interim stage.

PALESTINIAN VISION OF STATE

An independent and sovereign state is the ultimate political objective of the Palestinians. They hope that it will be secular and democratic based on universal suffrage, free elections, a multi-party system and with a basic guarantee of civil and human rights. One Palestinian respondent articulated this vision in the following manner.

⁶¹ Dajani Burhan, *The September - Israeli-PLO Documents: A Textual Analysis*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington DC), vol. XXIII, no. 3, Spring, 1994, p. 9.

⁶² *Ibid*, pp. 8-10.

The establishment of a Palestinian state is the ultimate objective of the Palestinian struggle. The stage will come about in a gradual and incremental manner, not overnight. Because of their suffering and their persecution by the Israeli occupation authorities. The Palestinian will insist that this state be truly democratic based on multi-party system, free election and freedoms. These are not mere wishes: they constitute the absolute minimum for the establishment of a visible state.⁶³

The political settlement involving Palestinian sovereignty and independence can be reached, but the most urgent is not the security realms, but in the realm of economics.⁶⁴ In order to survive, the new Palestinian state will have to establish a whole range of economic and political relations with its immediate neighbours, namely Israel and Jordan as well as Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq and the Gulf countries.

Mohammed Rabie, suggested that the creation of a West Asian economic community that would serve as a "vehicle to facilitate regional cooperation, enlarge the potential export markets of all states, consolidate a rich and fragmented economic base, and lead ultimately to economic integration and the creation of a common market."⁶⁵ In addition, he recommends the creation of a West Asia conference on security and cooperation modelled after the European conference and whose task would

⁶³ Foud Moughrabi, Ela, Zureik, Manual Hassassin and Aziz Haidur, *The Palestinian on the Peace Process*, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Washington DC), vol. XXI, no. 1, Autumn, 1991, pp. 36-53.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 37.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*,

be to "share and develop the regions water resources, settle border dispute among its members, and the arms race and reduce military spending, and address questions of the rights of minorities and ethnic groups".⁶⁶

In short, European political integration is based on an institutional framework for interplay among sovereign states. The single international European market underpins this integration pattern economically. This model of integration seems to be most promising for the Arab states to emulate, if honest and serious efforts at redefining 'Arabness' were to be taken. In fact, the lessons of the past four decades like conquest, occupation, and colonization by Israel, have taught the Palestinians that unless democratic practices are implemented "at every level of daily life in the home, in schools, offices, and factories" the Palestine will never progress and achieve the destiny.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 38.

CONCLUSION

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After nearly four decades of confrontation between Arabs and Israelis, the problem of the Palestinians remained the greatest obstacle blocking progress toward resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The emergence of a more independent PLO leadership, the growing international interest and support for the Palestinian cause, forced many Israelis to recognise that there was indeed a Palestinian problem that required resolution.

For Palestinians, the establishment of Israel and displacement of refugees created a legacy of bitterness and new social, economic, and political realities that would had a profound impact on the way they looked at Israel, the world and themselves. Unlike European Jewry, Palestinian were not confronted with physical extinction but threatened by the loss of their identity. Thousands of refugees and their children became alienated, embittered, and dependent on Arab regimes that treated them with a mixture of suspicion and contempt.

Out of this environment came a militant and radical Palestinian national leadership determined not only to regain their land and self respect but to correct wrongs and injustices their people had suffered. Creating a new sources of identity and a national movement for displaced, fragmented and dispirited community required an ideology that was maximalist, revolutionary and one that would motivate a younger generation to regain their self respect

and pride, and direct their energies against Israel as well as those Arab states and international forces that had betrayed the Palestinian cause.

The idea of armed struggle has been a key ingredient in Palestinian ideology and strategy since the 1950s. Indispensable as it has been in mobilising Palestinian ranks and gaining credibility within the Arab world, it has never been an effective weapon against Israel. While guerrilla and terrorist activities made the PLO a factor in the West Asian equation. They were never able to further Palestinian goals by forcing Israel to cede territory or to effect a shift in the political/military balance that would have resulted in an effective Arab war coalition or great power support capable of forcing Israel to meet Palestinian demands. The PLO's capability to shell and rocket northern Israel - its most effective military weapon to date - produced an Israeli invasion of Lebanon that has weakened the PLO militarily and politically.

By the mid 1970s, the PLO's leadership, primarily under Fatah's direction, began to show signs of flexibility in its approach toward a negotiated solution. The post- 1973 war situation created new political realities that the PLO wanted to exploit and King Hussain seemed interested in a US brokered West Bank settlement. At the 12th session of the PNC in 1974 and again in 1977 resolutions were adopted that seemed to lay the groundwork for Palestinian acceptance of a state on the West Bank and Gaza should the

prospects for negotiation arise. However, the Camp David accord of 1978 and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty did not resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Politically, the Palestinians have fared much better against Israel. From a marginal organisation entirely dependant on Arab support, the PLO has emerged as a key player recognised by most Palestinians, Arab states, and much of the international community as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians. The PLO has had remarkable success in impressing the international community with the importance of the Palestinian issue and the centrality of its own role in any solution of has some form of diplomatic recognition in more countries than those that recognised Israel.

The eruption of the intifada engendered major changes in international politics relating to the West Asia and to the Palestinian future. Despite the tension between Arafat and Arab heads of state, those leaders with close ties with the United States worked to restore contacts with the PLO leaders and to encourage steps towards dialogue between Arafat and Washington. In November a meeting of the PNC in Algiers declared the existence of 'the state of Palestine with its capital in the holy Jerusalem'. In addition the PNC announced its readiness to negotiate with Israel on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338 under the aegis of an international peace conference, with the condition that mutual recognition occurred, that Israel recognised Palestinian right also.

The intifada and the Gulf war of 1991 played a major part in the Madrid peace conference with Palestinians forming a joint team with the Jordanians. Finally on 13 September 1993, both parties reached an agreement through secret negotiations conducted through the good offices of the Norwegian government and entered into the Oslo process with the intension of seeking a political and negotiated settlement to the conflict between Arabs and Jews.

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