STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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STRATEGY FOR A MIDDLE EAST PEACE – IS THE U.S. ACTING IN ITS OWN BEST INTEREST?

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Strategy for a Middle East Peace - Is the US Acting in Its Own Best Interest?

Michael A. Phillips
SSCF'98

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Abstract

The United States is not acting in its best interest with respect to Israel and the Middle East peace. Congress and many government officials have stated that Middle East peace is a vital national interest, yet the legislative and executive branches of government act to undermine the peace process through unconditional support for Israel and its policies.

This paper uses the National Security Strategy (May 1997) and the pronouncements of state Department officials to outline US interests in the Middle East. Actions taken or not taken to advance the peace are then examined as well as the stated rationale for these actions and policies. As the examination unfolds, two things become clear: the US is acting to undermine justice for the Palestinian and peace in the region, and Israel is a pariah nation that violates every value that is the ethos of America. Israel is what we teach our children to abhor; a country that practices genocide and has no respect for the basic human rights of others.

Six national interests are examined in making this evaluation: 1) the free flow of oil at reasonable prices; 2) the security of Israel and our Arab allies; 3) stability in the region; 4) combating terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction; 5) promoting democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law; 6) and enhancing business opportunities for American companies. The United States has the ability to achieve each of these interests and also to secure these interests, but chooses to jeopardize them by allowing Israel unrestrained latitude in dispossessing the Palestinian Arabs. The United States acts to marginalize the international community who seeks to force Israel to act like a responsible member of the global family. In doing so, the United States compromises its national values, its global leadership and its vital interest in the Middle East.

This paper also seeks to explain to some degree why the Congress and the Executive are united in their support for a country that so flagrantly violates human rights, international law and the sovereignty of its neighbors. The explanation is bureaucratic inertia and the power of the pro-Israeli lobby.

Finally, the author offers some actions the United States could and should take to advance the peace process and to provide justice for the Palestinians. These recommendations are within the capability of our government, but currently there is no will to implement them. That is because our relationship with Israel is based upon myth perpetuated by our government officials and the pro-Israeli lobby. Implementing the right and just policy would mean admitting the lies we have told ourselves for decades. It is not likely to happen. Still, our national interest and justice in the peace process have a basis in the truth. Without it we are destined for another "fire in the world's tinderbox."

Michael A. Phillips

Introduction

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Thomas Pickering declared in July of 1997 that, " . . . if Congress is right in stating that [Middle East] peace is vitally important to the U.S., it also means that the government should use all the means at its disposal to further the prospects of peace."[1] Yet with all the power of the US today the peace process is near total and complete collapse. This impending collapse threatens US interests in the region. These interests have remained virtually unchanged over the years. The US desires are for: stability in the region, security for Israel and US Arab allies, and the free flow of oil at reasonable prices from the Persian Gulf.[2] Former Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Robert H. Pelletreau, in a statement to the House International Relations Committee included three additional items calling these and those previously outlined as crucial national interests. They are: combating terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction; promoting democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law; and enhancing business opportunities for American companies.[3] Yet while US interests in the region remain constant, the political and geostrategic realities have changed. It is this change and the US response or lack of response to change that threatens the peace. This paper is intended to examine this changing relationship and the US role in the Middle East peace process as it relates to US national interest. It addresses the following issue: Is the US pursuing its national interest in the Middle East? The framework for answering this question will be the National Security Strategy. The evaluation will identify the inconsistencies between US policies and government actions. Finally, if Middle East peace is truly in US national interest, what actions should the administration and Congress take to move the peace process forward to secure US regional goals.

Israel was key to US interests in the Cold War years as a western foothold in the Middle East holding back the spread of Soviet influence in the region. While the US policy toward Israel has remained constant, the regional importance of this state to the US has diminished. Nonetheless, Washington maintains Cold War level support to Israel ignoring the geopolitical/geostrategic reality eroding US-Arab relations in the process. It was the increased level of co-operation and confidence between the US and its Arab allies following the Gulf War that made the peace process possible as well as the containment of Iraq and Iran, two threats to regional stability.

Iraq's threat to other nations in the region has been checked by Gulf War losses and UN supervised destruction of warmaking capability. Given the opportunity, it is likely that Sadam Hussein would result to violence to challege rival Iran or other neighbors for Arab leadership, Kuwaiti oil or to strike at Israeli or American targets. Given the current level of military strength, Iraq would most likely have to use cheap and easily produced waepons of mass destruction such as biological weapons. Delivery of such weapons may be problematic.

Iran threatens stability through sponsorship of terrorist groups and the spread of radical Islam. Despite recent overtures to the United States by a moderate president, it is unclear that Iran has changed in its hostility to Israel and the US. Iran has resisted Arab peace with Israel and has supported terrorist acts such as the four 1996 bombings from February to March that killed 65 people. The intent of this terrorism was to derail the peace process and some believe to facilitate the election of Benjamin Netanyahu, known to be against giving land for peace. They remain a threat to stability in the region.[4]

Both states are held in check by a US presence in the Gulf region and by sanctions imposed by the UN. US policy makers have decided that "dual containment," where the US would pit itself against the two potential regional powers instead of pitting them against each other, was the best policy following the Gulf War. Bases and a substantial presence in the gulf are key elements of this policy are only sustainable through continued strong relationships with our Arab allies.[5] Finally, the strong and newly important US-Arab ties, renewed US pressure on Israel for peace and the absence of the threat of spreading communism all played a role in altering the regional reality making peace negotiations possible.

Changing Geostrategic Reality

Two events in the 1990's have changed the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict and ushered in the chance for a settlement between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The fall of communism and the Soviet empire removed the perceived threat of spreading Soviet influence in the Middle East. Israel's importance as a military ally against that threat was eliminated. The unified Arab coalition that stood with the US against Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War further diminished Israel's importance as an ally in the region. The strength of the Arab coalition could do what Israel could not; stop Iraq, ensure the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf and provide basing rights; a US forward presence to insure continued stability in the region.

The changing reality precipitated a realignment of priorities for the US. Once the Gulf War was concluded the priority for the Bush administration was an Arab-Israeli peace. President Bush used this window of opportunity to pressure Israel. The new importance of Arab allies to the US, fatigue from the Intifada and Israeli isolation and the lack of a US-sponsored role for Israel in the region following the Gulf War, helped Israeli leaders decide to negotiate for peace with the PLO. Additionally, the arrival of SCUD missiles from Iraq during the Gulf War made it clear to Israeli leaders that control of the Occupied Territories could no longer assure security for Israel.[6]

The PLO for its part had backed Iraq during the Gulf War. This mistake cost the PLO dearly as most Arab nations, but especially Saudi Arabia, withdrew their economic support of the Palestinians. The PLO needed to regain some momentum for its cause and needed access to the US, the only superpower in the region. For these and other reasons, Yassir Arafat agreed to recognize Israel and its right to exist and to enter into negotiations with her government. These necessary political accommodations brought on by the changing geostrategic reality ushered in the peace process.[7]

Although the Bush administration was ready to push the Israelis and the Palestinians to pursue peace, the Clinton administration has seemingly taken a different tack. Initially focused on a more domestic agenda, the administration seemed to take a hands off approach to the peace process during the first term. This is not to infer that Middle East peace was not important. Instead the focus for the administration was on domestic issues and trade. The words of President Clinton's inaugural address made clear his intent. "We must invest more in our own people, in their jobs, in their future, and at the same time cut our massive debt."[8] The second-term administration became more involved in sustaining the peace process and the US mediating role in attaining progress. Despite a failing peace and growing intransigence, Washington embraced a policy of full support for Israel in the form of foreign aid, assistance with military technology and diplomatic and political support. Support for the Palestinian cause received little more than verbal backing. The Palestinians were actually dealt several severe blows to include a House of Representatives vote to move the US embassy to Jerusalem followed by a Senate Foreign Relations Committee agreement to provide US$100 million to accomplish the task.[9] While Washington minimalized the accelerated pace of Israeli settlements, they also

withdrew promised economic aid through such as the "Saxton amendment" to the House foreign aid appropriations bill which cut off financial support to the Palestinian Authority for a time and made restoration of that aid contingent on receiving complex and periodic presidential report on Palestinian compliance on a series of issues.[10]

The forcefulness of the Bush administration brought the two antagonist together. The accommodation of the Clinton administration toward the Israelis has allowed the Likud government to continue their policy of "land instead of peace." The Clinton administration's policy is essentially the Cold War approach to a post-Cold War problem. This policy of "business as usual" equates to allowing and supporting Israel's expansionist policy in the West Bank and Gaza and doing so in the context of a US sponsored peace process. This despite an agreement to use UN resolutions 242 (calling for the unconditional withdrawal from area occupied by Israel following the 1967 War) and 338 (calling for the implementation of UN resolution 242 following the 1973 War) as a basis for the peace process and the Oslo Accords.[11] An examination of the National Security Strategy and the US policy goals can assist in the determination of the effect of these policies on the US national interest.

[1] Thomas Pickering, "U.S. Policy in the Middle East," Remarks to the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee, Washington D.C., 28 July 1997. Available on the world wide web at www.state.gov.
[2] William S. Cohen, Annual Report to the President and Congress, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), p.4.
[3] Robert H. Pelletreau, "Developments in the Middle East," Statement before the House International Relations Committee, 25 September 1996. Available on the world wide web at www.state.gov.
[4] Kenneth Katzman, Searching for Stable Peace in the Persian Gulf, (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1998): (9-10).
[5] Kenneth Katzman, Searching For Stable Peace In The Persian Gulf, (Carlisle, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1998) p 6-14.
[6] Mohammed Sid-Ahmed, "The Specific Meaning of Peace in the Middle East," in The Middle East and the United States, A Historical and Political Reassessment, ed. David W. Lesch (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p. 268-69.
[7] Charles D. Smith, Pallestine and the Arab - Israeli Conflict, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996) p. 311-313.
[8] President Clinton's Inaugural Speech is available on the World Wide Web at: [http://library.whitehouse.gov/cgi-bin/web...TE+%23<>+19930119+19930130%29%29&use_hyp=].

[9] Rachelle Marshall, "The U.S. Lends a Hand As Israel Revives Old Hostilities," The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs vol. XVII (October/November 1997): p 9, 83-84.
[10] Shirl McArthur, "Interim Middle East Report Card on the 105th Congress," The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs vol. XVII (December 1997, p 16-17.
[11] The text of the cited United Nations resolutions is found in Arab-Israeli Conflict and Conciliation, ed. Bernard Reich (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), p 101, 116.

Chapter 1. The National Security Strategy and US Interest in the Middle East.

"Our responsibility is to build the world of tomorrow by embarking on a period of construction - one based on current realities but enduring American values and interests."[1]

President Bill Clinton

In the preface of the National Security Strategy, President Bill Clinton outlines three core objectives and the implementing strategies to achieve these objectives. The core objectives are based on the belief that America's domestic strength and global leadership are essential to advancing a safer more prosperous America. These three core objectives are: to enhance security with effective diplomacy and a strong military, to bolster America's economic prosperity, and promote democracy abroad.[2]

The President also outlines his strategic priorities which advance the core objectives. These priorities are more regionally oriented especially with respect to Europe, the Pacific, Latin America and China. There are three implementing strategies laid out in President Clinton's 1997 State of the Union Address and reiterated in the Security Strategy document, that are applicable to the Middle East. They are: "continue America's leadership as the world's most important force for peace; create more jobs and opportunities for Americans through a more open and competitive trading system that also benefits others around the world; increased co-operation in confronting new security threats that defy borders and unilateral solutions."[3]

These implementing strategies are intended to achieve US interests in the Middle East. In section III of the National Security Strategy document entitled "Integrated Regional Approaches," the following outlines US interests in the area:

The United States has enduring interests in pursuing a just, lasting and comprehensive Middle East peace, ensuring the security and well-being of Israel, helping our Arab friends provide for their security, and maintaining the free flow of oil at reasonable prices. . . The United States - as an architect and sponsor of the peace process - has a clear national interest in seeing the process deepen and widen to include all Israel's neighbours.[4]

Pursuing US Interests

Currently, the US is achieving limited success in pursuit of its interests in the Middle East. Thanks to the new technology available for locating and extracting oil, there is currently an abundance of oil driving prices to market lows not seen recently. Oil at prices below US $21 a barrel is cheaper than bottled water.[5] Additionally, this new technology puts nations outside OPEC on a competitive level with the once dominant cartel. The US for example no longer depends on OPEC oil primarily and gets most of its imported oil from countries outside the Persian Gulf.[6] Given the dependence of the Gulf states on oil revenues and the availability of cheap oil throughout the world, the free flow of oil will not be hampered by market conditions or unilateral action by oil producers in the near future.

Arab nations in the region are also secure. Since the Gulf war, the major antagonist in the region, Saddam Hussein, has been defeated and most of his weapons of mass destruction have been destroyed. Seven years of UN sponsored sanctions has left the Iraqi leader weakened and unable to menace his neighbours. Continued containment of this regional threat depends, in part, upon the US ability to obtain bases and maintain a forward presence in the area of the Gulf.

There is growing concern on the part of Arab allies about the US presence in the region. The increasing influence of Islamic extremists and general frustration with the US role in the stalled peace process has undercut initial support for an American presence in the Gulf. Gulf states are also concerned about the suffering inflicted on the Iraqi people by continued UN sanctions. US willingness to support sanctions against Iraq and a lack of will to force Israel to live up to their agreements with respect to the Palestinians, undermines Arab support for US regional presence. Should the Gulf states decide to revoke US basing rights, there could again be a threat to our Gulf partners and perhaps the free flow of oil.[7] Additionally, extremist Islamic groups have begun to gain political and religious influence in many of the moderate Arab states. These groups advocate violence and could act to destabilize the Arab regimes in the Gulf and Northern Africa. Should these groups obtain substantial success, co-operation with the United States could cease or degenerate, security of the Arab regimes and Israel may be threatened and the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf could be affected.

The failing Middle East peace process has already begun to erode previous achievements in the region. When the United States moved in 1998 to take military action against Saddam Hussein for his lack of compliance with UN inspection teams, there was no international or Arab coalition willing to join the US effort. Arab nations were unwilling to support the US because UN sanctions imposed heavy suffering on Iraqi civilians. To the Arabs the United States seemed to be playing by a double standard. The US was willing to bomb Iraq for violating UN sanctions, but would not take any action against Israel for ignoring the international community and UN resolutions. At the same time, the US was unwilling to pressure Israel to abide by the agreements made in the Declaration of Principles and the Oslo Accords. In addition to voting against the Security Council who sought to sanction Israel for continuing settlements in the Occupied Territories despite the agreements in the Oslo Accords, the US continues seemingly unconditional support for any action the Israeli government may take with respect to the peace process.[8]

The peace process is key to maintaining the support of the moderate regimes of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Egypt and others. These Arab states are key for providing bases for the US military. As the US military presence around the world diminishes, forward basing in areas where the US and their allies perceive eminent danger is necessary to protect US interest and assist friendly nations.

US inability to move the process forward undermines its leadership in the region. More than just a blow to US prestige, a failed peace gives extremist Islamic movements a wedge issue for making political inroads. Anti-Israeli and anti-US elements could bring back violence in the form of terrorist attacks. The effect of this action would destabilize the region and undo decades of effort to build trust among the Middle East nations and Israel. The status quo is unacceptable to the Arabs who perceived a terrible injustice being done to the Palestinians at the hands of the Israelis with the support of the United States. Failure to advance peace can only be bad for Israel and the United States.[9] Richard Haas, Director of Foreign Studies at the Brookings Institution, put it more simply, "A successful peace process lubricates other US relationships in the Middle East and Persian Gulf; a failing process pours sand into the gears."[10]

Flaws in the Process Threaten Success

What action is truly in the best interest of the United States? Without some kind of miraculous recovery, the peace process is dead. It cannot be resuscitated in its current form. The

peace process is based on a foundation with multiple flaws, the most important of which is a lack of political will on the part of the Israeli government. Additionally, the negotiations were established to function on a bilateral basis. However, the US sponsored Declaration of Principles (DOP) and the subsequent Oslo Accords were not made between equal negotiating partners. Israel has all the power and the Palestinians have no cards to play save one; the Intifada. That card can only be played when the failure of the peace process is complete.

The Madrid and Oslo Accords are flawed in many other ways too. Although it is clear from the beginning that the Palestinians intended to achieve self-determination, the vaguely worded agreements have given Israel great latitude to claim legal authority over the Occupied Territories by maintaining the military government, continue subversion of the Palestinian economy and final authority over the kind and amount of autonomy that may eventually be granted to the Palestinian Arabs.[11]

The illegality of the Israeli occupation and the rights of the Palestinians are enshrined in the UN resolutions and decades of international jurisprudence. Therefore, basing negotiations on Resolution 242 made the illegal occupation by the Israelis self-evident according to the Palestinians. So to, the Palestinians saw the settlements as illegal and invoked Security Council Resolution 682, which declared unanimously in 1991 that the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War applied to the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian delegation insisted on linking the concept of an interim period of negotiation to an Israeli decision to come to terms with Israel's legal status with respect to Gaza and the West Bank. However, Israel's view of jurisprudence, which has no basis in international law, saw the occupation as a non issue. For the Palestinians this was the principal issue. Israel violated the spirit and letter of the agreements interpreting them in terms which allowed them to continue and expand the occupation under the guise of a peace agreement. This was essentially the end state of the Madrid negotiations in 1993 leading up to Oslo.[12]

The Declaration of Principles (DOP), proposed by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, included three elements which provide the context for the PLO-Israeli agreement. The first element implied that Gaza and the West Bank were "disputed" rather than occupied territories implying that Israel has a claim to the land also; there was an absence of any reference to the exchange of land for peace; and finally, the Palestinians were required to agree beforehand

that all matters relating to sovereignty were outside the scope of the negotiations in the interim phase. Jerusalem, expanding settlements and land issues were deferred for years under this context.[13]

Because Israel was not required to admit she was an occupying power, some scholars believe that UN resolutions 242 and 338 have been reduced to matters of negotiations between the parties effectively legitimizing the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Political analyst Noam Chomsky believes the Palestinians are being offered something "similar to apartheid" of early South Africa.[14]

This distinctly Israeli agenda undermines the legal status of Arabs in the occupied territories. Secretary of State Christopher's January 1997 "Letter of Assurances" to Prime Minister Netanyahu, issued in conjunction with the Hebron Accords, changed US policy by implying that the West Bank and Gaza were "disputed" not "occupied" territories. This assurance further undermined the Palestinian cause and their power to negotiate in their interest. The letter ". . . essentially made the enforcement of UN resolution 242 dependent upon 'Israel's security' as determined by Israel alone."[15] This provides some explanation why the Israeli Prime Minister always speaks of "threats to Israel's security" and that Israel alone will "determine its security needs," despite Israel's relatively secure environment.

The concept of security is key. The Palestinians see security as assured by removal of the occupying forces. Israel defines security as allowing the Palestinian police force to take over civil control in the population centres while Israel maintains the military occupation and controls the external borders, movement in the West Bank and Gaza, and the areas surrounding the Jewish settlements. Under Oslo, as interpreted by the current government of Israel, Israel has essentially tightened the noose of occupation while repackaging it for public consumption.[16]

United States interests in the Middle East are served by peace. The framework for peace was designed around building confidence between the antagonist. Through gradual implementation of withdrawals and concessions on policing of violence, trust and confidence would grow until resolutions could be established for the many issues. However, in a process where the "honest broker" (Washington) clearly favours the antagonist with overwhelming power to force their own solution (Israel), there is little incentive for compromise. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's startling admission that the administration had "adapted its policy" to

Israel's Likud government meant that the US would allow Israel to interpret Oslo as though, . . . "Israel's responsibilities were optional and those of the Palestinians mandatory."[17] This approach undermines the foundation of the peace process and US interests in the region.

[1] The White House, A National Security Strategy for the New Century, (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, May 1997) p. i
[2] The White House, A National Security Strategy for the New Century, p. i.
[3] The White House, A National Security Strategy for the New Century, p. 2.
[4] The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, p 26.
[5] Peter Coy, Gary McWilliams and John Rossant, "The New Economics of Oil," Business Week, (3 November 1997): p142.
[6] Coy, McWilliams and Rossant, "The New Economics of Oil," p. 140-144.
[7] A brief discussion of dual containment and the strategy in the region is provided by Hans Binnendijk, "Focus on the Middle East," in Joint Forces Quarterly, (Autumn 1995): (5-6). Additionally, Secretary Cohen's report notes the importance of dual containment for protecting US interests, other states and their citizens.
[8] William Pfaff, "The Decline of the New Rome Has Begun," The International Herald Tribune, 21-22 February 1998, p. 6.
[9] William Quandt, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict in the 1990's: Prospects for a Settlement," in Riding the Tiger: The Middle East Challenge After the Cold War, ed. Phebe Marr and William Lewis (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) p. 98-99.
[10] Richard N. Haas, "The Middle East: Making Oslo Work," Brookings Policy Brief No. 19, (June 1997) p. 2.
[11] Naseer Aruri, "Oslo's Muddled Peace," Current History vol 97 (January 1998): (8-10)
[12] Aruri, "Oslo's Muddled Peace," p. 7-8.
[13] Aruri, "Oslo's Muddled Peace," p. 8.
[14] John Dirlik, "Chomsky Labels Oslo Accords 'Triumph of U.S. Indoctrination System'," The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Vol. XV (December 1995): p. 30, 82.
[15] Naseer Aruri, "US Role in the Peace Process Part I: From Madrid to Hebron," Middle East International. This paper was presented as part of a symposium titled, "Honest Broker: the US and the Middle East," and is available on the world wide web at: http://salom.org/policy/aruri/.html. Accessed 21 April 1998.
[16] Aruri, "Oslo's Muddled Peace," p. 8-9.
[17] Augustus Richard Norton, "Clinton's Middle East Legacy: A Scuttled Peace?" Current History vol. 97 (January 1998): (3).

Chapter 2. Pursuing Security for US Allies in the Region.

Israel's Security Myth

The state of Israel has never been more secure. In 1997, Abba Eban, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Relations and Defence Committee, surprised a group of Jewish intellectuals from the United States when he declared, ". . . Israel has never been more secure against external menace than it is today, or more vulnerable to domestic folly."[1]

Since the late 1970's there has been peace between Egypt and Israel, albeit a cold peace at times. The presence of a peacekeeping force in the Sinai and the proven political will of the Egyptian leaders rules out Egypt as a combatant in the near future. Jordan signed a comprehensive peace with Israel in 1994. Relations have never been more cordial between these two nations. Syria has not signed a peace treaty with Israel but Syria has political and military entanglements in Lebanon and could not muster the forces necessary to engage Israel militarily. Iraq too has no real capability to threaten Israel. Saddam Hussein has been literally defanged by the UN sanctions following the Gulf war and will be many years rebuilding his country and his military once the sanctions are lifted. Most Arab nations have recognized Israel's right to exist and have in fact opened channels of commerce with Israel. Regional co-operation while not perfect was at its peak in the mid 1990's.[2]

Given Israel's military posture and the lack of credible enemies in the region at present, what are the security risks to Israel? There are no risks to the state of Israel, only the risk to individuals who may be subject to violence directed at civilians. This violence is normally in response to some Israeli action which is perceived by the Palestinians to be an extension of the Zionist policies of denying Palestinians their land, basic human rights, self-determination and sometimes their right to life. One could surmise that violations of the agreement to pursue peace in accordance with UN resolutions 242 and 338 is the greatest threat to Israel.

The peace process is the key to Israel's security and the success of this process will have an impact on US ability to protect its Arab allies and ensure the free flow of oil. The inevitable result of a failed peace process is a renewed and more violent Intifada; literally an uprising. Should this occur, the Intifada will most probably usher in instability in the region, political

internal instability in some Arab states and the resurgence of terrorism against Israel, the US and its interest.

It is the concept of security that is Benjamin Netanyahu's justification for inaction in meeting Israel's obligations under the Oslo Accords, namely the redeployment of the Israeli Defence Force from the West Bank. Given Israel's military hegemony in the region, their exclusive possession of nuclear arms and the inability of any Arab country or coalition to threaten Israel, it is hard to see what security is insured by control of the West Bank or Gaza.

The land for peace formula is problematic for a Likud government. The ideology of the Likud party is the return of Judea and Samaria; the biblical names for the territory encompassed by the West Bank. The West Bank and Gaza, according to the Likud party, cannot be relinquished. This is the true motivation behind the accelerated pace of bulldozing homes and creating and expanding settlements. For Likud to turn their back on this policy and give land for peace would be destructive to the party.

"It is doubtful whether the Likud is humanly capable of trading territory for peace, thereby signing its own political death sentence. Furthermore, the Likud party tends to identify the defeat of its policy with the defeat of Israel, rather than its own extinction."[3]

Netanyahu's policies and that of his government are fraught with security problems for Israelis. The Israeli government policy of dispossessing and displacing the Arabs perpetuates the hatred, increases Palestinian hopelessness and invites violence and Islamic extremism. In certain areas the policy is one of ethnic cleansing. For the Palestinians to accept Netanyahu's current policies is suicide for the Palestinian nation.[4] The Palestinians most probably will not vanish to accommodate a growing Israel and therefore have no choice but to resist their destruction or subjugation. The security problem, partly of Netanyahu's making, will most certainly be a return to violence on the part of the Palestinians as they seek basic human rights and self-determination. There can be no other alternative for the Palestinians. They cannot sit idly by and accept the death of their culture and the loss of their homeland. In the current regional context a renewed Intifada is assured.[5]

Increased frustration and hopelessness on the part of Palestinians makes way for radical Islam and increased support for groups like Hamas, Hezbollah and the Islamic Jihad. Much of

this hopelessness is due to the deplorable living situation in the Occupied Territories brought on by border closings, economic subservience to Israel, and continued confiscation of land. Many Palestinians blame the Palestinian National Authority and Arafat for policies that placate Israel and the US. It is in Israel's and US interests to facilitate some political success for the Palestinian government if they are to keep Islamic radicals from making major political gains.

According to the Institute for National Strategic Studies, "Agendas [for radical Islamist groups] will be centred on domestic political issues - reforming the political infrastructure, gaining power, implementing Islamic law, ensuring the new laws conform with Islam, and gaining influence over decisions affecting the economy and education."[6] Improving domestic conditions could help keep radical groups from gaining power. Israel has the power to improve conditions in the West Bank and Gaza without harming the Israeli economy. In fact, I will present evidence later that will show that Israel could benefit substantially from a healthy economy in the West Bank and Gaza.

These radical Islamist groups are seen by many as the only alternative to the current government which most blame for failing to improve the Arab condition. Judith Yaphe, Visiting Senior Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies, offers five factors shaping this view: 1) loss of faith in Arab nationalism; 2) dashed economic expectations; 3) generational time shift; 4) 'surfing the net' by dissidents; 5) changing face of the security threat.[7]

Many of these factors could be mitigated by perceived Arab success in the peace process and the resulting regional economic success. The Palestinian Authority's ability to manage the spread of radical Islamist influence is directly related to success in the peace process. In the United States, crime seems to go down in those times when the unemployment is low and the economy is doing well. In a time of less than 5 percent unemployment, major US cities are reporting a decrease in violent crime. Likewise, Palestinians find it easier to support their leaders when they have jobs, education, freedom of movement and feel a sense of dignity in their existence. Or as stated in the Strategic Assessment 1997, "The degree to which this support [for the Palestinian Authority and Arafat] expands depends on the perception of immediate dividends from the peace process such as economic prosperity, movement toward Palestinian statehood, and withdrawal of Israeli security forces."[8]

Radical Islam has an increased appeal when frustration, uncertainty and confusion exist in Islamic society. Given Israel's current position with respect to the Palestinians, can the spread of radical Islam be avoided? Given that the spread is not limited to the Occupied Territories and the view of these radicals toward Israel, what does this mean for Israel's future? I would submit that Israelis will be less secure given the current trend. As radicals make political inroads, Arab regimes will be destabilized and their ability to cooperate with Israel and the United States will be hampered. Terrorist groups could resume their violence against US and Israeli targets around the world. Terrorist could even target shipping or oil infrastructure in the Persian Gulf. At a minimum, there will be renewed violence. Worst case, there will be an all out war against western influence that has served to humiliate, dispossess and destroy the Palestinian Arab and by extension the people of Islam. The current Israeli policy only serves to undermine the US stated interest of stability in the Middle East, security of Israel and US Arab allies and the free flow of oil from the Gulf at reasonable prices.

A Palestinian State Enhances Security

In addition to being the moral and practical thing to do, Israel should actually seek a Palestinian State. Such a state could enhance Israeli security by undermining the legitimacy of terrorists, blunt Palestinian irredentism and limiting the already improbable Arab coalition attack in Israel.

Most of the conventional terrorism to which Israelis have been subject was intended to motivate Israel to withdraw form the Occupied Territories. Achieving this political purpose would stop that type of terrorism. There is also the extreme radical terrorists who seek to destroy the peace process and ultimately Israel itself. Their cause would undermine the legitimacy of the Palestinian State who would have no choice but to crush such a move. Evidence of this is the agreement of the Palestinian Authority to cooperate with Israeli security forces following the suicide bombings in March of 1996. There were no suicide bombings for a year following that agreement until Netanyahu's government decided to build new Jewish housing in Arab East Jerusalem. The failure of peace sparks terrorism while progress toward peace undermines its base of support and legitimacy.[9]

Israelis have long been concerned about a Palestinian State on its borders whose people long for a return of all of Palestine. Such an action should Arafat and his people be granted a

state, is not likely but also cannot be taken as a matter of faith. Provided the area granted encompasses most of the West Bank and part of Jerusalem as its capital, it is most likely that Palestinians would never be able to challenge Israel for more land. Geographically, Israel will surround Palestine on three sides with one of the world's most powerful armies. Palestine will never be able to challenge because they will not be allowed nor will they have the resources to build an army of equal capability. Arab neighbors of both Israel and Palestine will ensure this as it is in Jordan and Syria's interest to check Palestinian irredentism. As a condition of statehood, Palestinian leaders would be required to accept its new borders as permanent and denounce any claim to areas outside these boundaries. Finally, an international peacekeeping force, such as the one in the Sinai could be stationed along the borders to ensure compliance with any treaties or agreements between the two states but especially arms limitations and external invasion. The creation of a properly designed Palestinian state would greatly enhance Israel's security by removing the incentives for terrorism and other provocations of the Israelis to avoid reoccupation, defining clear political borders between the Palestinians and Israelis and create a buffer state between Israel and other potential adversaries beyond Palestine. Finally, Palestinians would have a vested interest in the peace and a vested interest in opposing Arab rejectionism. Israel would certainly gain international support throughout the world and a national peace of mind.[10]

[1] Amos Elon, A Blood-Dimmed Tide, Dispatches from the Middle East, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 121.
[2] Louis A. Delvoie, "The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Is It History?" in Behind the Headlines, vol. 55 (Autumn 1997): (12-15).
[3] Yehoshafat Harkabi, "Arab-Israeli Conflict at the Threshold of Negotiations," in The Struggle for Peace: Israelis and Palestinians, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Mary Evelyn Hocking (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992): p. 252.
[4] Muhammad Muslih, "History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," in The Struggle for Peace: Israelis and Palestinians, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea and Mary Evelyn Hocking (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992): p. 68-69.
[5] Jack Katzenell, "Arafat Threatens New Uprising," The Washington Post, 13 February, 1998, p .
[6] Judith S. Yaphe, "Islamic Radicalism: Shifting Approaches to Power but Not to Islamic Goals," Strategic Forum No. 104 (February 1997): (p. 2).
[7] Judith S. Yaphe, "Islamic Radicalism and the Arabian Peninsula," Strategic Forum, No. 67,

(March 1996): (p. 3).
[8] "Middle East Radicalism" in Strategic Assessment 1997: Flashpoints and Force Structure, ed. Hans Binnendijk, Patrick L. Clawson (Washington DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, 1997), p. 171.
[9] Jerome Slater, "Netanyahu, A Palestinian State, and Israeli Security Reassessed," Political science Quarterly vol. 112 (Winter 1997/98): (680-682).
[10] Slater, "Netanyahu, A Palestinian State, and Israeli Security Reassessed," p 681-689.

Chapter 3. The Multilateral Working Groups - Creating New Markets and Business Opportunities

Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Samuel (Sandy) R. Berger, laid out the second term foreign policy agenda in March of 1997 to members of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies. One of the goals he emphasized was to "build a new, open trading system for the 21st century."[1] Berger, in reiterating the points laid out by President Clinton in his second State of the Union address, pointed out that we develop jobs at home by nurturing markets abroad. Integration is the process by which nations join and benefit from the economic and technological revolution of the 21st century. The job of the United States, according to Berger, is to open markets globally sharing the growth and not turning our backs on it.[2]

The Arab world represents a market of more than 200 million people, a disproportionate number of whom are young; teenagers or young adults in their twenties. This group is already consumers of some American goods and services with a potential for greater or less consumption depending on political and market development. Not surprisingly, the oil giants have substantial and important investments which are a key element of a growing global economy as long as oil remains reasonably available and inexpensive.

US corporations have significant investments in Arab countries and especially the Gulf region, an area where US influence is affected by the ups and downs of the peace process. Should political entanglements and diplomatic failures lead the US to take unilateral action against certain Arab countries, there is also the potential to hurt other American overseas business interests. As an example, legislation such as the Helms-Burton Amendment of 1997 calls for sanctions against countries doing business with Iraq and Iran. These countries represent important markets and investment for some European countries. Any attempt by the US to prevent Allied countries from doing business with them will likely invite retaliation against American business interests elsewhere overseas.[3] A failing Middle East peace has the potential of inhibiting progress in normalizing relations with Iran and Iraq because of perceived injustice toward the Palestinian Arabs. Therefore, it also has the potential to damage American business interests in the region and the world.

The US has invested in Israel as well, but this market represents just over 4 million people. Additionally, Israel is an expensive partner for which there is limited direct return with respect to the foreign aid budget. Because of political commitments, Washington expends more of its foreign aid on Israel than any other country in addition to sharing technology and subsidizing military development and arms production.[4]

There is an opportunity for regional co-operation which has been tested briefly and proven to have the potential to integrate the entire region on a series of potentially volatile issues. The co-operation demonstrated a possibility to develop similar institutions such as those that integrate the nations of Europe. However, continued co-operation is predicated on peace between Israel and her Arab enemies, but primarily peace with the Palestinians.

The opportunity for regional co-operation was born out of Madrid in 1991 as the Multilateral Working Groups (MWG). This forum was developed with four aims: to foster support for the bilateral negotiation by engaging Israel and its Arab neighbours in discussions of topics considered non-political but of mutual concern. Secondly, the political motive was to draw other Arab nations from the Persian Gulf and Northern Africa into the peace process without involving them in the direct negotiations. Thirdly, the planners hoped to provide stability based on the development of regional relations and institutions focused on co-operation instead of competition. Finally, the intent was to provide a basis for confidence building to encourage future regional development.[5]

In a region not known for the ability of state players to co-operate, there was a period of dramatic success. The results of initial meetings were so encouraging that participation was expanded to include the European Union and the United Nations. Despite the very rocky beginning of the bilateral negotiations at Madrid in 1991, 36 parties including 11 Arab states and Israel attended the first multilateral organizing session in Moscow in January 1992. Extra regional parties that attended became "gavel-holders" for the working groups. The European Union chairs the working group on economic development (REDWG); Japan chairs the environmental working group; Canada leads the refugee working group; and the US chairs the water working group; and co-chairs with Russia the group on arms control and regional security (ACRS) and the steering group.[6]

Most US policy makers did not believe that there would be much success on the multilateral front. However, it was this aspect of the peace process that convinced, then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir that the risk for peace was worth taking. The Multilateral track was, in the view of US Secretary of State Baker, an opportunity to enhance Israeli's legitimacy in the Arab world and a way to facilitate its political integration.[7]

It accomplished both prior to the election of Netanyahu and the current government. The multilateral negotiations progressed even when the peace process faltered. Arab and Israeli elite had a forum for continuous interaction even when the bilateral talks halted. Where there was no recognition or interaction before, the multilateral negotiations fostered and sustained for a time a relationship between Arab and Israeli elite. Finally, the agreements of the working groups became the conceptual blueprint for future bilateral accords. As evidence of this, language from some of the working groups was adopted directly into some of the later developed bilateral agreements.[8]

The multilateral co-operation today suffers as a result of Netanyahu and his Likud government's policy of scuttling the peace process. Halting the peace process through ignoring Israeli commitments and continuing to build settlements, Netanyahu has also scuttled multilateral advances. Progress in the bilateral process is the enabling condition for the multilateral success. Once the politicians begin to advance peace, the non-political issues with which the working groups deal, become the ground work for an enduring peace. The regional multilateral dimensions of peace and security, in all their aspects, are essential for the long-term durability of any Arab-Israeli settlement.[9]

The most recent Middle East North Africa (MENA) Economic Conference was held in November of 1997. Begun in Casablanca in 1994, this gathering is an annual event which comprises Arab nations and Israel primarily, but also includes all nations interested in investing in the economic development and infrastructure projects in the region. The summit is key to building a democratic open market in the Middle East and to creating the economic institutions to support it. It is also intended to integrate Israel into the region economically.[10] Although it was not cancelled in 1997, some of the key players like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco boycotted the meeting in Dohar, Qatar. Those that did attend sent their lowest level representatives as a matter of protest. This is another example of the eroding success of achieving US national interest.

President Mubarak of Egypt, made his decision to boycott following Israeli and Palestinian talks in Washington which failed to move the peace process forward. Mubarak made clear his reason for the boycott in an announcement to the Democratic Party in Cairo. "The aim of an economic conference is to build co-operation between Israel and the Arab community, and this is linked to progress toward peace."[11]

The success of the program was evident during the period from 1992 through 1996. Although US Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian declared that most multilateral participants saw the working groups as win-win, it was clear that Israel was the biggest winner. [12] In 1996, inflation in Israel was at 5 percent, half of the 1993 level. Growth was at 7 percent. The per capita income of US $15,600.put Israel on par with the most Western European countries. By 1996, Israel had a modern economy linked to the global transformation of capital, labour and trade markets. With the almost universal declaration of an irreversible peace process, foreign concerns more than tripled the annual amount of capital invested in Israel. This increase was facilitated, in no small part, by the multilateral track of the peace process.[13]

There is evidence that Israel will benefit substantially from a prolonged peace as well. Israel has the human capital so important in the information age. This human capital has already brought Israel economic ties from the Pacific region and Europe. The one impediment to unprecedented growth is the incessant threat of violence and the continued closed relations that Israel practices with Jordan and the Palestinians. These practices and the failing peace process have lead Arab nations to reinstate the Arab boycott of Israel. The best evidence of this is the limited and downplayed participation at the Doha Economic conference in November 1997. The Tehran Conference held in December of that same year, further demonstrated the level of Arab frustration with the policies of Israel toward the Palestinians. In Tehran the Muslim world passed a resolution declaring that Israel was a terrorist state and that she should cease building settlements on Arab land. More than the pronouncements themselves, Israeli action seemingly united the Muslim world against it, something Arab leaders have had great difficulty doing previously.[14]

The Arab boycott has serious effects on the Israeli economy. Dr. Atif Kubursi, a professor of economics at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada, estimated that the dismantling of the Arab boycott is worth about US$40 to $70 billion in annual investment in the

Israeli economy.[15] According to Steve Yetiv, a research affiliate at Harvard's Centre for Middle East Studies, growing prospects for peace were behind the increased investment in the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange which amounted to US$44 billion in 1993. The top 100 stocks rose 21 percent as compared to the Dow Jones increase of only 13 percent.[16] This kind of increase in capital would open world markets and render US aid to Israel unnecessary. The benefit that Israel could enjoy has been amply demonstrated since 1993 with the partial relaxing of the Arab boycott in support of multilateral negotiations. Israel needs interaction with major international companies in order to benefit from the global revolution in information and technology. It is precisely these types of multinational companies who have been deterred by the instability in the region and the Arab boycott. Israel will be a prominent place to trade and invest should peace become a reality and the region become more integrated.[17]

US businessmen and companies could benefit from an open and integrated Middle East market. In commenting to the Middle East/Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association (MEMTTA), one of the multilateral sub-organizations, Robert Pelletreau, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, pointed out that one-thousand participants from 60 countries world-wide attended the economic summit in Amman, Jordan in October 1995. The conference helped expand private sector investment and encourage regional co-operation and development.[18] For the first time Israel was sitting with Arab countries on an equal basis exploring solutions to common regional problems and co-operative arrangements. This was a boon for international business.

The US government could do more to open the Middle East market for US businessmen. Sanctions against Iran, technology and military armament project transfers to Israel cost US businesses jobs and profits. An open Middle East market means greater access to more than 200 million consumers and an increase in tourism and trade. In the years between 1992 and 1996, the multilateral working groups developed plans for hundreds of potential investment opportunities in areas from tourism to infrastructure development. Unconditional and seemingly automatic support for Israel's continued occupation and virtual annexation of Arab land thwarts this opportunity to open this important market further and develop regional stabilizing institutions in support of an global market economy.

Although the Arab boycott has been reinstated as a result of Netanyahu's policies, Israel continues to enjoy economic well being in 1998. There is talk that it is in Israeli's best interest to end the US subsidies by the year 2000.[19] However, this presupposes that the economy will continue to grow despite a failing peace process. Should the peace fail, Israel may not have sufficient economic strength to sustain the military occupation and economic growth together, especially without substantial US aid.

The multilateral track will only advance if the bilateral talks are successful. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, led many of the Arab countries in a boycott of the US-sponsored economic conference in Doha, Qatar, 9-12 November 1997. One Egyptian official stated they would not attend the conference, "unless Israel demonstrates a commitment to peace with concrete measures, such as suspending the building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank."[20] Another official stated,

> We have extended our patience in the hope that something might happen. But for businessmen to get together and for an economic conference to succeed, you need a climate. This is not a photo op. This is not a psychological massage. This is why Egypt will not be attending. The climate has been poisoned by Mr. Netanyahu and his government.[21]

It is elementary that prudent foreign investors will not invest in a country or region destabilized by war and terror or where regional barriers impede return on investment. In fact, during early February '98, Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, met with the Israeli government to discuss EU investment in Palestine. This investment represents in excess of US $2 billion since 1994.[22] The EU believes that their wider economic and security interests are being undermined by a deadlocked peace process and that Israel is largely to blame. Israel's security demands and extended border closures negate EU efforts to develop the Palestinian economy and to gain a return on their investment. Although Netanyahu has not made clear how investment and development such as the airport in Gaza or the planned seaport puts the Palestinians in a position to threaten Israel, he continues to apply severe measures such as closing borders and restricting the movement of labourers and goods. These restrictions have destroyed the Palestinian economy, severely damaged industries and stopped altogether economic development in the Arab territories.[23] If Israel continues to colonize the Palestinian economy and spoil the efforts of the EU and others, investment will cease and Israel and the Palestinians will be the losers. The EU goal of turning the entire Mediterranean region into an area of stable

economic development with Israel as one of the 12 Mediterranean partners will not happen as envisioned. This potential arrangement is in Israel's best interest and grasp because it is intended to forge cultural, political, security and economic links.[24] Israel's subjugation of the Palestinians via the economy is not in their best interest. More importantly for the US businessmen, this does not enhance business opportunities and develop new markets for themselves or their allies; a national interest outlined in the National Security Strategy.

The resulting wasted investment on the part of governments and private businessmen is not small. The EU invested US $1 billion in the Occupied Territories in 1992 alone. This is more than four times the amount of investment in the following four years, the dwindling amount due mostly to Israeli interference. This investment was intended to be the basis for a Palestinian state economy. Instead of growth, Palestinian unemployment has more than doubled to 42 percent and per capita income has dropped 35 percent.[25] The Palestinians are worse off now than when the peace process began. They have all the elements to build a better solid economy especially if Israel agrees to integrate rather than subjugate the two economies. What the Palestinians truly lack is co-operation from the Israeli government.

The EU has begun to create the infrastructure for Palestinian economic improvement. There is an airport in Gaza and there are plans for a seaport as well. Israel has ensured that the airport remains closed and the construction on the seaport remains blocked. Since Israel controls all the borders to which the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza have access, there can be no movement of goods and services without Israeli acquiescence. Indications are it is not forthcoming. Israel continues to control land and water in all but approximately 3 percent of the West Bank. Additionally, Israel has split the West Bank and Gaza into separate economic units with no interrelationship breaking an already small economy into even smaller units. The majority of economic restrictions imposed by Israel during military occupation continue to apply and cannot be modified or repealed by the Palestinian National Authority.[26] Therefore there can be no economic or industrial development for the Palestinians. As a result, Israel continues to control Palestinian independence and well-being. The occupation continues despite the claim that Israel has granted autonomy to the Palestinians.

Even when Israel seeks to help the Palestinians, they do so at the peril of the Arabs and on Israel's terms. Israel has pursued a policy of making Gazans and their industries dependant on

Israel for markets. In the case of flowers, sardines and oranges, Gaza must depend on Israel to import cans for their sardines or they must export through Israel to get flowers and oranges to market. While some jobs are created , Gazans must pay taxes to export their goods, compete with Israelis who receive subsidies, and are subject to an Israel first policy. In effect, Gaza cannot compete, must pay what Israel demands and are subject to import quotas or border closure which can destroy an industry that is time sensitive such as cut flowers. This occurred in March of 1997 when Netanyahu closed the border devastating the carnation industry in Gaza.[27] Clearly the terms of Gaza's restructured relationship are intended to serve Israel primarily. Gaza may reap some limited economic benefit, but not on Gaza's terms and certainly not in Gaza's best interest.

It is hard to believe that Gaza, which is physically separated from the West Bank and does not have an army, threatens the security of Israel. It is more probable that the Israeli government wants the Gaza economy to be dependent on Israel so that Israel can continue to control the people of Gaza and their well being. There can be no sovereignty for the Palestinians when they have no control of their economy or the resources that support it. This is another form of continued occupation while appearing to be complying with the peace accords.

Another look at the Gaza situation provides proof of Israel's efforts to maintain the occupation. The promise of limited autonomy in Gaza does not alter the asymmetric power relationship between Israel and Gaza. It only reshapes and redesigns the occupation. The economic fundamentals of occupation remain the same. The Arabs of Gaza are no less a prisoner now than they were when Israel practised a full military occupation.[28] In the absence of sovereignty for Palestinians, Israel remains responsible for international agreements. Gaza must negotiate through Israel for access to international markets. Israel still refuses to cede decision-making authority over land, zoning and water indicating Israel's intent to maintain economic control over Gaza.[29]

What the Israeli policy does not allow is Palestinian control over the economic resources necessary to develop an independent and thriving economy. Israel has established an impoverished colonial system where the economic growth in Gaza and the West Bank is - linked to and at the whim of - Israel. Palestinians are dependant on Israel for the goods necessary to make their limited economy work. Then they must depend on Israel for access to outside markets and must pay fees and taxes which handicap their goods in competition with those of Israeli

producers. The Palestinian economy can only succeed and grow if Israel wants it to. Therefore, the economic future despite autonomy, will look just like the Palestinian economic past.[30]

Israel has more to gain from regional co-operation and eventual peace than they have to lose. Territorial compromise is less risky than in the past and all the signs are that peace will bring unprecedented investment and growth to the Israeli economy primarily and other Middle East economies secondarily. This growth is partly fuelled by regional integration which can only happen when peace between the Israelis and the Arabs is a reality. This integration must include Syria and Lebanon as well as the Palestinians if it is to succeed. Along with greater economic integration comes greater security by virtue of mutual benefit and co-operation. According to Steve Yetiv, "Peace will generate economic interaction between Israel and other actors, which will yield Israel significant short-term material gains and longer-run influence." He adds, "Israel can then protect its welfare better and increase its sense of security."[31]

[1] The text of this speech is available on the World Wide Web at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/speeches/032797speech.html].
[2] From the text of Berger's speech as noted above.
[3] Stephen C. Pelletiere, "Middle East," in World View: the 1997 Strategic Assessment from the Strategic Studies Institute, ed. Earl H. Tilford, Jr. (Carlisle, Penn.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1997), p 63-64.
[4] Shirl McArthur, "Administration Requests 1999 Foreign Aid Increase and Full Funding for Israel military and Economic Aid," in Washington Report on middle East Affairs, vol. XVII (April 1998): (24-28).
[5] Joel Peters, "The Pathways to Peace: The Multilateral Arab-Israeli Peace Talks, (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996), p. 5-7.
[6] Dalia Dassa Kaye, "Madrid's Forgotten Forum: The Middle East Multilaterals," The Washington Quarterly, vol. 20 (Winter 1997): (176-186).
[7] Kaye, "Madrid's Forgotten Forum: the Middle East Multilaterals," p. 172.
[8] Kaye, "Madrid's Forgotten Forum: The Middle East Multilaterals," p. 172-174.
[9] Peters, "The Pathways to Peace: The Multilateral Arab-Israeli Peace Talks, p. 7.
[10] An explanation of the MENA Conference and its importance can be found in testimony given before the House Committee on International Relations, 25 September 1996, by Robert H. Pelletreau, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. The text of the speech is available on the World Wide Web at: [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nea/960925.html].
[11] John Lancaster, "Cairo Snubs U.S.-Backed Trade Talks," The Washington Post, 12 November 1997, p. A1.
[12] Speech by Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Edward P. Djerejian, printed in Department of State Dispatch, 4, (11 October 1993) p. 696.

[13] Jim Hoagland, "Bibi's Choice," The Washington Post, 1 June 1996, p. A29.
[14] Egypt led a boycott of the Doha Conference, aimed at forging economic ties between Arabs and Israelis. See John Lancaster, "Cairo Snubs U.S.-Backed Trade Talks," The Washington Post, 12 November 1997, p. A1. For a discussion of the Tehran Conference see Douglas Jehl, "Muslim Leaders Unite to Denounce Israeli Terrorism," The International Herald Tribune, 12 December 1997, p. A1, A10.
[15] Janet McMahon, "Palestine, Israel and the Middle East: The Economics of Peace," The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, **vol**. (December 1995): 13, 84.
[16] Steve A. Yetiv, "Peace, Interdependence, and the Middle East," in Political Science Quarterly, vol.112 (Spring 1997): (37).
[17] Yetiv, "Peace Interdependence, and The Middle East," p 29-38.
[18] Robert H. Pelletreau, "The Promise of Peace and Regional Cooperation in the Middle East," speech made to the Committee of the Americas Division, Middle East/Mediterranean Travel and Tourism Association, New York, 31 May 1996. Available on the US State Department Web Site at http://www.state.gov/www/regions/nea/960531.html.
[19] David R. Francis, "US Aid to Israel: Will it Shrink?" in The Christian Science Monitor, 20 April 1998, p. 1, 10.
[20] Lancaster, "Cairo Snubs U.S.-Backed Trade Talks," p. A1.
[21] Lancaster, "Cairo Snubs U.S.-Backed Trade Talks," p. A1.
[22] Reginald Dale, "In Mideast, Don't Forget the Economy," International Herald Tribune, 20 February 1998, p 13.
[23] Barry James, "EU-Israeli Talks Focus on Aid to Palestinians," The International Herald Tribune, 6 February 1998, p. 4.
[24] Dale, "In Mideast, Don't Forget the Economy," p 13.
[25] James, "EU-Israeli Talks Focus on Aid to Palestinians," p. 4.
[26] Sara Roy, "The Palestinian Economy after Oslo," Current History, vol. 97 (January 1998): 919-25).
[27] Sara Roy, "Separation or Integration: Closure and the Economic Future of the Gaza Strip Revisited," The Middle East Journal, vol. 48 (Winter 1994): (11-30).
[28] Roy, "Separation or Integration: Closure and the Economic Future of the Gaza Strip Revisited," p. 30.
[29] Roy, "Separation or Integration: Closure and the Economic Future of the Gaza Strip Revisited,": p. 30.
[30] Roy, "Separation or Integration, Closure and the Economic Future of the Gaza Strip Revisited,": p. 30.
[31] Yetiv, "Peace Interdependence, and The Middle East," Political Science Quarterly, vol. 112 (Spring 1997): (29-38).

Chapter 4. Terrorism versus the Colonial Struggle

There has been terrorism in the Middle East, but it is not the exclusive property of the Arabs as popular movies, TV shows or novels would have us believe. We do not define terrorism in our National Security Strategy but it is safe to say that we normally apply this term to our enemies, the enemies of our allies, but never to our friends. The Department of Defence definition of terrorism is:

> The calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological.[1]

Benjamin Netanyahu ventures to define terrorism this way: ". . . terrorism is the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political purposes."[2] With this definition, Netanyahu has described Israeli violence against Palestinians as well as Palestinian violence against Israel. Palestinian and Arab violence against Israel is well know since it receives substantial coverage in the media. What is less well known is the violence Israel perpetrates against the Arabs.

The massacre at Deir Yassin in 1948 made the declaration of a state possible because it was the event that so terrorized the Palestinians that they were either forcibly removed or fled under duress leaving a majority Jewish population to claim the Arab homeland for itself.[3] The pursuit of a "Greater Israel" which includes the West Bank and Gaza is an ideological one. No one can deny that a military occupation with land confiscation, random arrests and torture is not intended to inspire fear and intimidate and coerce the Arab society to give up their own nationalism. Israel's military occupation fits both Netanyahu's and the US Department of Defence definition of terrorism. A discussion of terrorism is necessary because it is terrorism that Netanyahu says Arafat must fight, the defeat of terrorism that is a US vital interest and the understanding of the concept of terrorism in the Middle East that is the rallying cry to unite the American electorate against the Palestinian.

While there is certainly terrorism in the Middle East, the term is normally used to label any violent act perpetrated by the Arabs. It is never used in the US media to describe an Israeli act of violence. Yet, in the context of a colonial struggle, violence on the part of the Arabs can be justified. "The principle of 'armed struggle' derives from the right of resistance accorded

universally to all peoples suffering national oppression."[4] There is no argument that the Arabs are the indigenous people of the area that encompasses Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. There is no dispute that they are being dispossessed by the settlement of Jews in land that is claimed by Orthodox Jews based on religion, but not recognized as such by the international community. Since the Jews are not the indigenous people and they seek to settle or control the land of Gaza and the West Bank at the expense of those who live there, the battle for this part of the Levant can and should be characterized as a colonial struggle.

The Middle East expert Meron Benvenisti characterizes the situation this way:

> . . . what could be more colonial than the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip? A country occupies a territory that is not its own, settles its [Jewish] citizens there, monopolizes its natural resources, and creates economic dependency based on exploitation of the natives' cheap labour and on a market that protects the industrial output of the mother country. This colonialism is enforced by an army of occupation from the mother country, and it persists so long as the mother country can impose its rule."[5]

There is truly no other way to characterize this situation. The Jews have no true claim to the land of Israel, at least no more than Christian or Muslim. The Romans expelled the Jews some 2000 years ago. Of the 5000 years of recorded history, the Jews have ruled ancient Palestine for only about 600 years. It does not follow that the Jews have claim to the land in perpetuity especially considering the Arabs and other nationalities have occupied the land for greater periods of time.[6] What legitimate legal right to the land can the Jews claim?

The Palestinian right to resist is embodied in International law and the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) (adopted 8 June 1977). This Protocol essentially says that armed conflict is legitimate when a people are fighting against a colonial domination, alien occupation and against racist regimes in exercising the right of self-determination.[7]

How should the Palestinians respond to Jewish settlements, the destruction and confiscation of Arab homes, human rights abuses, illegal imprisonment and torture? The Palestinian Arabs have no ability to resist militarily. Civil disobedience results in arrests, torture, border closings which means economic destruction, no emergency medical care and generally greater oppression and suffering for the Arab inhabitants. To give in is to cease to exist and to resist is to be labelled a terrorist. The result for Palestinian Arabs is frustration, disillusionment and a search for answers. The answer is in many cases radical Islam and violence.

Against whom should the Palestinian strike? Israel uses Jewish civilians as a tool to dispossess the Arabs of their land. Essentially, Jewish settlers are a weapon in the struggle for Palestine. They use the civilian population to justify military forces in the area and to terrorize the local Arabs in the hope of driving them off. For example, the Jewish population in Hebron is somewhere between 300 and 400 in a city with more than 100,000 Palestinians. After the Hebron protocol signed in January 1997, Shuhulda Street, a main thoroughfare in the heart of Hebron closed since October of 1994 because an Israeli settler gunned down 29 Palestinians, was to be reopened. The US renovated the street at a cost of US $2.5 million. The centre of the city is protected by the military and no Palestinians are allowed in. The majority of the population is required to take a sequitious route to transit the city or go to the market.[8]

Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem routinely terrorize an orphanage in an effort to rid the area of its Arab inhabitants. The head of the orphanage, Mahira Dajani described a gauntlet of settlers uttering filthy words and making lewd comments at students arriving for school. Signs are erected with skull and cross bones on the outside gate where rotten fruit and bottles are thrown. Israeli soldiers have chosen to stand at the front of the school creating a siege mentality. The intent is, of course, to force students and teachers to flee so the land can be confiscated.[9]

Other modern day terrorism includes the bulldozing of homes, closing of borders which results in denial of medical care and the ability to work, and the killing of unarmed workers at border crossings. The current military occupation is designed to slowly cut off population centres and deny a people the ability to move freely between population centres. They become confined to little "bantustans." In this way, the Israelis can make movement to schools and work difficult or impossible. Goods may have difficulty getting to market and daily interaction and exchange among towns becomes demanding or impossible. This form of occupation denies a people the ability to be a society and it too is terrorism.

When rock throwing children, whose rights are being violated, protest by throwing rocks at their jailer, Israelis answer with bullets. When soldiers killed two unarmed Arab workers and wounded two others in an apparent miscue between border guards, army Major Uzi Dayan explained that the soldiers acted "according to regulations" in opening fire with automatic weapons. When Palestinian youths protested with rocks the next day, 36 were wounded by soldiers firing live ammunition.[10]

Terror has been a weapon of Israel since the turn of the century even though the Israelis would have us believe it is an Arab invention. Irgun was a very effective terrorist organization that killed without regard to nationality targeting British, Arab and Jew alike. Many prominent Israeli leaders began their political career as members of Irgun. Menacham Begin and Yitzhak Shamir are perhaps two of the most prominent. These as well as other terrorist have been honoured with high ranking government positions, or a stamp series for Zionist heroes approved by the Israeli Cabinet in the early 1980's. Included in the series was Shlomo Ben-Yosef, a man hanged by the British for firing on an Arab bus and murdering Lord Moyne in 1944. A final insult to the Arabs and honour to Israeli terrorist includes a festival held in Deir Yassin in April 1948, one year after Begin's Irgun army murdered 250 Arabs there. In 1980, the remaining ruins of the town where removed so an Orthodox Jewish settlement could be established. The streets were named after the Irgun units that perpetrated the massacre.[11]

The US Role in Supporting Israel's Terrorism

There is plenty of evidence of US complicity in Israel's terrorism. Israel invaded Lebanon in the summer of 1982 under the pretence of responding to PLO attacks on northern Israel. In fact, Israeli defence minister Ariel Sharon had been planning an attack on West Beirut for the purpose of destroying the PLO leadership. Israel used the 3 June 1982 attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador to London as justification for their attack. Although British and Israeli intelligence agreed that the attack on the ambassador was the work of Abu Nidal, a group sponsored by Iraq, the Israeli leadership was not concerned about the facts since they now had the justification they needed to for aerial attacks on Lebanon and suspected Palestinian positions. These attacks were designed to provoke Palestinian shelling of northern Israel. When the PLO complied, Israeli leaders convinced the Knesset that this was justification for a limited invasion into Lebanon. Sharon however, had always planned to attack Beirut to destroy the PLO and Yassir Arafat and to engage the Syrians.[12]

The US was aware of Israel's plans. Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, had been informed as early as October of 1981 by Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel's intent to move militarily into Lebanon.[13] The US remained involved throughout the invasion as evidenced by Haig's approval of the tactics of aerial attacks and indiscriminate bombardments of West Beirut in order to pressure Arafat to leave Lebanon. The civilians killed in these attacks

were not always Palestinian and many were civilian.[14] In the end some fifteen to twenty thousand people, mostly civilian, died as a result of the Israeli invasion, an invasion planned and executed because the PLO was abiding by the rules of a cease fire and becoming a political impediment for Zionist aspirations.[15]

The Palestinians had gained credibility and Arafat had gained control over the many PLO factions. His ability to sustain the US brokered cease fire between the PLO and Israel undermined the goals of leaders like Sharon and Begin who wanted to ensure that the PLO was not around to participate in further peace negotiations. What the Israeli leadership wanted and needed was a PLO that has many unruly factions who carry out random bombings and acts of terrorism throughout the world. This would undermine their political legitimacy not enhance it like the current disciplined approach taken by Arafat. Israeli leaders needed this kind of PLO to avoid future political accommodations. To evade a political settlement, the Israeli government required a PLO that resembled a wild gang of murderers to mobilize the Israeli electorate in hatred and disgust.[16]

The US was a willing partner in this unjustified attack on Lebanon. She later became an indirect partner in the terrorist attacks on the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla. Despite a US brokered cease fire, Israeli troops returned to Beirut on 15 September following the assassination of the newly elected Lebanese president. The Palestinians had withdrawn leaving the city unprotected. Sharon authorized the Maronite Christian forces into the Sabra and Shatilla camps on 16 September to conduct "mopping up" operations. Forty hours later, as many as 1000 people had been murdered, most of them women, children and old men. The international community was united in its condemnation of Israel. The UN Security council passed two strongly worded resolutions criticizing Israel. The Arabs and Palestinians blamed the United States who had guaranteed the safety of the unprotected civilians following the withdrawal of the PLO from Beirut.[17]

In the aftermath of this brutal attack, US policy seemed to shift from one of proclaimed neutrality to one which supported continued Israeli control of southern Lebanon. A US brokered Israeli-Lebanese agreement was signed on 17 May 1983 calling for Israeli's withdrawal conditional on Syria's commitment to the same. Syria had been excluded from the talks and the agreements. This agreement essentially left Syria without a voice in Lebanon while giving Israel

control through proxies. The agreement resulted in sniping at American positions and a June bomb attack on the American embassy. When the Israelis withdrew from the Shouf Mountains overlooking Beirut, American marines became more exposed and vulnerable to Druze military action. The White House ordered naval bombardment on Druze positions. The Druze responded by bombing the marine barracks killing 241.[18]

This was deemed the US as a terrorist attack. This is hard to justify since US forces were on the sovereign soil of Lebanon and the US was engaged in the fighting there. Certainly from the Arab perspective this was a justified attack on a combatant and characterized more accurately as guerrilla warfare. Any reasonable interpretation of international law would support this conclusion. The invasion was a violation of the UN Charter Article 4(2) which prohibits conquest as a method of acquiring title to territory.[19] However, the massacre at Sabra and Shatilla was certainly a terrorist operation although not characterized that way by Israel and the US. The invasion itself was justified under false pretence and the killing of civilians many of whom were not Palestinians was not deemed to be a terrorist act. US support for Israel's actions before and during this war is indisputable. What may not be clear is the degree to which the US supported the barbaric nature of this invasion. Nonetheless, the US was at least an unwitting accomplice and at most a partner to state sponsored terrorism and violations of international law.

The Israeli attack on Tunis in 1985 was another attempt to kill Yassir Arafat. Again, Israel justified this illegal act as a legitimate response to a 'terrorist attack.' The Israeli attack killed 20 Tunisians and 55 Palestinians. This attack was allegedly in response for the murder of three Israelis in Cyprus even though the assailants were captured and tried for their crime. The target in Tunis was an undefended vacation resort with dozens of homes and cottages. The PLO headquarters was in the midst of the vacation homes and indistinguishable from the other buildings. US support for this attack was also apparent with the presence of the Sixth Fleet and an extensive surveillance system in the region. Although aware of the attack the US did not inform the Tunisian government who accepted Arafat following the Palestinian evacuation from Lebanon and at the behest of President Reagan.[20]

If these violations of national sovereignty, the massacre at Sabra and Shatilla and the occupation of Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza fit the definition of terrorism, isn't the United

States guilty of complicity to terrorism in the least and active participation in terrorism at the worst?

In December 1997, the Muslim world united for a conference in Tehran. The conference was unprecedented in its attendance. The 55 member Organization of the Islamic Conference adopted a joint declaration demanding that Israel stop building settlements on Arab land. They also criticized Israel for its "state terrorism." Sentiment for affixing the terrorism label grew from the bungled assassination attempt of a leader of a militant Islamic group in the Straits of Amman, Jordan. This conference was significant in that it brought together moderate and fundamental Muslim some of whom are friendly to the US. There was bitter debate over issues such as the Middle East peace process and sanctions against Iraq. In some cases there was no consensus for a joint declaration. What was clear is that Israel's actions are viewed as terrorism and the US and Israel have certainly unified the Muslim world in a way not seen in recent history. Most importantly, they were united in declaring Israel a terrorist state.[21]

The indiscriminate use of the label terrorist when referring to Arab violence is clearly inappropriate. Much of the Arab violence can be justified as a defence of the Palestinian people against the enemies and their accomplices who would seek to destroy them and take their land. The use of violence on the part of the Palestinians seems more to protect innocent inhabitants and their homeland while denying the extinction of a people. When the PLO resorted to "terrorism" it earned them little sympathy in the world. However, the violence and the international attention it focused on the Palestinians helped to change their cause from one of a neglected refugee problem to the quest of a victimized people for national self-determination.[22] According to Benjamin Netanyahu's definition of terrorism, international law, the United Nations and international conventions, the Palestinians have a right to resist decades of military occupation at the hands of Israel enabled by the United States.

Political Terrorism

The purpose of terrorism is normally to achieve some political goal. A terrorist act is seldom directed at the individual or group that suffers the consequences of the act. Normally the impact of the terrorist act is intended for a wider audience. George Lopez and Michael Stohl define political terrorism as "the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behaviour in a victim and/or audience of the act or threat."[23] This definition allows

an inspection of the terrorist question without regard to an ethical judgement. Using this definition we can evaluate the acts perpetrated by either the Israelis or the Palestinians simply by applying the test of whether or not an action was intended to intimidate or coerce. In this regard, terrorist acts can be state and non state sponsored. States may use economic coercion, the legal system, the police or the military to coerce or intimidate. Non state actors may use murder, destruction of property or physical or psychological harm short of murder.[24]

Most Americans only use the word "terrorism or terrorist" when talking about the Palestinians or other Arab groups only. What is clear is that in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, both sides have used terrorist tactics. The Deir Yassin massacre in April of 1948 where combined forces from Irgun and Stern Gang members killed two-thirds of the residents and then drove to other villages telling them they might suffer the same fate if they did not leave was a terrorist act. In September of 1970 when members of the PFLP hijacked four planes and blew up three after releasing their hostages was a terrorist act. When Israel bombed the PLO headquarters in Tunis on 1 October 1985 killing Palestinian and Tunisian civilians, that too was terrorism. In addition to the car bombings, the killing of civilians at prayer and other acts easily recounted, it is important to make clear that not all terrorist acts result in death or injury. The military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is terrorism. The use of torture on prisoners, arrest without being charged, closing of borders and deportation are all acts of terrorism according the Lopez and Stohl definition.

What is key is the primary intent of the act and the audience for whom it is intended. When, on 27 November 1987, a Palestinian soldier on a hang glider killed six Israeli soldiers, that was not a terrorist act. It was instead a military act of one combatant engaging another. There was intent to coerce a wider audience through intimidation. This was a confrontation. A surprise attack on an airfield such as happened in the June 1967 war when Israel attacked Egyptian airfields in the opening hours of the conflict does not qualify as a terrorist act.[25] The distinction between terrorism and other forms of violence is sometimes difficult, but necessary if the truth is important. In this examination it is clear that the terrorist label has been used as an expedient label to inspire hatred and action directed against the Palestinians. Israeli terrorism by way of military occupation is part of the daily Palestinian diet. It is the intent of the Netanyahu government and their supporters to sustain this condition indefinitely. History shows that the United States has

supported Israel in its terrorist acts against the Arabs. The virtual unconditional support for Israeli policy in the 1990's could lead one to accuse the United States of supporting state terrorism. For example, the Clinton administration's changing characterization of Jewish settlements from "illegal" to "an obstacle to peace" and then providing monetary support to expand settlements in Arab East Jerusalem and other territories can be construed as support for terrorist acts.[26] What is certain is that the United States has taken no decisive action to stop Israeli terrorism. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has said that the United States is not a party to the Arab-Israeli conflict and that we should not try to impose solutions.[27] However, the total and unconditional support, with the exception of rhetoric, for the Israeli government allows Netanyahu and his supporters to "impose their solutions" by continuing their terrorism in the Occupied Territories. To put it another way, Netanyahu continues to coerce and intimidate the Palestinians with the full support of the United States. This threatens the peace process and it is this process that the US has called vitally important to US security interests in the region.[28] In declaring peace vitally important the US is declaring it will use all means at its disposal to further the chances of peace. History will judge US efforts to pursue peace in the 1990's. What is abundantly clear is that support for Israeli terrorism guarantees failure of the peace process and undermines US national interests.

[1] Lieutenant Colonel Stephen H. Gotowicki, "Middle East Terrorism: New Form of Warfare or Mission Impossible?" Military Review, Vol. LXXVII (May-June 1997): (62)
[2] Edward W. Said, "The Essential Terrorist," in Blaming the Victims, ed Edward W. Said and Christopher Hitchens (London: Verso Press,1988), p 152.
[3] Michael Palumbo, The Palestinian Catastrophe, (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), p 47-57.
[4] Edward Said, "The Essential Terrorist," p 153.
[5] Meron Benvenisti, Intimate Enemies: Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p 75.
[6] Jerome Slater, "Netanyahu, A Palestinian State, and Israeli security Reassessed," Political Science Quarterly vol. 112 (Winter 1997/98): (675-676).
[7] Gotowicki, "Middle East Terrorism: New Form of Warfare or Mission Impossible?" p 62.
[8] Rachelle Marshall, "U.S. apathy Over Israel's Obstruction of Peace Process Ignites Hostility, Frays U.S. Alliances," Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, vol. XVII (January/February 1998): (7, 118-119).
[9] Pat McDonnell Twair, "Israeli Settlers, Soldiers Attack and Trash East Jerusalem Orphanage," Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, **vol.** (March 1997): (68-71).
[10] Doug Struck, "Arab Families Mourn Deaths," The Washington Post, 12 March 1998, p A23
[11] Noam Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, (Boston: South End Press, 1983). p164-167.

[12] Charles D. Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p 267-269.
[13] Deborah J. Gerner, One Land, Two Peoples The Conflict Over Palestine (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994) p 125.
[14] Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, p 269.
[15] Gerner, One Land, Two Peoples The Conflict Over Palestine, p 127.
[16] Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p 200-201.
[17] Gerner, One Land , Two Peoples the Conflict Over Palestine, p 126-127.
[18] Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, p 273-274.
[19] Gotowicki, "Middle East Terrorism: New Form of Warfare or Mission Impossible," p 62.
[20] Chomsky, "Middle East Terrorism and the American Ideological System," p 99-102.
[21] Douglas Jehl, "Muslim Leaders Unite to Denounce Israeli 'Terrorism'," International Herald Tribune, 12 December 1997, p. A1, A10.
[22] Chomsky, The Fateful Triangle, p 164. Chomsky is citing a quote from Noah Lucas in his book, Modern History of Israel.
[23] Gerner, One Land, Two Peoples the Conflict Over Palestine, p 160-161. The author is quoting from the introduction of The State as Terrorist edited by Lopez and Stohl.
[24] Gerner, One Land, Two Peoples the Conflict Over Palestine, p 161.
[25] Gerner, One Land Two Peoples the Conflict Over Palestine, p 160-163.
[26] James H. Noyes, "Does Washington Really Support Israel?" in Foreign Policy, no 106 (Spring 1997): (146).
[27] Remarks made by Secretary Albright on 6 August 1997 in a question and answer session at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. The speech and comments are available on the World Wide Web at: [http://secretary.state.gov/www/statements/970806.html].
[28] Remarks made by Under Secretary of State Thomas Pickering to the American-Israeli public Affairs Committee on 28 July 1997 in Washington D.C. The text is available on the world Wide Web at: [http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/970728_pickering_meast.html].

Chapter 5. Promoting Democracy, Respect for Human Rights and International Law.

"America's global leadership is derived not only from our economic and military power, but from the power of our ideals. And fundamental to American ideals is our commitment to democracy." [1]
Secretary of State Madeline Albright

The US administration and Benjamin Netanyahu continue to ignore international jurisprudence and justice. Palestinian leaders and Israeli peace activists claim it is the Israeli government that is provoking Arab extremist to commit acts of violence. Netanyahu's response is to deny the "moral equivalency" argument.[2] In a statement to the National Press Club, Madeleine Albright states, [t]here is no moral equivalency between suicide bombers and bulldozers, between killing innocent people and building houses."[3] This is of course, to misstate the Arab argument. No one would try to make such a comparison. The Arab point is that there is a moral equivalency between "taking" a person's life and "destroying" a person's life. While Arabs kill innocent civilians in suicide bombings, Netanyahu destroys the lives of innocent civilians in the Occupied Territories.[4] There is a moral equivalency and it is embodied in universally accepted Geneva Convention and international law.

Ironically, we have exempted Israel, one of the world's truly terrorist states from our principles for countering international terrorism. They are:

> 1) make no concessions to terrorists; 2) bring all pressure to bear on state sponsors of terrorism; 3) fully exploit all available legal mechanisms to punish international terrorists; 4) help other governments improve their capabilities to combat terrorism.[5]

The United States Congress and the Executive have made every accommodation to Israel; a state sponsor of terrorism according to international law. Israel receives massive aid, almost one quarter of all US foreign aid; they receive technology; they receive most favoured nation trade status; and they receive diplomatic and legislative support for their terrorism. What is most telling is that United States uses its UN Security council veto to block the rest of the world from combating Israel's terrorism. The only conclusion that can be made is that the United States sponsors state terrorism in the Middle East. What other conclusion is there?

Weapons of Mass Destruction

During the Cold War, the weapons of mass destruction debate centred around nuclear weapons. In the Middle East Israel developed a nuclear weapons program while denying other Middle East powers that capability. In June of 1981, Israel launched an aerial attack against an Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak. This illegal strike into the soverign territory of another nation was conducted with newly delivered F-16s which Israel ensured the US were for defensive purposes only. This strike destroyed, for the meantime, the Iraqi nuclear development capability.[6]

Today's threat includes chemical and biological weapons. These weapons are of much greater concern since they can be developed with little more than a common kitchen, can be delivered conventionally or unconventionally to include by human carrier. The affect of such a weapon can be devastating and in the analysis there is no warning of the strike and perhaps little evidence to suggest who the perpetrator was. The probability that some smaller weapon of mass destruction will be used in the future is growing.[7]

This new tendency toward economical weapons of mass destruction should be of great concern for both the United States and Israel. The US has already experienced a bombing of the Murah Federal Building in Oklahoma and the World Trade Centre in New York. The former was conducted by a US civilian while the latter was the work of a foreign radical. As the ire of smaller states and religious groups grows against those they perceive to be blocking their legitimate aspirations so too the threat of attack increases. According to Richard K. Betts, "It is hardly likely that Middle Eastern radicals would be hatching schemes like the destruction of the World Trade Centre if the United States had not been identified for so long as the mainstay of Israel. The Shah of Iran and conservative Arab regimes and the source of cultural assault on Islam."[8] Deterrence is difficult and problematic at best. The problem is essentially a political one that defies military solutions. Few in the world can compete with US arms, technology and military dominance. Arab countries can not afford to compete with Israel's regional military hegemony especially since it comes with substantial US support. Given the current array of weapons of mass destruction, there is no reason to squander a nation's economic wealth in an arms race.

While there are many security problems for the nations of the Middle East, conventional war is not one of them. The arms race in the region has subsided as nations, albeit reluctantly, accept the geostrategic status quo. The proof is on the wholesale reduction of GNP dedicated to

defence and arms.[9] This is not to say that there is an end in sight to confrontation in the Middle East. On the contrary, non-state actors will continue to challenge states who they perceive as violating their values, culture and religion. It is not unreasonable to believe that this confrontation will escalate from suicide bombs that kill few to weapons of mass destruction. The Palestinian cause will continue to be at the centre of this confrontation.

What Kind of Democracy? What Kind of Human Rights?

A very important part of the National Security Strategy discusses the need to advance Universal Human Rights and Democratic Principles. President Clinton stated that, "[a]dvancing human rights must always be a central pillar of US foreign policy."[10] Human rights are of such importance the security strategy states, "[i]n appropriate circumstances, we must be prepared to take strong measures against human rights violators. These include economic sanctions as have been maintained against Nigeria, Iraq, Burma, and Cuba; . . . and restrictions on the sale of arms that we believe may be used to perpetrate human rights abuses."[11]

Finally, the national security strategy specifically addresses the Middle East peace process:

> The United States as an architect and sponsor of the peace process - has a clear national interest in seeing the process deepen and widen to include all Israel's neighbours. We will continue our steady determined leadership - standing against those who would destroy it, . . ."[12]

Promoting democracy and the adherence to human rights is the third core objective of the National Security Strategy. It is interesting to look at the Middle East and Israel to determine what kind of democracy and what kind of human rights the US is fostering in providing unconditional support to Israel.

Human Rights

The geostrategic reality may have changed, but the view form the Palestinian window is the same. The conditions for the Palestinian Arab have changed little since the pre-Cold War days. If anything, his condition has worsened. Israel remains an occupying power exercising control over natural resources, freedom of movement, freedom of speech and assembly, the ability to work and basic human rights. Palestinians are subject to unlawful arrest, torture and confiscation of property at the hands of a state that intends to completely dispossess them of their homeland. The Israelis have made tremendous advances in their efforts to claim all of the West Bank and Gaza as part of "Greater Israel."

In the post-Cold War world, it is hard to believe that the Palestinians are really the "bad guys." However, the players with all the power can create the circumstances to define the perception of others, and perception is reality for the beholder. It is useful to view the world from the perspective of the Palestinian Arab.

The Palestinian is a prisoner in his own homeland. He works, goes to school, travels within the occupied territories and abroad at the whim of Israel. Access to outside markets and industries is through Israel. Arrests are frequent and often without due process. Arrest is almost always accompanied by torture. There is massive unemployment with no farmland to work since the best and most fertile land has been confiscated by Israel for Jewish ownership and benefit. One may have his home knocked down and his land confiscated without notice or compensation. The home and land have probably been in the Palestinian family for decades, maybe hundreds of years. Palestinians pay high taxes but receive none of the services a government should provide. Most of the money goes to Jewish developments which are modern, subsidized and complete with unlimited water and other amenities. The peace process once offered the Palestinian hope for a better life in their homeland. What the Palestinians have experienced is increased suffering and deprivation. Israel and Netanyahu have accelerated the pace of annexation. For the first time Palestinians are literally starving to death. The current realization is that the peace process only makes life worse and seemingly legitimate to the outside world.

Israel takes water from the West Bank denying the Palestinians their own natural resource. Israelis have irrigated a desert while Palestinians do not have enough water to sustain a decent life. In many cases, they are forced to drink and cook with agricultural runoff.[13]

On 27 February and 6 March 1998, National Public Radio aired a story about water in Israel and Gaza. Essentially, there are no restriction on the use of water in the Jewish settlements or in Israel. Israelis have turned the Negev desert into lush gardens and oasis. Jews are allowed to wash cars and own swimming pools. Jewish consumption of fresh water is higher than anywhere in the world; nearly 700 litres per person per day. The fields of a kibbutz can consume up to seven times that amount. Arabs in Gaza have no water for their crops nor do they have sufficient water for bathing or cooking. Their water supply is in fact not even fresh water. Their limited supplies come from a deteriorating aquifer and contaminated runoff from agricultural areas and sanitation lines. Any fresh water they do get is at three or four times the cost paid by Jews.

Arabs live next to Jews in the settlements and must witness the extravagance while their children suffer the ravages of disease and parasites.[14]

The story also talked about how the confiscation of land continues even today. Stretches along the Mediterranean are confiscated from the Arabs to create resorts. These too receive an unlimited water supply at the expense of their Arab neighbours. The Arabs of course receive no compensation for their homes or land or the crops they loose. Their only recourse is to live with friends or relatives which only compounds the problem of scarce water and thriving disease.[15]

The confiscation of land is not inconsequential overall and has been accellerated during the peace process. Since the Oslo Accords in 1993, the number of Jewish settlers has increased by 40 percent and 73,741 acres of Palestinian land has been confiscated.[16] In May of 1997 alone, the Netanyahu government confiscated more than 7,000 acres of Palestinian land in the West Bank for the expansion of settlements and building of roads.[17] As the media focuses on the expansion of Jerusalem, the systematic looting of the West Bank continues.

There has been a concerted effort to deport the best and brightest Palestinian minds. Since 1967, Israel has deported educators, doctors, municipal councillors, scientist and other professionals in an effort to eliminate the possibility of creating self-governing institutions.[18] Arabs can be arrested and in many cases may not be charged with any crime. Once arrested, they are usually tortured regardless of age. Human Rights Watch has long reported that Shin Bet, also know as the General Security Service practices torture and ill treatment in Israelis jails. In fact, the Israeli Supreme Court has upheld the right to use these practices despite being a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture.[19] In April 1995, a Palestinian prisoner, Abd al-Samed Harizat, was shaken violently until he fell into a coma and died without recovering consciousness. The soldier who shook Harizat was acquitted on most counts by a disciplinary court and returned to duty.[20] The Israeli government says this does not constitute torture. Other actions which Israel denies are torture include: sleep deprivation, bondage, forced exercise and exposure to extreme heat and cold.[21] Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is non-waiverable even in "time of public emergency which threatens the life of a nation."[22]

How can a nation supposedly based on one of the three monotheist religions commit such human rights atrocities? Richard Goldstone, the South African jurist who served as the first chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTFY), stated in connection with the human rights atrocities with which he had to deal that, "the victimized group must be dehumanized or demonized. Once this is done, it frees ordinary people from the moral restraints that would normally inhibit them from doing such terrible things."[23]

Despite these injustices, the United States does nothing to pressure Israel to respect the basic human rights of the Palestinian. In fiscal year 1998, the US will reward Israel's human rights policy by providing US$3.5 billion which includes both State Department and Pentagon programs. This follows on the heels of the FY '97 grant, interest and loan guarantees of US$5.7 billion.[24] If the US wanted to put pressure on Israel to act responsibly, there is certainly leverage there.

Democracy

Israel hardly meets the criteria for a modern democracy. According to former Senator Paul Findley the belief that the United States and Israel have a special relationship based on shared values and a commitment to democracy is a myth.[25] Israel has no written constitution and is a theocracy. All Jewish residents come under the authority of the rabbinical courts. Essentially, non-Jews are second class citizens and must live their life according to Jewish law. A religious judge can order a husband and wife to divorce or a brother in law may forbid a childless widow to remarry. Only kosher meat is allowed in Israel and Christian proselytizing is punishable by five years in jail. If we implemented a Israel-like theocratic government in the US, the predominant religious group would have a highly privileged status. They alone could confiscate property of non-Christians, carry firearms and buy or lease government property. Non-Christians could be shot on suspicion of carrying a gun, their bones broken as a matter of disciplinary education and their homes could be forcibly entered without search warrant and dynamited or sealed. They would not be entitled to legal due process and could be jailed for long periods of time without being charged. Under these rules, non-Christians living in land conquered by the US could never become citizens and would not have the right to determine their political future.[26]

Theoretically, everyone in a democratic society is represented equally and all are treated fairly. While in the best democracies this may not be completely true, the laws, institutions and

governemnt are set up to function in pursuit of that goal. Israeli society does not meet this test. In Israel, Arabs who have lived in Israel since 1948 are not equal and are not treated fairly. They are denied the right to own land and their property can be confiscated for Jewish use.[27] All confiscation is without compensation. In fact, on 30 July 1997, the Knesset passed the first reading of a law making it illegal to compensate Arabs for losses suffered at the hands of the military in the Occupied Territories. This is essentially all losses since the military is the enforcer in the Occupied Territories. What this law essentially does is exempt the Israeli Defence Force, Border Police and the General Security Services from all liability. In these few cases where exemptions are granted, Palestinians will bear the burden of proof unlike Israeli tort law as it applies to Jews. If any compensation is granted, it is limited based on an average the wage in the Occupied Territory regardless of actual wages, skill level of the injured, or extent of the injury. [28] This is one more way to deny the rights of the Palestinian.

As illustrated previously, Israel practices some state policies which are illegal in the US and most Western states. They include: assassination, kidnapping, expulsion, detention without due process, land confiscation, collective punishment and torture. Israel is the only country in the world that officially sanctions torture.[29] If it is a democracy, Israel is the only modern democracy that occupies another sovereign nation; in this case Lebanon and Syria. As a military occupier, it is the only democracy currently practising genocide. Beyond an elected government, it is difficult to find some aspect of Israeli society that it truly democratic. It doesn't even function as a democracy for all Israelis, considering some Israelis are Arabs. Speaking in 1986, long time Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek confirmed the discrimination against Israeli Arabs. "I've done something for Jewish Jerusalem in the past twenty-five years; for East Jerusalem? Nothing!"[30] In 1986 Jerusalem invested less than 3% of the total municipal budget in East Jerusalem.[31] Although taxed, Israeli Arabs did not experience democratic representation. There is no other regime like Israel with which the US has such a close relationship. Why would we ever say the US and Israel have shared ideals, values and a commitment to democracy?

Is Israel a Mirror Image of the United States?

Israelis and especially Israeli policy makers would like Americans to see a mirror image of themselves when they look at Israel. This is important to sustain support for Israeli policies and the substantial political, diplomatic, technological and monetary support provided to Israel by the

United States. When that image comes under attack or is threatened, there is a network of organizations whose mission it is to manage the image and garner continued support from the West. Government lobby groups, business groups and civil organizations have a substantial impact on the American view of Israel. That view is sometimes inaccurate, romanticized, one sided or simply based more on myth than fact.

Positive images of Israel have been cultivated for decades. The most effective and carefully cultivated image is that of the Holocaust victim and the role of anti-Semitism. While these are horrible images, they are used to play on Western and especially American guilt feelings and sense of obligation to garner unquestioned support for Israel's policies toward the Arabs. Pro-Israeli lobbies and others have played a vital role in shaping the message and winning the hearts and minds of the American people with respect to Middle East affairs.[32]

The ability of the pro-Israeli groups in defining the acceptable limits of public discourse on issues related to Israel is impressive. Their efforts are apparent in the media (films, television, radio, newspapers and popular literature) where Israel has been presented in a favourable light while important issues related to the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli struggle have been distorted or left out. In the 1980's, the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) used both subtle and overt methods to undermine and intimidate the media as punishment for pro-Arab or Palestinian coverage. In the style of McCarthyism, AIPAC produced publications like, The Campaign to Discredit Israel, a book which describes in minute detail, 21 organizations and 38 individuals labelled as 'enemies' of Israel. The primary charge against these people and organizations is that they were pro-PLO. Vanessa Redgrave, an Academy Award winning actress and vocal supporter of the PLO, was contracted to narrate five Boston Symphony Orchestra performances of "Oedipus Rex" in April of 1982. Pro-Israli advocates were able to have the contract cancelled. Redgrave was unable to work of 18 months after that due to a blacklisting campaign, as she characterizes it. In the lawsuit that Redgrave brought against the Symphony, it was brought out that Jewish financial backing to the Symphony would have been withdrawn if the contract was not terminated.[33]

In June 1983, NBC was the target of a pro-Israel group for its coverage of the war in Lebanon. In reporting events, NBC dared to give the Palestinian viewpoint of the Israeli invasion. In response, the Americans for a Safe Israel (AFSI) made an hour-long documentary, produced

by Peter E. Goldman, entitled "NBC in Lebanon: A Study of Media Misrepresentation." Following that (AFSI) published a monograph entitled "NBC's War in Lebanon: The Distorting Mirror." This publication was meant to discredit NBC reporting of the war. Finally, the group twice filed suit with the Federal Communication Commission to deny WNBC-TV a license.[34] There is little these pro-Israeli groups would not do to have the story told their way and to punish those who would defy them by seeking to present a more balanced account of events.

There are many movies depicting Arabs as terrorist and this is or has been the stereotypical image for most Americans. Movies like "Exodus," a frequently shown movie on TV, uses the Zionist image of The War of Independence, the name of the book by Leon Uris on which the movie is based. It is not an accurate depiction or characterization of events. Accurate accounts are not permitted as evidenced by the cancellation in many cities of the Public Broadcast System (PBS) 90-minute special on the Arab-Israeli struggle. This 1986 production was intended to give both the Zionist and the Palestinian side of the conflict. The Zionist objected to the interview with Arab survivors of the 1948 massacres in Der Yassin and Dawayma.[35] The Israeli myth is that the massacres never occurred although Israeli writers like Benny Morris have disputed the official Israeli version.[36] Why do the pro-Israeli groups work so hard to ensure there is only one version of the story; their version that gets told? Would the American public support Israel as we do now if the true story were known? The Palestinian scholar, Edward Said, said it best, "If you need virtual thought police to champion a cause, something is wrong."[37]

The Reagan administration labelled Israel a 'strategic partner' in 1981 to the amazement of the professional diplomats who built careers working Middle East issues and knew better. We garner no benefit from our relationship with Israel. They do not share our goals for the region, our national values and they provide us no military advantage in the region nor diplomatic or political capital of any kind. They are a liability and actually act to undermine our interests in the Middle East.[38] We have no military bases in Israel and they are not a port of entry into the region for US forces. We do have shared weapons programs but not because there is some distinct advantage for the US. This is in fact a form of aid. No one would argue that the Israelis have some new technology the US does not possess. Nor would anyone argue that Israel is paying a fair share of these projects. Weapons programs are another form of arming Israel at the expense of US taxpayers.

Beyond the Jonathan Pollard spying incident, there are many cases of Israeli agents acting against US interests. There have been arrests for attempting to sell US$2.5 billion worth of military equipment to Iran, illegally shipping trigger devices for nuclear bombs, attempting to acquire technology to manufacture tank cannon barrels and cluster bombs. There has even been corruption on Israel's behalf in the Pentagon. In 1991, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Melvyn R. Paisley pleaded guilty in Alexandria, Virginia Federal District Court to massive fraud involving the awarding of defence contracts to an Israeli company, Israeli Mazlat Ltd. Mazlat was bidding on contracts to build pilotless drone aircraft for battlefield reconnaissance. Paisley had agreed to help Mazlat win the defence contracts in exchange for US$2 billion in bribes. Victor Ostrovsky, a former Israeli Mossad spy claimed that Mazlat was a subsidiary of the state-run Israeli Aeronautical Industry and the research for producing the drones had been stolen by the Mossad from US firms.[39]

Israel has repeatedly engaged in diversion schemes by selling US arms technology to other nations to include China, South Africa and Iran. Arms sales accounts for about US$1.5 billion annually or 40 percent of exports.[40] The subject of Israel profiting from the sale of US technology was set forth in a book entitled Dangerous Liaison, by Andrew and Leslie Cockburn. The US began to transfer technology to Israel in 1970 with the signing of the Master Defence Development Data Exchange Agreement. This agreement allows the greatest transfer of technology ever undertaken to another country by the US. By 1981, Israel was transformed from a backward arms importer to the seventh largest arms exporter of military weapons in the world. [41]

If the US goes to war with Iran in the future, we will probably face Iranian pilots flying advanced Chinese J-8 fighters armed with PL-8 missiles guided by helmet-mounted sights. This technology allows the pilot to track the target by simple head movements. This is US technology sold to China by Israel according to a 10 November 1997 article in the New York Daily News. Additionally, the Israelis are helping the Chinese build a more advanced fighter jet, the J-10, using the cancelled Israeli Lavi-fighter technology.[42] The Lavi-fighter was a failed Israeli project 90 percent financed by the US who also provided at least half the advanced technology to Israel for the project.[43]

Respect for International Law

Israel has often claimed that the United Nations is prejudiced against them. Prior to the Madrid Conference in 1991, Israel rejected the UN as a mediator because of UN views against Israel. It is certain the UN would not allow Israel to continue to act in an unlawful manner. Israel has violated International Law since its existence. Since 1955, the United Nations has passed 69 Security Council Resolutions, each supported or accepted by the United States. They range from condemnation for raids on Gaza, Syria and Jordan, to urging return of Palestinian refugees, declaring invalid acts to unify Jerusalem, to condemnation for violation of sovereignty, failure to withdraw from occupied territory, killing of innocent Palestinians to threatening the sanctity of Muslim Holy sites.[44]

In more general terms Israel violates Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations which states,

> All members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered" and that they "shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.[45]

The ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is in violation of both the spirit and the letter of this Article. The clear intention of the current government to avoid peace while continuing the illegal occupation and annexation is contrary to the values of the international community and a violation of Israel's agreement to abide by this Article upon joining the international body of the UN.[46]

The Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. No nation since that time has expressed any reservation or exception to the declaration. In the official International Conference on Human Rights, held in Teheran in April-May 1968, the assembly proclaimed, ". . . the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states a common understanding of the peoples of the world concerning the inalienable and inviolable rights of all member of the human family and constitutes on obligation for the members of the international community."[47]

The Crime of Genocide

To say that Israel is guilty of genocide without further explanation is unacceptable. The idea of genocide brings to mind the vision of the extermination of thousands such as in Bosnia or Rawanda or the millions that died in the Holocaust of World War II. Israel is not guilty of a crime of this magnitude. Perhaps the euphemism of "ethnic cleansing" is more appropriate in the case of Israel. Israel has and is destroying the lives of millions of Palestinians. This is a fine distinction as made previously in discussing the moral equivalent between suicide bombers and bulldozers. There is a moral equivalent between taking a life and destroying a life. Israelis have destroyed millions of Palestinian lives and continues to do so today.

The 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, defines genocide as the . . .

> "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such," by: "(a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."[48]

One could make a case that the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza has caused serious bodily and mental harm to many Palestinians. The destruction and confiscation of homes and businesses certainly causes mental anguish for the people of the Occupied Teritories. The denial of fresh water to the people of Gaza has caused the spread of disease and increased infant mortality. The subordination of the economy of Gaza to ensure it cannot develop and must always be linked to and controlled by Israel means the slow death of that community. There is certainly mental harm there.

Jerusalem is an example of the ethnic cleansing going on at the expense of the Palestinians. Jerusalem's boundaries like those of Israel are at the whim of the current government at any given time. yitzak Rabin in a speech to the Israeli Knesset on 8 April 1993 referred to "Greater Jerusalem" as the municipality and its boundaries as established in 1967. Yet, in a speech four days later, Rabin referred Maale Adumim, a large settelment in the West Bank and several kilometers east of Jerusalem's municipal boundary, as part of "Greater Jerusalem."[49]

According to Ian Lustick, "[t]he line demarcating Jerusalem's boundary was not only unprecedented, but also devoid of any religious, historical, or emotional justification."[50] Lustick goes on to explain that the governemnt could give no explanation for the boundaries and could only provide three pages of geographical coordinates as an explanation. He further states that . . . "the historically and religiously meaningless nature of the description reflected the artificiality of the new Jerusalem - an accidental shape whose only rationale was that it maximized the acquisition of Arab land while minimizing the number of Arabs who would become Israeli residents."[51] Netahyahu continues this policy of ethnic cleansing by adding Jewish settlements in places like Har Homa and claiming they are part of "Greater Jerusalem."

Israel has passed an impressive body of law designed to dispossess the Arabs and thereby continue systematically to drive them off. According to Dr. Edna Homa Hunt, ". . . it would be difficult to find another state in the 'free world' whose laws, codes, regulations and procedures are as tarnished by agrarian racism as is the system of land management of the State of Israel." [52] The system to which she refers is the one where the Israelli government can bulldoze your house and then declare it abandoned (even though the occupants are present). Once abandoned, the property can be issued to a Jew. Likewise, early agricultural law stipulated that the minister of agriculture may decalre all lands that remained unclutivated for one year "virgin lands." this dinstinction meant that the land could be redistributed to Jews. The implementation of the law made it most effective. Since Palestinians were under Israeli military control, they needed the permission of the local military authority to plant crops. This permission was frequently denied and the land was confiscated after a year.[53]

The legality of torture and administrative detention also served to mentally harm the Arab public. Random detention without being charged with a crime is a concern for every male Arab young and old. The Israelis operate the Khiam prison in Lebanon where men as young as 12 have been held without being charged, some for as long as 13 years. Former prisoners, many of whom have permanent disabilities as a result of their treatment at the facility, describe torture, mistreatment and hostage taking.[54] Hostages are taken into prison and used a bargaining chips with the Hezbollah. A three-judge panel of the Israeli Supreme Court acknowledged and condoned the holding of prisoners solely as a bargaining chip even though these men violated no law and pose no threat to Israel. The confirmation that Israel is holding 21 Lebanese came in

March of 1998. In support of his ruling, Justice Barak wrote, "I am convinced that detentions of individuals for the sake of freeing our missing captured men constitutes a vital interest to the state." He stated further, "In situations like this, damage to basic human rights is obligatory - sometimes even grave and painful damage."[55] In another similar situation, Ahmed Qatamesh, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Plaestine, was released in April of 1998 after almost six years of administrative detention in an Israeli jail.[56]

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Chapter 6. One More Time . . . Why Do We Support Israel?

It is clear that our support for Israel undermines US interest in the region. Stability is threatened by Israel's relentless repression of the Palestinians and Israel's expansionist policies designed to dispossess the indigenous population. This same repression gives radical Islamic groups an opportunity to make political inroads in Middle East countries threatening to destabilize the current regimes and ignite greater dissension. Israel's refusal to co-operate in the peace process threatens the multilateral co-operation dealing with issues of common concern for all members of the Middle East. Multilateral cooperation during the mid 1990's provided a glimpse of what the Middle East can be in terms of open markets and greater business opprotunities. The multilateral track can be successful if the political leaders can work toward peace.

The US and Israel do not share a desire for the spread of democracy and we do not share a similar value system. Israel's type of government and their pursuit of a policy of ethnic cleansing and apartheid in the Occupied Territories are at the exact opposite end of the spectrum from the values espoused by the United States. In this vein, support for Israel undermines the US as a world leader. How can other nations take the US seriously in its fight for basic human rights when the US unconditionally supports Israel's denial of Palestinian rights. The US intends to be a force in the world for peace. Yet, by supporting Israel, the US enables oppression making peace impossible in the Middle East. If we do not support Israel, they cannot continue their illegal occupation against universal resistance. Finally, despite the declaration that Israel is a strategic ally, there is little real evidence that this is true. What kind of ally spies on you, sells your secrets and technology abroad to your potential enemies and undermines your foreign policy goals despite the support you provide them. In the 1990's Israel offers no strategic benefit to the US and costs it dearly in a region where Israel is a minority market and the intransigent partner in the battle for peace. Israel is an ally sustained by a committed and pervasive political force in the US able to sway the Washington leadership and garner support for policies inimical to US national interests.

Achieving US goals in the Middle East is possible. If the US had the political will to achieve Middle East peace it could be done by withdrawing support for Israel. Israel must have US money, technology, diplomacy and political support to pursue their policies. Any

administration with the courage to publicly state a vision for the Middle East; an end state in the battle for Palestine, can define the framework for the peace argument. The lack of a framework or the current, anything Israel wants framework, will move the Middle East closer to violence and and instability and further from peace. A US position on a desired outcome for negotiations forces both parties to work toward this stated goal. Netanyahu and many in Congress understand that Israel looses control of the current negotiations and accelerated occupation if the US goes public. As evidence of this several senators wrote to Secretary Allbright and President Clinton to urge the administration to keep US negotiations private. In an interview, Senator Carl Levinson said that senators feared the US might go public with proposals that Israel opposes.[1] Any proposal with a hint of justice for the Arabs would certainly be opposed by Israel since some within the current government desire a "Greater Israel" from the River Jordan to the Mediterranean, including the West Bank and Gaza. In those areas inhabited by Arabs, Israeli control of those aspects of life that allow the Arabs to thrive as a people is the acceptable compromise.

The following steps are right for achieving US interests in the Middle East and bringing peace to the region:

1) Declare the US vision for the region. It must be based on international law and a semblance of justice for the Palestinians. The vision must state that the US supports a Palestinian state and self-determination for the Palestinians. It should also outline what the US recognizes as the legally acceptable boundaries of Israel. That boundary should be the pre-1967 borders.

2) The US should cut all aid and loan guarantees to Israel. Any and all aid to the region should be tied to progress toward peace. This includes all weapons programs and technology transfers. If we are serious about arms control in the region, we should stop escalating the race by arming the regional hegemon.

3) The US should declare that Israel must withdraw from the Occupied Territories without condition in accordance with UN resolution and international law. All structures and infrastructure is to be left in tact. It is Israel's precedent to destroy everything when they withdraw as they did upon leaving the Sinai desert.[2] These settlements should be given to the Palestinians as partial compensation for the illegal and destructive military occupation. Further compensation for losses should also be part of the settlement.

4) The US should signal to the international community that they do not intend to resist efforts to sanction Israel for violations of international law and convention. Israel must be made to act as a responsible member of the global community.

5) The US should take steps to renew the multilateral negotiations. These working groups are the source of enduring peace. They should not begin work until a formal peace is declared and Israel has withdrawn from the Occupied Territories.

Key to the conditions above is the understanding by all players in the region that the US will not abandon our commitment to ensure Israel's security. Israel must be allowed to live in peace, and by all indications prosperity, inside their pre-1967 borders. This leaves the problem of Jerusalem. This issue should be considered only after Palestine has declared statehood. This gives the Arabs more equality at the negotiating table. Statehood for Palestine prior to final negotiation settelment will mean the difference between a bargain and a solution. According to Richard Falk of Princeton University, any agreement given the current power disparity will only be a bargain that Arafat is forced to make. It will not remove the core grievances of the Palestinian people.[9] Statehood will give Arafat some equity with its negotiating partner and solve one of the core grievances; Palestinian sovereignty.

There is also the question of Jerusalem. The solution should centre around Jerusalem as an international city or as a divided city under the control of both Israel and Palestinian. The question of Jerusalem should also focus on Jerusalem as recognized prior to 1967; not the expanded area Israel claims as Jerusalem today. The religiously significant portion of Jerusalem is essentially the old walled city. There is ample room for accomodation with the Arabs in a shared capital. Additionally, the annexation of Jerusalem was done unilaterally without consent of the Arab inhabitants and in violation of international law. [3]

The above stated solution is no easy matter. According to Edward Said, in an interview he gave to the Christian Science Monitor, there can be no peace without atonement or apology or restitution for what the Israelis did to the Palestinians. "They destroyed a society, dispossessed a people, and have oppressed them ever since." He goes on to say, "This history must be faced, just as it was for the Jews after World War II."[4]

Said is right. This policy can only succeed if it is based on truth. Israel should admit they violated international law and that the occupation was wrong. This may also cause some US soul

searching. When Israel faces the truth, US complicity and suppoprt for wrong or illegal actions will also become public. Many in Congress and some in former adminsitrations will be called to account for their support of Israel.

One way to begin this truth search may be to open an investigation into incidents such as the attack on USS Liberty where Israel bombed an unarmed US ship in broad daylight and the US government failed to stop the attack or come to the aid of the ship. More than 30 US servicemen died and hundreds were wounded. There has never been an explanation or investigation into this incident. [5]

No American who believes in the United States or who even slightly assimilated the values articulated in our Constitution would stand for supporting Israel, as we do, if they knew the truth. The problem in the United States is that the message has been tailored and the 20-second sound bite and has the spin desired by the pro-Israeli lobby and our government leaders. Our knowledge of the Middle East and the people of the region stops there. Outside the academic world, the Israelis and the Jewish lobby control the slant and the quantity of coverage of Palestinian-Israeli-Arab events. The image of Israel as seen from the living room of the average American is a mirror image of himself. False though it may be, it is a powerful force in American politics.

It is difficult to believe that Israel could face the same truth without internal repercussions. This is a violation of everything it means to be Jewish. How can you tell a people that you have violated all God's laws in pursuit of service to Him. How do you admit that you have lied to a people for one hundred years for their own good and that much of what they believe about their history is fantasy? This is a daunting task for Israel, but a step they must take. These steps are necessary to stop the hate and inhumane treatment of Palestinians. These steps are the price of peace. South Africa is surviving their struggle with the truth. Israel can too.

In the end there can be no peace without justice, no justice without truth. Washington must reject its role as the champion of the Israeli cause of expansion and dispossesion of the Palestinian Arabs. The American electorate could be moved to apply the necessary political pressure on Congress to stop foreign aid and other support if the President would take this issue to the public. When President Bush presented his reasons for withholding the US$10 billion he expalained his case and clearly articulated why this action was in the national interest, the

electorate believed and supported him.[6] The same would work now on a uninformed American public and an American Jewery who already supports land for peace. A President in his second term with approximately two years left has enough time to see the task through and will probably not hurt his hopeful successor in the process. There is ample evidence that there is popular support from the Jewish electorate in the United States and popular support for Clinton in Israel. Mel Salberg, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, told President clinton in October of 1997 that nearly 85 percent of Jews support the peace process. He also stated, "[w]e stand behind you to create an environment that will allow the parties to make peace."[7]

As every major newspaper and magazine ran articles about the the 50th anniversary of Israel, one theme ran clear, a preponderance of Israeli Jews are suffering some angst about their state and its policies toward the Palestinians.[8]

It is also in Israel's best interest to act now to reach some accommodation with Arafat. Israel has overwhelming military dominance in the region and they hold the strategic and political upper hand with the Palestinians. They must, in the end, address the Arab grievances. Why not address them when Israel has all the power and the ability to achieve a result favorable to Israel? None of us can forsee the future. The tables may turn in the future and the Arabs will achieve some high ground.

Conclusion

Middle East peace is a possibility that exists, but will require a radical shift on the part of Washington and Israel. According to Martin Indyk, who under President Clinton has worked on the NSC staff, has been the US Ambassador to Israel and currently is the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, the United States is not an impartial arbiter of the peace process. He stated, "the President and the Secretary of State made it clear that our approach in the negotiations will invlolve working with Israel, not against it."[10] Peace will only be achieved through a solution to the Palestinian question. A solution is only possible if the United States goes beyond the political rhetoric and truly acts as an honest broker in the peace process.

Israel's existence is irreversible. Even the Arabs, with very few exceptions from minutely small radical groups, have recognized and accepted this fact. The limited voice sreaming for the demise of Israel is the equivalent of the Freemen of Montana calling for the destruction of the US

government. They can be reduced to a whisper with some accommodation in the form of Palestinian self-determination.

The state of Palestine exists too. According to John V. Whitbeck, an international lawyer, Israel has never defined its borders as this would limit the ability of Israel's leaders to redefine the country geographically. The State of Palestine has effectively defined its borders and they are the area occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. Israel has never legally annexed the territories of the West Bank and Gaza since the international community would never recognize it and it would raise some difficult issues as to the status of the inhabitants. "Since November 1988 when Palestinian statehood was declared, the only state asserting sovereignty over those portions of historical Palestine which Israel conquered in 1967 (aside from expanded East Jerusalem) has been the State of Palestine, a state recognized as such by 124 other states encompassing the vast majority of humankind."[11]

If Israel is allowed to consolidate its conquest over the West Bank, it will solidify and perpetuate the conflict between Israel and the Arab world. This means 4 million Israeli Jews will have 200 million Arab enemies in the region. It is conceivable that the Muslim world consisting of 1/5 of the world's population can also be counted in that enemy number. There are millions of Palestinians living in other Middle Eastern countries. They will not forget the Palestinian fight for self-determination. The best we can hope for given the current course is that the violence will be contained in the Middle East. The most likely scenario is that Americans will once again be "targets for terrorists" as the friend and accomplice of the oppressor, Israel. The current failed peace is not in our best interest and achieving peace is within our capability.

Normally the political conflict is between ideals of the state and self-interest of the state. However, in the Middle East and with respect to Israel, we violate our ideals and act contrary to our self-interest. Our actions undermine our important relationship with our Arab allies and threatens our ability to influence those allies when it is in our interest. What could be more morally corrupt and self-destructive?

For a nation to act in contravention to its best interest is irrational. For a nation to make policy, provide fiscal, diplomatic and political resources to another country despite the inevitable disintegration of national interest is beyond reason. Both the United States and Israel have the

ability to impose a short-term solution on the Palestinian Arabs that favors the current Israeli government. What they cannot do is impose peace.

The solution to the Middle East problem calls for some exceptional political leadership. It means taking the moral high ground and ignoring the money and influence of ethnic groups and their lobbies. The President and his advisors have outlined our natinal interests in A National Security Strategy For A New Century. We clearly fail to follow our own plan for success as laid out in the implementing strategies that apply to the Middle East; "continue America's leadership as the world's most important force for peace; create more jobs and opportunities for Americans through a more open and competitive trading system that also benefits others around the world; and increased co-operation in confronting new security threats that defy borders and unilateral solutions."[12] We can lead Israel and the Palestinians to peace if truly act as an "honest broker." Arab countries are willing to integrat Israel into the Middle East once peace is a reality which will create a new and open market. Finally, Israel's refusal to abide by international law and the agreements they made in the Oslo Accords threatens more than Palestinian self-determination. It threatens US and Israeli interests. The potential for violence and instability in the region is increased by Israeli intransigence.

In the National Security Strategy also states, " . . . we also recognize that if we withdraw U.S. leadership from the world today, we will have to contend with the consequences of our neglect tomorrow."[13] If we corrupt that leadership; if we subvert our nations values and interests to curry political favor, then we also must contend with the consequences of our neglect tomorrow.

[1] Harry Dunphy, "Privacy Sought for Mideast Talks," Associated Press, 3 April 1998. This story was downloaded from the AP wire using the World Wide Web at: http://wire.ap.org/APnews/center_story.html?FRONTID=MIDEAST&STORYID=APIS6KIN8M8O.

[2] The author was of member of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai desert in 1981/82. I saw first hand how the Israelis destroyed the town of Sharm el Shaik before withdrawing. Similar destruction was witnessed at all former Israeli sites in the Sinai.

[3] Meron Benevenisti, Intimate Enemies Jews and Arabs in a Shared Land, (Berkely: University of California Press, 1995) p 30.
[4] Robert Marquand, "Conversations With Outstanding Americans," The Christian Science Monitor, 27 May 1997, downloaded from the paper's website at: [http://plweb.csmonitor.com/plweb-turbo/cg...+archives+179785+1++middle%20east%20peace].
[5] Paul Findley, "Even as USS Liberty's Heroic captain Receives New Honor; Cover Up of Israeli Attack on His Ship Continues," The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, vol. XVII (March 1998): (26,88). The USS Liberty was attacked on 8 June 1967 in broad daylight by Israeli fighters. The Liberty was unarmed. Thirty-four sailors died and 171 were injured as a result of the attack.
[6] Christopher Hitchens, "Settled Why Bush will yield to Israel and 'the lobby'," Harper's vol. 284 (January 1992): (57-62).
[7] Augustus richard Norton, "Clinton's Middle East Legacy: A Scuttled Peace," Current History vol. 97 (January 1998): (5).
[8] Patrick Martin, "Israeli's midlife crisis," The Globe and Mail 25 April, 1998, p D1,D4. This was part of a five artilce series which ran for the next week. I found articles in The Washington Post, The Christian Science Monitor, The New York Times, and Economist full of extensive information about the paradox many Jews suffer with respect to the Jewish state, the question of Palestine and the struggle of what it means to be a Jew. All reflect on attitudes toward Arabs and Palestine.
[9] Richard Falk, "Can US Policy Toward The Middle East change Course?" The Middle East Journal vol. 47, (Winter 1993): (15).
[10] Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "Islamist Perceptins of U.S. Policy in the Middle East," in The Middle East and the United States, ed. David W. Lesch (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), p 432.
[11] John V. Whitbeck, "Now Drop the Veil: The Palestinian State Exists," in Wahsington Report on Middle East Affairs vol. XVI (March 1997): (19,96).
[12] The White House, A National Security Strategy For A New Century (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, May 1997) (2).
[13] The White House, A National Security Strategy For A New Century, p 3.

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