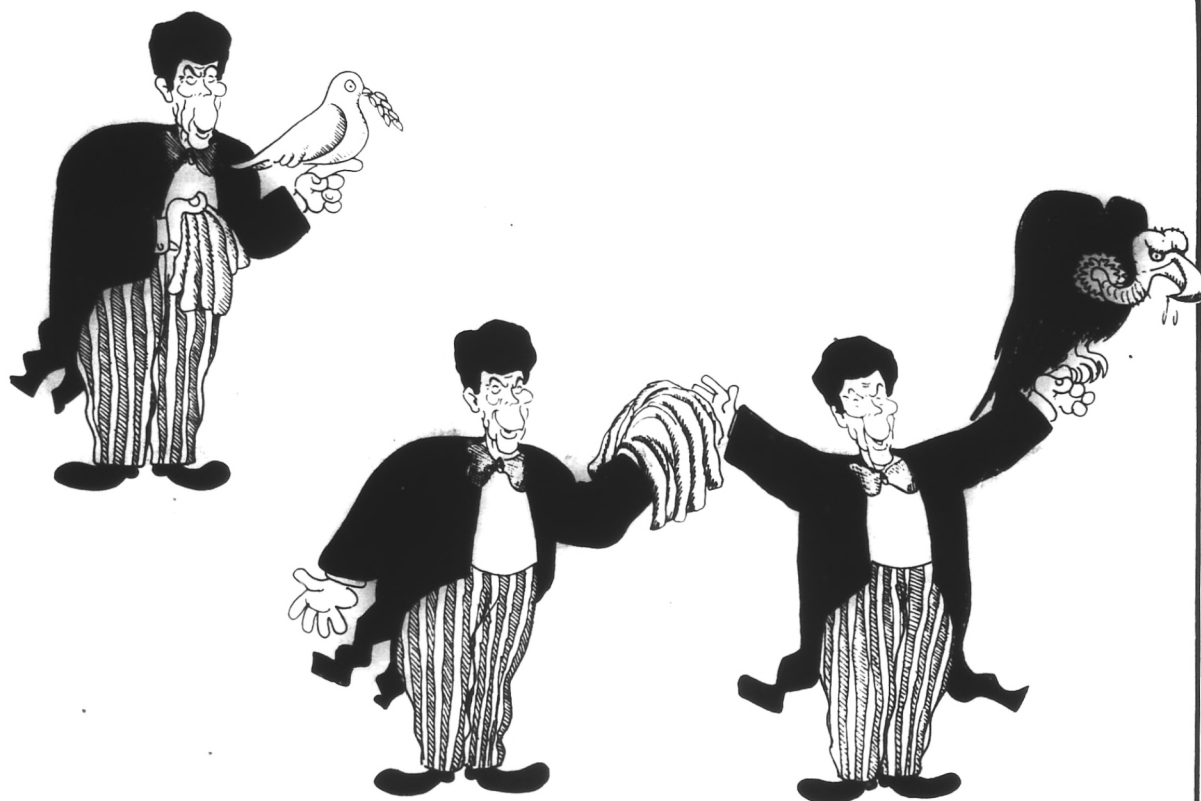


free palestine

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America drops the mask

'Full-fledged diplomatic and military alliance' with Israel

AT LAST the facade that America has an interest in securing a just settlement to the Middle East conflict should have been laid finally to rest. In a series of moves, some more public and obvious than others, Washington has snubbed her Arab allies on repeated occasions and made clear her unyielding endorsement of both Israel's policies of territorial

expansion and the Zionists' military methods of dealing with political issues. It is not surprising to find Tom Dines, the Executive Director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee — the powerful Zionist lobby in Washington — describing US-Israeli relations as 'a deep, broad-based partnership progressing, day-by-day toward a full-fledged

diplomatic and military alliance'.

Suddenly, the United States has focused on what it terms 'state sponsored-terrorism' to justify its bombing raids on Libya, and to warn of possible attacks against Syria.

There are few intelligent people who believe that Washington has any serious, principled reservations about the use of terrorist methods — simply about by whom and against whom they are used. Reagan's concern about terrorism is easily exposed for the sham that it is. Repeatedly over the past 38 years Israel has used terrorist methods against the Palestinians and her Arab neighbours in an effort to force them into submission; the creation of the Zionist state was only possible through terrorism used to drive the Palestinians from their homeland. ►



Destruction in Tripoli, Libya, caused by US bombing: Israel admits being closely involved in all stages of the raid.

► And if the Middle East is too emotive a subject for our Western friends to view dispassionately, one only has to turn to American-funded terrorism and American-trained terrorists in Nicaragua and Angola. It is ironic that Qadhafi should be accused of bank-rolling the IRA, when it is well known that IRA funds are well supported from the United States; perhaps that support is not government-provided, but it is government-approved, just as IRA militants are given refuge in the United States.

Washington managed to manoeuvre itself into bombing Libya largely through the success of its own disinformation machine — having spent several years, since the earliest days of the Reagan administration, dedicated to destabilising the Qadhafi regime in Libya, Reagan was finally forced to act in response to the unsubstantiated allegations against Libya which have been issued routinely over the years.

The consequences of the Libya raids have been not only to reinforce Qadhafi's popularity at home — those who believe he is unpopular with the vast majority of Libyans deceive themselves and embark on perilous missions — but it has undermined America's allies in the region, and those who believe that just solution based on compromise could be secured by peaceful means, even though with compromise it would entail a major shift in US policy towards Israel. It was always argued that such a shift could be achieved.

Today, it is evident that the shift is going in Israel's direction. Whether the shattering of illusions may work, in the long term, for the restoration of uncompromised Arab rights in Palestine only time will tell. The only certain thing is that conflict and bloodshed will continue.

Even if the Americans had succeeded in their mission to assassinate Qadhafi and instal a pro-American regime, the manifestation of 'terrorism' — as given in US examples — would not be eliminated. Not simply because Qadhafi's exist-

ence is marginal to 'terrorism', but because when a dispossessed and oppressed people find that logic, justice and international law are rejected as a means for securing their rights, then logic, justice and international law will not determine their own strategy. Only when a fair and just solution to the Middle East conflict is achieved, based on respect for the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination in an independent state and the right to enjoy full human rights in all areas of Palestine, only then will the issue of Palestinian 'terrorism' be resolved.

It is argued that 'terrorism' comes from those who do not want a solution. That is not true. From the first Palestinian hijackings in the early 1970s — which coincided with the Rogers Plan — to more recent actions, 'terrorism' has generally increased at times when Palestinian rights were being further threatened by moves to impose solutions which would prolong the denial of those rights and ensure submission to Zionism in Palestine. Rightly or wrongly, many have seen the Palestinian-Jordanian initiative aimed at such a solution. Meanwhile, the American role in the Palestinians' suppression has become more and more obvious — from the arming of Israel for the invasion of Lebanon to backing the Israeli bombing of the PLO Headquarters in Tunis and the attempted assassination of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. It is not surprising therefore that US interests should themselves become targets of military action by Palestinian combatants.

US policy shift

The US response to the Palestinian-Jordanian peace initiative, which King Hussein elaborated in such detail in his 19 February speech, and the early May rejection by Congress of arms supplies to Saudi Arabia, coupled with the new high-profile 'anti-terrorism' campaign

which appears motivated solely by anti-Arab, pro-Zionist sentiments, indicate quite starkly that the United States no longer has any commitment to a political solution in the Middle East, however compromised might be the formula from original Arab aspirations. Of course, some will argue, that has always been the US position. What is new, however, is the openness with which this fact is now presented by the Americans themselves.

Ronald Reagan's election as President reflected a major shift in US foreign policy engineered by a concerted public relations campaign to halt the trend against foreign intervention which followed the US defeat in Vietnam. It was perhaps no coincidence that the hawks should mobilise Zionist opinion to their cause.

In 1972, alarmed by George McGovern's nomination as Democratic presidential candidate in 1972, the Washington hawks established the Coalition for a Democratic Majority to mobilise opinion for interventionist policies aimed at confronting the 'Soviet threat'. Prominent in the CDM was Eugene Rostow, President Johnson's Under Secretary of State.

Jimmy Carter's nomination in 1976 showed the CDM they had failed to make their impact on US policy, and the CDM gave away to a broader-based Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), which established links with the Republicans, to argue the need for rearmament and to warn of the dangers of detente. The respected liberal American Jewish Committee journal *Commentary* emerged as a mouthpiece for the CPD, under its editor, Norman Podhoretz, a leading CPD member.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) at Georgetown University in Washington became one of the think-tanks — organisations funded by big-business ostensibly to conduct research but notable as propaganda organisations for the specific opinions of their founders — through which CDP views were promoted. CSIS staff included Edward Luttwak, a dual Israeli-British national who was promoted as its 'strategic expert', and Robert Neumann, former US ambassador to Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. Chairman of CSIS's International Research Council was veteran Zionist Walter Laqueur; the editorial board of the CSIS journal *Washington Quarterly* included Senator Moynihan and Anne Armstrong — Nixon's ambassador to London. Executive editor was Michael Ledeen, who co-authored articles attacking Libya and Billy Carter's association with Qadhafi.

Likewise, the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis Inc (IFPA) is a consultancy established by the Fletcher School of Law and Philosophy at Tufts University. Both the Institute and the School have close connections with Israel's security establishment, and with US defence and foreign affairs under the

Reagan administration. Geoffrey Kemp is now a National Security Council staff specialist on Middle East affairs, having left the Fletcher faculty, while Richard Burt and Scott Thompson went into US foreign policy posts. Assistant Defence Secretary Richard Perle was formerly a IFPA consultant; IFPA director Robert Pfaltzgraff is one of Perle's Pentagon consultants; another IFPA associate, Amoretta Hoeber, is a high-ranking civilian official of the US army, while her husband Frank Hoeber, a Washington military consultant, works with JINSA. Jonathan Jay Pollard, arrested in in Washington in 1985 on charges of spying for Israel, did graduate studies at the Fletcher school, and was associated with IFPA.

In 1977 Podhoretz and Rostow joined forces amongst the founders of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), to rally Jewish votes behind candidates backing the CPD's foreign and military strategy, arguing that Israel's survival depended on increases in US military spending. The moving figure in creating JINSA was Stephen Bryen; when he moved to the Pentagon in 1981, he wife Shoshana Bryen took over the running of JINSA. Since 1981, a number of JINSA members have worked at the Department of Defence (Pentagon) in Washington including JINSA founder Stephen Bryen and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defence, Richard Perle, a former business partner of the Navy Secretary, John Lehman. Bryen, Perle and Lehman each have close links with Israel's military establishment. Prior to his appointment as Navy Secretary, Lehman was a board member of a Philadelphia-based think-tank funded by American supporters of Israel; he also had a defence consultancy with ties to the Israeli arms industry.

Richard Perle was the subject of a 1970 FBI investigation when a tapped telephone conversation on the Israeli embassy line showed Perle, then assistant to Senator Henry Jackson, passing classified information given to him by a member of the National Security Council; the NSC suspect was Helmut Sonnenfeldt, a member of the NSC staff known for his Israeli sympathies.

Stephen Bryen was appointed to the Defence Department staff in 1981, and is in charge of safeguarding the export of US arms and military technology. In 1984, he was investigated on suspicion of espionage on behalf of Israel and other offences. On the order of the Assistant Attorney-General, the investigation was closed, but the issue continues to arouse interest in the press. Only recently, Bryen retained lawyers to represent him, Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Kampelman — the firm also retained to represent the Israeli government and Israeli Military Industries.

Stephen Bryen's assistant at his Pentagon office is Barbara Ledeen, wife of Michael Ledeen, editor of *Washington Quarterly*.

Hired in 1983, without any known



Reagan: Declaring war on the Arabs

experience in military and defence technology matters, she had worked on a Washington journal reporting archaeological discoveries in Israel. Shoshana Bryen arranged the appointment of Michael Ledeen to JINSA's board of directors.

The role these known Zionist sympathisers may have had within the policy-making process in Washington with regard to the US targeting of Libya and its attempts to assassinate Qadhafi is likely to remain a matter of speculation. Yet America's over-riding concern with the security of Israel, which permits it to turn a blind-eye to Israeli terrorism on a much larger scale than anything Qadhafi is likely to have sponsored, has been consolidated by the operations of Zionist sympathisers — some of whom, such as Jonathan Pollard, are known to be Israeli agents.

In late 1983, Pollard was assigned as a specialist on the Middle East to anti-terrorism intelligence at the Naval Investigative Service, following the Pentagon decision to re-organise its intelligence bureaucracy. Each of the services was ordered to establish improved anti-terrorism alert centres. Appointed to co-ordinate the intelligence gathering was Noel Koch, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence, who prior to joining the Pentagon had been chief lobbyist of the Zionist Organisation of America.

Miraculous power

The presence of committed Zionists within the Pentagon and National Security Council must, some observers believe, distort and perhaps deliberately misinterpret information passed to the President and his advisers. At the same time, the Zionist lobby plays a powerful factor in determining the views of representatives in Congress.

Elected political representatives in the United States have long been expected to put Israel first; those who advocate a balanced approach in the Middle East are quick to feel the ire of the Zionist lobby, which is active through pro-Israel political action committees (PACs). The Rambo-style of foreign affairs adopted by the Reagan White House has coincided with a major shift in Zionist support from the Democrats to the Republicans. In

1983-84, the Democrats received 79 per cent of the \$3.5 million distributed by around 70 pro-Israel PACs, but in 1984-85 the Republicans received 55 per cent, leaving the Democrats 34 per cent down on the previous year.

Pro-Israel PACs raised \$6 million to influence the November 1984 congressional elections. £222,400 went to finance Democrat Jim Hunt in North Carolina in an unsuccessful bid to unseat Sen Jesse Helms, who the Zionists considered unsympathetic to Israel. Even where the Zionist-financed challenge is unsuccessful, the threat of the Zionist lobby supporting the opposition camp has a miraculous power of concentrating a candidate's mind on the Zionist cause.

'The intensely ideological senate race in North Carolina between conservative Republican Senator Jesse Helms and Liberal Democratic Governor Jim Hunt has taken a bizarre, non-ideological twist: a contest over support for the state of Israel, with literally millions of campaign dollars at stake,' wrote columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak. 'Although cut from the pro-Israeli political cloth that fits most liberal Democrats, Mr Hunt hitherto has not particularly stressed his devotion to Israel. Now, however, he has made significant fundraising inroads into the American Jewish community by warning that a third term for Mr Helms could produce an anti-Israel chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This has galvanised Mr Helms. He showed up in the Senate with a prominent right-wing Likud member of the Israeli Knesset... The next day he told the Senate that the United States "should never pursue any plan that envisions separation of the West Bank from Israel." The US embassy, he said, should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.'

Republican Senator Charles Percy, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, lost his Illinois seat to a Democrat Congressman Paul Simon, whose campaign was funded by 62 pro-Israel PACs to the tune of \$283,850. In primary elections for Republican candidate, Percy's conservative opponent Tom Corcoran received \$51,150 from 21 pro-Israel PACs. In addition, a California property investor, Michael Goland, is reported to have invested \$1.1 million on an 'independent' television, direct-mail and poster campaign to defeat Senator Percy, whose apparent 'crime' had been to support arms sales to Saudi Arabia, and expressing the view that there was 'no opportunity for peace in the Middle East unless an entity for the Palestinians' was created.

Last year, for the first time, the Chairman of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the leading pro-Israel lobby in the USA, came from the Republican Party, Robert Asher of Chicago, while a trend has also emerged in which the Zionist lobby, in its enthusiasm to back Reagan, is actively discouraging Jewish Democrats from challenging prominent Republicans.



Syrian target: Israel troops in armoured personnel carrier patrol northern border

Syria in Israel's sights

IT IS unusual for Israel and the United States to be out-of-step, but in the weeks preceeding the US attack against Libya, Israel appeared to be the sole voice against the trend of presenting Libya as the force behind the terrorist attacks at Rome and Vienna Airports. On several occasions, Israeli Premier Shimon Peres expressed the view that Libya was not the culprit, and that the guilty men responsible for the two airport operations were linked to Syria.

The preparations for an Israeli offensive against Syria were well in hand before British-based US F-111's hit Libya. Nevertheless, the American attack on Tripoli and Benghazi, and the attempt to assassinate the Libyan leader Muammer Qadhafi — which was the objective of the blitzkrieg on his Tripoli home — has clearly raised the political temperature in the Middle East, and with it the opportunity for Israel to further set the ground for what it will euphemistically call 'a pre-emptive attack' against Syria.

Military considerations apart, three issues of domestic politics appear likely to enhance the possibility of an Israeli attack: Prime Minister Shimon Peres is becoming increasingly keen to find an issue over which he can renege on the agreement to handover the premiership to the Likud — a brief war against Syria and a victory for Peres would open the chance for an election; Israel's economy is in a dire condition and, relatedly, its military industries face flagging sales and exports — Israeli wars have always brought a boost in foreign (US) aid and

□ A new Arab-Israeli war in 1986 appears increasingly likely. The target is expected to be Syria. The propaganda war had been set in motion, even before the bombing of Libya and subsequent events.

would revitalise its armaments industry; on the occupied Syrian Heights the local Druze population is proving increasingly militant in opposing the Israeli occupation — a war on the Syrian front would provide a much needed opportunity to push the troublesome Golan population across the border.

Contrary to the current propaganda campaign by Israel, there are no strong reasons for Syria to start a war, in fact the reverse is true: leaving aside President Assad's traditionally cautious approach to military options, the balance remains in Israel's favour and any failed military operation by Syria would very likely end Assad's presidency; the removal of Egypt from the military equation following the Camp David accords with Israel effectively cut the military option from Syria's hand; finally, reductions in oil revenues will further reduce the number of Arab leaders ready to back any Syrian military scheme.

The accusing finger pointed at Damascus by Shimon Peres in the aftermath of the Rome and Vienna airport incidents was one in a series of propaganda initiatives and provocations aimed that estab-

lishing Syria as the villain of the peace in the Middle East and providing the pretext for an Israeli attack.

Last December Israel accused Syria of threatening Israeli security when the Damascus regime moved ground-to-air SAM missiles into Lebanon's Bekka Valley and along the border with Israeli forces on the Golan Heights. It was claimed, perhaps rightly, that the missile deployment would, or could, curtail Israel's freedom of flight over Lebanon on reconnaissance missions. Officials of the Israeli military command spoke of an 'extremely dangerous situation'; Gen Moshe Levy, the Israeli Army chief, said that SAM-2 missiles placed along the Syrian border posed a threat to Israeli flights over Lebanon.

Hand-in-hand with the propaganda war to discredit Syria in Europe and the United States, efforts were made to provoke the Damascus regime. There was the incident in which Syrian aircraft were shot down last autumn by Israel; and subsequently the hijacking of the aircraft carrying Syrian government officials from Libya to Damascus — which was then presented by Israel as a mistake due to misinformation that Palestinian 'terrorist' leaders were on that flight. Some Israeli observers believe there was no mistake; the Israeli intention was to raise the temperature in Damascus.

Since then, the scenario in the Middle East has changed. In December and January, Israel faced the fearsome prospect that the Jordanian-Palestinian initiative might lead Washington to make

some demands of Israel on which a peace settlement could be established. That factor has been removed, perhaps temporarily, by King Hussein's divorce from Arafat's PLO. The US attack on Libya has put any peace process firmly off-stage for the time being. But Israel sees as negative factors the improvement in relations between Syria and Jordan, and the prospect that Damascus and the PLO might once again set aside their mutual enmity and form a new alliance.

There is no disputing that Syria is re-arming with Soviet support. Israel's traditional strategy has been to ensure that no Arab neighbour is permitted to establish parity, let alone superiority, with Israel's military forces.

Syria now has an array of missiles. It has acquired the SS-21 ground missiles, which are considered highly accurate, with a range of 120 km. Two new SA-5 missile sites with new control systems have been introduced, and the anti-aircraft batteries destroyed in 1982 have been replaced. It has SAM-2s, with a range of 56 km, SAM-6s with a similar range to provide defence against high altitude attack aircraft, and SAM-8s designed to take on low-flying attackers. According to western intelligence reports, Syria's command, control and communications systems have been revised and strengthened. Moreover, it now has about 500 combat aircraft, and the armed forces have been improved

through technical training and incentives for conscripts to remain in the services to ensure a more efficient force. Three new divisions have been added to the six divisions, bringing the total strength to around 500,000 men, and two new corps command structures introduced into the army.

These determined efforts by President Assad to mould the Syrian armed forces into a credible defence force are impressive. To the Israelis, the developments are alarming. Syrian territory on the Golan Heights has been under Israeli military occupation since the 1967 war, and Syria has a legitimate cause for launching an offensive to liberate that territory which the Israelis have vowed never to evacuate, emphasising their long-term commitment by annexing the Golan into the state of Israel in December 1981.

The build-up of Syria's military capability is not, however, the only factor which has concerned the Israelis. The increasing Arab emphasis on a negotiated settlement through an international peace conference, perhaps only temporarily diverted by the US confrontation with Libya, also alarms Israelis intent on maintaining control of the Golan and the Palestinian territories on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Contrary to the image of a belligerent Syria threatening the Israeli state, the Syrian Ba'ath Party in 1975 issued a

document indicating that in return for the Golan territory, Syria was prepared to reach a non-belligerency agreement with Israel. The recent rapprochement with Jordan suggests that President Assad may eventually show more flexibility towards negotiations, if these offer the prospect of a movement of Israeli forces from the Golan — even if the end result were the demilitarisation of the Heights.

More than Syria's military capability, the prospect of Syria becoming part of an Arab peace initiative alarms the Israelis. Some point to the fact that Assad, who in 1983 suffered a serious heart attack, is an astute politician, whose years as Syria's leader are limited by his health and age. He is aware of Syria's military capabilities, and its limitations. A move to reach some form of political arrangement with Israel for the return of the Golan cannot be ruled out, and that Israel sees as no less a threat to Zionist ambitions than a military attack.

The so-called 'pre-emptive attack' by Israel could hit Syria on both the military and political levels, and ensure Israel's continued occupation of the Golan. Syria's control over the territory in Lebanon from which Abu Nidal and other militant Palestinian and Arab guerrilla groups operate could, in the current hysteria concerning Arab 'terrorism', provide the pretext for an Israeli attack. Washington could hardly object.

POLITICS

New Israeli plan for Gaza

□ Two new initiatives proposed by Israel are being presented as advancing stability in the Middle East. Critics, however, argue that the proposals are designed to avoid the central issue of Palestinian rights and Israel's obligations to withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967.

ISRAEL is reported to be secretly planning what is described as 'a new peace initiative' aimed at securing Israeli control over the Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip. The proposal, for the establishment of an Egyptian-Israeli 'condominium' in the Gaza Strip, has been presented to the US Secretary of State, and Washington has expressed its support for the scheme.



The Gaza Strip is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, housing 700,000 Palestinians, most refugees from the 1948 war when the state of Israel was established in Palestine. It was ruled by Egypt from 1948 until the Israeli occupation in 1967, since when it has been under Israeli rule.

The Gaza 'condominium scheme' follows various similar schemes for the

West Bank, which have included proposals for an Israeli-Jordanian condominium to rule the West Bank Palestinians; a settlement based on 'territorial compromise'; and West Bank 'autonomy'.

The Gaza proposal envisages 'significant autonomy' for the 700,000 Gazan Palestinians, with Egypt and Israel sharing joint responsibility for security and

► defence. According to reports, 'the question of sovereignty would be left until a later stage'.

The move is the latest in a series of Israeli initiatives aimed at diverting international attention from securing an overall settlement to the Palestine conflict based on the restitution of the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination in an independent sovereign state following Israeli withdrawal, under the terms of UN Security Council Resolution 242, from Gaza and other territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. The proposal is being discussed with the Americans in the hope that it will gain support in the vacuum created by Jordan following the rift between King Hussein and the PLO.



Shimon Peres

Israel is keen to seize the initiative following Jordan's confrontation with the PLO leadership, and to regain the credibility lost to the joint Jordanian-Jordanian initiative which undermined Israel's position in Washington. In a bid to reassert Israel's image as 'peacemaker' in the Middle East, Premier Shimon Peres called for closer economic cooperation between the West and the Middle East, during a visit to Washington in early April. He called on Europe and Japan to join the United States in funding a multi-billion dollar 'Marshall Plan' aid programme for Middle East countries. He argued this would enhance stability in the region through closer economic ties.

Commenting on the Israeli proposal, a *New York Times* report said, 'The plan is particularly attractive to Washington officials as a way of supporting the Palestinians living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank', while Secretary of State George Shultz welcomed the plan, saying, 'History shows us that nations which are economically successful are best equipped to resolve their differences with their neighbours.'

'If Peres truly wants peace, why is he beating around the bush and setting conditions that prevent peace?' asked a commentary on the Israeli Prime Minister's visit to Washington, broadcast on Damascus radio. 'The path to peace is clear. If Peres wanted peace, there would have been no need to go to Washington to announce initiatives. It is simply a matter of Israel giving up its occupation of other people's territories and usurpation of other people's rights, and respecting the UN charter and international law.'

NEWS ANALYSIS



Hussein gives an insight into US manoeuvres

□ Accusing the PLO of duplicity and failing to adopt a consistent approach to a Middle East peace process, King Hussein's 19 February speech provided a detailed insight into American strategy to abort the Arab peace effort. **Louis Eaks** examines the details

KING HUSSEIN's 19 February 'Address to the Nation' was a lengthy and detailed review of the joint Jordanian-PLO initiative to secure an international peace conference to resolve the Palestine conflict, providing a move-by-move account of proposals agreed between Jordan and the PLO, and the responses of the United States. Yet although the conclusion reached by Hussein was that there was no further purpose to be served by a joint Jordanian-PLO peace effort, the scenario presented by the King and his interpretation of events shows that the firmest obstructions to the initiative came not from the PLO but from Washington.

Point-by-point the United States sought to avoid assisting the peace process, and even the concessions which Hussein disclosed he had secured from Washington were vague and ambiguous.

According to Hussein, agreement on a four-point procedure was reached in talks between the PLO leadership and Jordan prior to approaching the United States at the end of March 1985. This

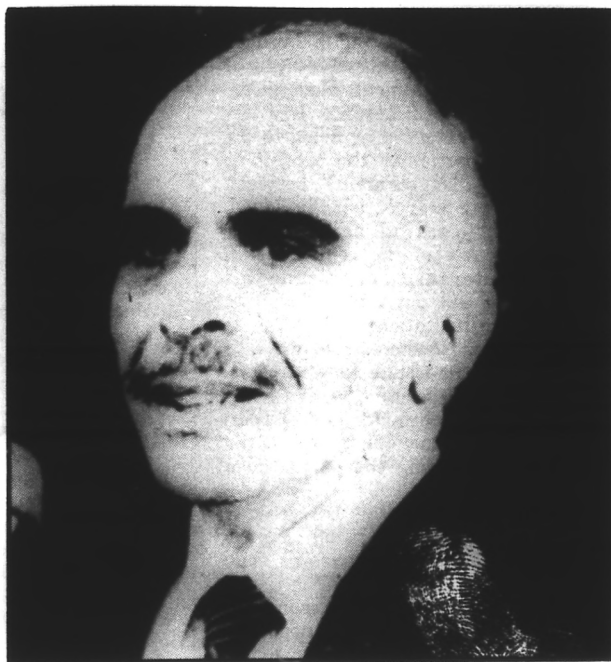
envisaged (1) the US administration to start a dialogue with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation composed of Jordanian government officials 'and members chosen by the PLO'; (2) After this dialogue, the PLO would declare its acceptance of UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which would pave the way for (3) US recognition of the PLO and a meeting between US officials and members of the PLO in Washington 'to discuss the issue of a peaceful settlement and relations between them would be normalised' which would remove 'a major political obstruction blocking the Arab peace plan and open the way to (4) an international peace conference.

Yet Hussein detailed how the United States refused to meet leading Palestinians with any authority within the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which forced the Jordanian-Palestinian initiative to turn its attention to securing US backing for an international peace conference. Again, Washington failed to grasp the opportunity available to secure a Middle East peace settlement by rejecting essential points on which a just settlement would necessarily be based.

The first phase of the Jordanian-Palestinian initiative centred on achieving the first three objectives — a dialogue between the US and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, the PLO reciprocating with a declaration accepting 242 and 338, followed by US recognition of the PLO and a meeting to discuss the phase two objective, the convening of an international peace conference.



PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat: Firm on rights



Jordan's King Hussein: Seeking compromise

From the outset, the Jordanian emphasis was compatible with the known American position rather than attempting to secure any major concessions from Washington. Acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338, while ignoring other more pertinent UN Resolutions defining Palestinian rights, was central to both US and Jordanian approaches. Moreover, Jordan's formula for a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation was designed to meet US embargoes on recognition of, or even discussions with, the PLO.

The four-point procedure, already designed to meet US conditions, was conveyed to Washington in late March 1985, and in early April the US response was received, making it conditional that the joint delegation's members 'were not leading members of the PLO or any fida'iyyin (resistance) organisation'.

The American condition was hardly a sign of a positive approach to a major Arab initiative, but the PLO leadership responded by providing the names of three candidates, which in Hussein's words, the US rejected 'because they did not meet their criteria'.

The following month, May 1985, Hussein met the US Secretary of State at the Red Sea resort of Aqaba, and was reassured that members of the Palestine National Council — the parliament of the PLO — would be considered by the US, although Washington expressed 'doubts about the PLO's intentions', fearing that the PLO would not follow the proposed meeting by accepting Resolutions 242 and 338.

On 18 May, Arafat and the Jordanian Prime Minister agreed the text of a statement which Hussein would issue at the end of his planned visit to Washington, in which it was stated that Jordan and the PLO envisaged negotiations 'to achieve a peaceful settlement within the

framework of an international conference on the basis of related UN resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 and 338'.

In June, the US 'affirmed their position regarding Palestinian participation' which Washington said should be limited to four, two from the occupied territories, and two from 'the outside'. In response, in July the PLO provided a list of seven names from which the US could select four. However, Washington approved only two, and again expressed the view that the PLO would not 'fulfil the second phase of the agreed scenario, namely to accept Security Council resolutions 242 and 338'. It is interesting to note the change from the approved Jordanian-PLO commitment to 'related UN resolutions, including Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338' to the US wording which omits reference to 'related UN resolutions'.

However, on 15 August 1985, Jordan, on the basis of further meetings with Arafat, advised Washington their fears were unfounded, and asked for a positive reply concerning a date for the proposed meeting between US officials and the joint delegation. The reply, received on 7 September, said such a meeting was not possible, which Hussein admits meant 'terminating this scenario before the first step was taken'.

Second Phase

At this point it was decided to turn discussions to the 'second phase' — the international peace conference. And again, according to Hussein's presentation of the facts, Washington's approach was obstructive and devious.

Earlier in May 1985 when the subject had been first raised in talks between Jordan and the US, the latter's position was 'a flat rejection of an international conference', Hussein said. Washington's

commitment was to 'a unilateral approach similar to that of Camp David' based on a meeting between Israel and the joint delegation in a US city; when this was rejected, the US proposed the meeting should be in Geneva at the United Nations, thus ignoring Arab rejection of unilateral contacts with Israel which would ignore Syrian and other Arab issues.

In October 1985, having failed to secure any progress on the planned meeting between the US and joint delegations, the subject of the international conference was raised again. Washington responded by making the Soviet participation conditional on the restoration of diplomatic relations between Israel and the USSR. This was opposed by the Arab side, and after three days of talks Washington agreed to the UN convening the conference; participants to be the Permanent Members of the Security Council, including the USSR, as well as parties to the conflict. Resolutions 242 and 338 would form the basis of the conference, and the PLO would have to accept 242 and 338 to qualify for an invitation — again no reference was made to the all important 'related UN resolutions' on Palestinian rights.

Even with apparent Jordanian concessions on this point, Hussein concedes failure to reach 'a final understanding with the US administration concerning the powers of the conference'.

In fact, other US conditions were made at this stage, namely Palestinian participation only as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, and that the PLO renounce 'terrorism' — the US terminology for Palestinian armed resistance. Nevertheless, the PLO responded on 7 November in Cairo, when Arafat issued a statement denouncing terrorism in all its forms (although this did not apply to legitimate armed resistance).

► On the basis of a meeting in January 1986 in London with Richard Murphy of the US State Department, Hussein recalls, 'The American position had developed to the extent of agreeing to the right of the parties to the conflict to submit any disagreements between them to the conference', but, he added, 'we could not reach full agreement regarding the role of the conference in settling disputes among negotiating parties...The US did not commit itself to accepting the invitation of the PLO to the conference.' Nowhere in the whole of Hussein's speech, despite some cosmetic shifts in the US position, is there any indication that the US and Jordan reached any agreement on the role of the conference in binding the parties to a settlement.

Later that month, the US sent to Hussein in Amman 'a written commitment'. According to Hussein this said: 'When it is clearly on the public record that the PLO has accepted Resolutions 242 and 338; is prepared to negotiate peace with Israel; and has renounced terrorism, the USA accepts the fact that an invitation will be issued to the PLO to attend an international conference.'

'The USA would then start contacts with the Soviet Union with the purpose of participating, together with the other permanent members of the Security Council, in the international conference, which would be convened by the UN Secretary General,' Hussein added.

Breakthrough?

Was this the breakthrough? Hussein says he assumed the PLO would accept these terms, 'since the assurances met the PLO's requirements'. During four days of talks in Amman, involving Hussein and Arafat, the PLO refused to accept 242 'within this text', and proposed an amendment 'indicating the agreement of the USA to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination within the context of a confederation between Jordan and Palestine'.

Hussein argued that this was a matter for Jordan and the PLO and not the United States, but the PLO persisted. In late January Jordan conveyed the PLO proposal to Washington, with the US responding that (1) the Jordanian-Palestinian accord did not involve the USA; (2) 'The USA supports the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people as stated in the Reagan peace initiative'; (3) 'The PLO, like any other party, has the right to propose anything it wishes, including the right to self-determination, at the international conference; (4) the US adheres to its position.

Again Jordan pressed the PLO to accept; Arafat remained firm; the USA was again asked to meet the PLO's terms and refused. In the discussions that followed, Arafat insisted that the United States make that all important concession, stressing, in Hussein's

The PLO responds to Hussein's claims

AMERICA'S refusal to recognise the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, and their right to self-determination within an independent Palestinian state, were the key points on which the Jordanian-Palestinian peace initiative broke down, according to the PLO Executive Committee, which met in Tunis in early March in the wake of King Hussein's 19 February speech calling for the Palestinians to establish a new PLO leadership to replace Yasser Arafat, whom he accused of rejecting major new US concessions to the PLO.

The PLO denied Hussein's assertion that it was responsible for the failure of the initiative, and challenged whether any real progress had been made in changing the American position, as Hussein had claimed.

It pointed out that the PLO had accepted the Jordanian attempt to influence Washington despite 'the realities of the US stand', but after several months of Jordanian efforts, Hussein was forced to admit that Washington, in the words of the PLO communique, 'continues to refuse to recognise the PLO and the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, (and) to insist on advance recognition by the PLO of resolutions 242 and 338 and of Israel's right to exist within secure and recognised borders, and that the PLO must announce the suspension of armed struggle in exchange for US agreement to the PLO's participation in the international conference within a joint delegation'. Washington had also, the PLO said, 'left the door open to Israel to reject all that it believes to be inappropriate or that it sees as being in conflict with its interests'.

The PLO stressed that 'a solution cannot be achieved except through guaranteeing the Palestinian people's

right to self-determination in an explicit and clear manner'. Responding to Hussein's assertion that the matter of self-determination could be ignored in any agreement with the US because it was a Jordanian-Palestinian matter, the PLO said it was not 'an internal and bilateral issue'; it was the United States and Israel, not Jordan, which denied the Palestinian people this right.

'The PLO rejects the US understanding of the international conference with regard to its framework and prerogatives,' said the communique. 'The US stand has remained confined to regarding it as a mere international umbrella for direct negotiations between concerned parties.'

Contrary to King Hussein's claim, the PLO had not retreated on the issue of accepting Resolution 242. The Arab position, adopted by the Casablanca summit, and supported by the PLO, was for a programme that included 'US recognition of the PLO and the Palestinian people's national legitimate rights, including their right to self-determination, as well as other political guarantees for the PLO in order to convene the international conference in return for the PLO's acceptance of international resolutions, including 242 and 338', said the Tunis statement.

'How can the organisation alone be asked to recognise Resolutions 242 and 338 while the USA refuses to recognise in return the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and refuses to provide all the political guarantees for the PLO?' the PLO asked. 'How can the PLO be held responsible for retreating when the PLO has never accepted Resolution 242 without it being linked to all other UN resolutions and the right to self-determination?'

words, 'that despite the positive development of the American position, recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people did not encompass the right to self-determination to which, the PLO insisted, the USA ought to give its prior approval.'

Nor, of course, was the PLO prepared to accept Resolution 242 in isolation to those UN resolutions which specifically define the rights of the Palestinians; the United States would not accept any resolutions other than 242 and 338 which make no such references.

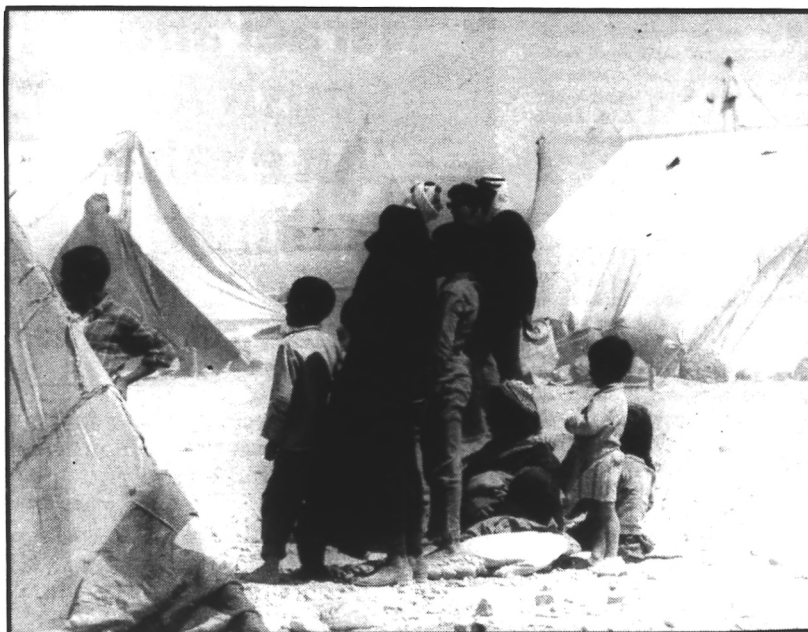
Yet, Hussein went on to announce an end to co-operation between Jordan and the PLO. 'We are unable to continue to co-ordinate politically with the PLO lead-

ership until such time as their word becomes their bond, characterised by commitment, credibility and constancy,' he declared. No criticism was voiced of the United States, and its stubborn refusal to recognise the PLO and commit Washington to securing the UN defined rights of the Palestinians, nor of Washington's persistent military, economic and political support for Israel's unlawful military occupation of Arab lands and the dispossession of the Palestinians.

All quotes are taken from King Hussein's 19 February 1986; translated from Arabic by the BBC Monitoring Service.

Israeli myth of the Palestinian exodus

□ Thirty-eight years ago, 400,000 Palestinians fled their homes during the prelude to the establishment of the state of Israel in Palestine. Israel has always claimed the Palestinians' exodus was at the calling of Arab leaders; the Palestinians have a different story to tell.



AN ISRAELI army intelligence report dated 30 June 1948 has been uncovered by an Israeli scholar which seems set to abolish a basic feature of the Zionist argument as to why 400,000 fled their homes between 29 November 1940, when the UN adopted its resolution proposing the partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, and 1 June 1948. Almost as many again left their homes by the end of 1948.

The Zionist case has rested on the claim that the Palestinians left their homes voluntarily, the Zionists claim, and therefore Israel has no responsibility to allow them to return.

This proposition has been long disputed. Palestinians tell of terrorist attacks on their villages and homes by Zionist underground organisations, and warnings that they would be massacred if they remained in their homes. Further dispute centres on whether such activities by the Zionist underground were part of a centrally orchestrated campaign planned by the pre-state Hagana organisation, which later became the Israeli army, or due to over-zealous local Zionist commanders.

It was an unequal battle. The Palestinians were largely disarmed by the British during the Mandate, while Jewish immigrants were permitted to join Zionist military forces. The Haganah offered 30,000 front-line troops supported by 32,000 garrison forces, 15,410 settlement police, and 32,000 Home Guard. The Irgun terrorist group was 5,000 strong, and the Stern Gang had 1,000 fighters. It was not until December 1947 that the Palestinian Arabs attempted to raise a 5,000-strong Arab Liberation Army, which was untrained, ill-equipped, and vastly outnumbered.

In a book to be published next year,

historian Dr Benny Morris will reveal the details of the 1948 Israeli army intelligence report, which gives detailed analysis of the reason for the 400,000 exodus up to 1 June 1948. According to the report, some 70 per cent of Palestinians dispossessed fled as a result of Jewish military action, while only 30 per cent might be credited to Arab broadcasts reporting the situation in Palestine, such as the massacre of 250 Palestinians in the village of Deir Yassin in April 1948. The intelligence report blames 15 per cent of the exodus on the activities of Zionist terror groups such as the Irgun (responsible for Deir Yassin) and the Stern Gang, and 55 per cent by official and approved operations by the Hagana and the fledgling Israeli army.

In May 1943, Gen Patrick J. Hurley, personal representative of President Roosevelt in the Middle East reported to the President on the situation in Palestine, and warned that the Zionist organisation in Palestine had indicated its commitment to 'an enlarged programme' which included 'an eventual transfer of the Arab population from Palestine to Iraq'.

In 1947 and 1948 the expulsion of the Palestinians was put into action. Massacres such as at Deir Yassin caused panic amongst the Arab population, fuelled by Zionist psychological warfare aimed at inciting an exodus, with broadcast warnings that the Jews were using 'poison gas and atomic weapons', and that Arab villages would be razed to the ground.

For further details on the Palestinian exodus, in his book 'Dispossessed — The Ordeal of the Palestinians 1917-1980' (Published by Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1980), David Gilmour examines the causes.

40,000 Palestinians fled their homes between November 1940 and June 1948, and almost as many again left their homes by the end of 1948. An Israeli army intelligence report recently uncovered admits 70 per cent fled because of Zionist terrorism.

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Israel and South Africa: 'An exalted calling'

A review of military collaboration

SOUTH AFRICA's recent military attacks against several of her neighbouring states, on the pretext of hitting at 'terrorist' bases, has served to recall the close military ties which have been developed between Pretoria and Tel Aviv over many years. As South Africa has become increasingly isolated from international arms supplies, military co-operation with Israel has continued and expanded.

It is a relationship which rarely receives attention in the western media. From time-to-time small items of news appear, such as the report last November that South Africa was planning to buy an electronic warning border fence from Israel. 'The fence is the type used by Israel to prevent guerrillas infiltrating its frontiers,' Capital Radio in Umtata reported. 'A South African mission recently visited the country with a view to buying the fence.'

Little attention was given to comments by Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Bishop of Johannesburg during his visit to London in October 1985, when according to the *Jewish Chronicle* he 'strongly condemned co-operation between Israel and South Africa' and 'denounced the relationship between Jerusalem and Pretoria'.

'I can't square co-operation with South Africa, especially when it comes from the Jews with their type of history...you are willing to collaborate with people who carry out a policy similar to that of the Nazi's just because you want friends,' he said.

Much to the embarrassment of both Israel and South Africa, the testing of a nuclear device in the South Atlantic-Indian Ocean area in September 1979 draw attention to the military links between the two countries. Although Israel, South Africa and the United States have attempted to conceal information about the incident, monitored by the US spy-satellite, a Washington anti-apartheid group forced the disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act of details confirming that South Africa had, in fact, and despite a Carter White House pronouncement to the contrary, exploded a nuclear device. It was widely accepted that the device was almost certainly a joint Israel-South Africa project.

In November 1984, South African Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha, arrived in Jerusalem on what was described as a 'private visit'. Despite some

□ Increasingly isolated from the international community, South Africa's rulers are assured of continued close collaboration with Israel. The use of military strikes against neighbouring countries, and the fact they are both settler states are not the only common factors which link Pretoria to Tel Aviv.

Israel embarrassment at his arrival, which was bound to prompt some closer examination of the ties between the two governments, he was greeted at Tel Aviv airport by a Foreign Ministry entourage, held talks with Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, was guest at a dinner given by Shamir, and met with Abba Eban, Chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee.

The *Jewish Chronicle*, 9 November 1984, attempted to maintain public ignorance of the links, while observing: 'Aspects of Israeli-South African relations which are concealed outweigh those which are revealed, as was shown this week during the four-day visit to Israel of Mr R.F. (Pik) Botha, the South African Foreign Minister.' The report also noted that 'in a series of warm meetings with Mr Shamir', Israel's Foreign Minister 'did not denounce apartheid or express Israel's moral revulsion at South Africa's race separation policies', the latter being the Zionist euphemism for apartheid and racism. It cited the 'foreign press' for reports 'on the issue of arms purchases and military training of South Africans by Israelis in guerrilla warfare'.

The *Times* correspondent on 6 November noted: 'Israeli military ties with South Africa have been increasing in recent years, and are reported to include co-operation in the manufacture of tanks, naval vessels, artillery and small arms. It was confirmed yesterday that Mr Moshe Arens, Israel's former Defence

Minister, visited South Africa recently as a guest of Jewish fund-raisers.'

The commonly shared values of Zionism and apartheid have linked the two forces since the earliest days of the Zionist movement. Today those links, at a governmental level, find Israeli advisers and military equipment playing a crucial role in the South African security forces.

And at a time when it is now fashionable in Washington to adopt a tough anti-apartheid stance, Israel's role as the US-proxy is likely to increase. 'Americans will find that Israel is a useful, resourceful ally,' Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, teacher of psychology at the University of Haifa, wrote in the *New York Times* on 6 January, 1983, in an article stressing the mutual interests of Israel and the United States.

Noting that Defence Minister Ariel Sharon had been on a visit to South African-occupied Namibia in 1982 (the year Sharon sent Israeli forces into Lebanon), Beit-Hallahmi commented: 'In South Africa, for example, Israelis are actively involved in defending what Washington sees as a strategic outpost — with the complicity and encouragement of the United States. In this case Israel's help is particularly important because although the United States is committed to the survival of the South African regime, Washington feels that the overt support it can give to South Africa is severely limited by world public opinion.'

'What others regard as "dirty work", Israelis regard as defensible duty, and even, in some cases, an exalted calling,' he added. 'Throughout the Third World, Israel has succeeded where other Western powers have failed in using force to blunt the edge of native radicalism.'

'The symbols of this involvement are familiar,' he boasted, 'the Uzi sub-machine gun and the Galil assault rifle, and Israeli officers named Uzi and Galil, and Golan.'

'There is virtually no Israeli opposition to this global adventurism,' Beit-Hallahmi declared. 'Some American policy makers may have qualms about what Israel does to aid such countries as South Africa and Chile, but they can hardly dismiss what Israel has done to advance their own concerns. The role of regional and global policeman is something many Israelis find attractive, and they are ready to go on with the job — for which they expect to be handsomely rewarded.'

Lebanon: Israeli occupation will continue

ISRAEL has said that 'under no circumstances' will its military forces be withdrawn from southern Lebanon. The statement came from Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin during a visit to Israel by Finland's Foreign Minister Paavo Vaeyrynen during March.

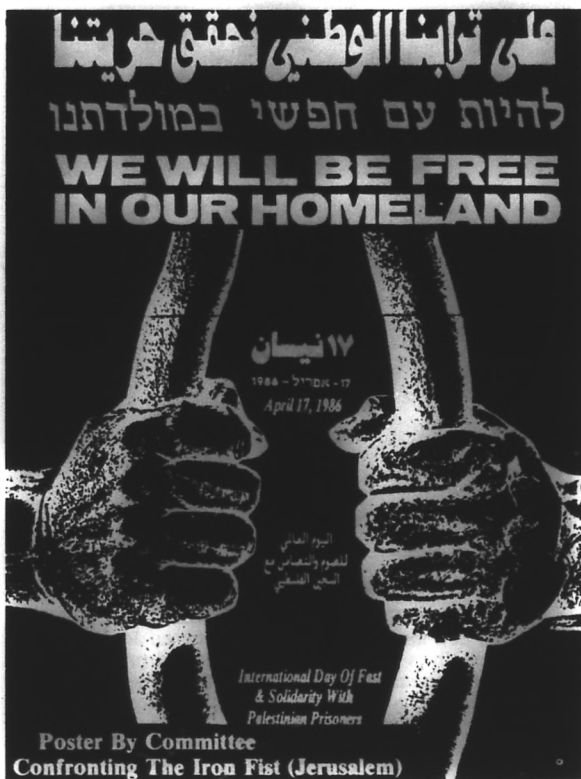
In his talks with Israeli leaders, Vaeyrynen had proposed that Israel should consider adopting a more positive attitude towards the UNIFIL troops in south Lebanon, that Israel should contribute to a solution of UNIFIL's financial problems by exerting influence on the USA to increase its financing of UNIFIL, and that Israel should cooperate with UNIFIL, thus helping the UN force to carry out its mandate.

While Premier Shimon Peres gave the impression in the talks that he was at least prepared to give serious consideration to Finland's views, Defence Minister Rabin told a press conference that Israel would under no circumstances agree to the UN troops moving any closer to the international border than at present. The Finnish request, he said, would mean that the UNIFIL troops would move south and that Israel would withdraw its troops from south Lebanon. This Rabin said, was 'out of the question'.

Vaeyrynen rejected Israeli demands that Finland change its attitude to the PLO. According to Helsinki radio, the Foreign Minister stressed, 'The PLO was the most important representative of the Palestinians and Palestinian autonomy would have to be taken into account in the overall solution of the Middle East question.' In an indirect reference to the Israeli attack on the PLO headquarters in Tunisia, he said that while Finland condemned all kinds of terrorism, failure to honour the territorial integrity of states also amounted to terrorism.

Deaths of two British friends of Palestine

THE deaths have been reported of two of Britain's leading defenders of the Palestinian cause, Sir John Bagot Glubb and Miss Elizabeth Monroe. Sir John, better known as Glubb Pasha was commander of Jordan's Arab Legion for 17 years, during which the state of Israel was created in



In Jerusalem the Committee Confronting the 'Iron Fist' has been formed to provide concrete opposition to Israel's repressive policies against the Palestinians. This poster for an international day of protest is by the Palestinian artist Suleiman Mansour.

Palestine; he was sacked by the King Hussein in 1956 because of Britain's role in the Suez invasion, but he remained a firm friend of the Palestinians. Miss Monroe's career as a scholar and administrator spanned working with Arnold Toynbee at Chatham House in the 1930s to a Fellowship at St Antony's College Oxford. Although aged 81 when she died in March, Miss Monroe had remained active in her support of the Palestinian cause; she was a founder of the 'Friends of Bir Zeit'.

Legitimate acts of resistance

BRIEFLY, the United States has recognised PLO military operations as 'legitimate actions of resistance'. In a television interview broadcast in the Gulf region last March, Gordon S Brown, the State Department's director of Arabian Peninsula affairs, said the acts were part of a 40-year Arab-Israeli conflict, and therefore different from assaults by Palestinians against innocent civilians in other countries. 'Some PLO actions I would expect would fall within our definition of legitimate actions of resistance within occupied terri-

tories,' he said on Worldnet, the US Information Agency's global television information system, established to promote US government opinion. Israel immediately protested to the State Department, forcing Brown to claim that he had 'mishandled' his response to a question.

New Zionist settlement in Hebron

ISRAEL'S Housing Minister David Levy on 27 April announced that construction work would begin 'in the next few weeks' at the site known as the Jewish Court in occupied Hebron. The intention, he added, was to settle 'many dozens' of Jewish families at the site in the Arab city, and that two more new settlements would be established in the Hebron hills this year. Levy's remarks were made during a cornerstone laying ceremony in the village of Neve Daniyyel in Gush Etzion.

According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, Zionist settlement in the occupied Arab territories, not including Arab Jerusalem, increased by 4,800 in

1985, bringing the total to 42,000. Figures released by the West Bank Data Base project in Jerusalem show that the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Jerusalem during 1984-85 increased by 9,400, compared with 15,500 in the previous year.

Spain upgrades PLO links

SPAIN has announced that it is to raise relations with the PLO to diplomatic status, following talks in Tunis between Foreign Minister Fernandez Ordenez and the Arab League Secretary General Chadli Klibi. PLO bags, radio communications and officials will enjoy diplomatic status, and the organisation will be entered in the diplomatic list, although the PLO office will not be recognised as an embassy. Mr Ordenez said Spain recognised the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including an independent state if they wished. The Palestinian problem, he added, was not a refugee one but a matter of national rights. Earlier this year, Spain granted diplomatic recognition to Israel, and the latest move is seen as an attempt by the Madrid authorities to dampen Arab protests over the move.

Israeli public favours annexation

A POLL shows that 54 per cent of the Israeli public favours annexing the West Bank while 46 per cent opposes annexation. The poll was carried out during March by the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies of the Tel Aviv University. In other finds, the poll showed that 50 per cent of the people believe the policy towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories is too lenient, while 45 per cent feel it to be too harsh.

\$28.5 million for the PLO

THE PLO has received \$28.5 million from the Saudi government as part of the kingdom's support for the Palestinian movement, it was disclosed in March by the Saudi Press Agency. The sum donated it a quarter of the \$114 earmarked by Saudi Arabia for the PLO this year.

Moscow brings Arafat in from the cold

A MEETING between the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev would seem to be a matter of routine when the two men attended the recent East German Communist Party congress in Berlin, but even the PLO in a radio commentary hailed the event as 'very important', accusing 'those who fish in murky waters' of having made 'incorrect deductions' concerning relations between the PLO leadership and Moscow.

Yet, even the PLO commentary acknowledged that the meeting was no routine matter as it might have been in earlier days, expressing 'great appreciation' to East Germany's Honecker 'for his constructive role which made the meeting possible'.

Hailing the Berlin meeting as a 'summit', the PLO emphasised the meeting had 'eliminated the problems surrounding Palestinian-Soviet relations in the previous stage'. The PLO did not elaborate this point.

In fact, the last Soviet leader to hold talks with Arafat was Yuri Andropov in January 1983, about the time Arafat was reaching agreement with King Hussein that a PLO representative would join a Jordanian delegation for talks with the Israelis.

At that meeting, Arafat sought Soviet support for the establishment of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation as a peace proposal, and pressure on Syria not to interfere in the PLO's activities. Neither demands appealed to Andropov, who refused 'to meddle in the PLO's internal affairs', according to one East European observer.

Despite several overtures to Moscow, that was Arafat's last official visit to the USSR. He attended Andropov's funeral, but failed to get a meeting with Chernenko, and in turn he travelled to Chernenko's funeral in Moscow but failed to get a meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, desite being one of the first to arrive in Moscow for the funeral, and one of the last to leave. 'The most significant event at the Chernenko funeral was the non-meeting between the new Soviet leader and Arafat,' commented a Yugoslav commentator, who described Arafat's status in the Soviet capital as 'persona non grata'.

The Yugoslav news agency observed at the time, 'The erosion of Arafat's unlimited credit which he used to enjoy in Moscow started at the beginning of 1983. Until then he had the right at any time without announcing the fact to travel to the Soviet



PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat meets with Egypt's President Mubarak in a move to heal the rift between Jordan and the PLO. Hussein is reported to have rejected proposals for a Jordan-PLO summit under Egyptian auspices, and political co-operation is not expected to resume soon. Meanwhile, moves are underway to reunite the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front (DFLP) into the PLO. Talks began in Algiers during mid-May which seem likely to move towards calling a meeting of the Palestine National Council. Abu Musa's Rejection Front which split from the PLO is reported to be in a state of disarray.

capital and be received by top leaders.'

It is probably no coincidence that the Berlin meeting followed the apparent rupture in relations between King Hussein and Yasser Arafat, but it may also have been approved by Moscow as a signal to Washington that the Soviet Union retains its interests in backing a PLO role in any peace process, and that any US action in the region cannot be undertaken without considering the Soviets' place in the Middle East.

PLO acts to stem new revolt

KING Hussein's call to the West Bank Palestinians to remove Yasser Arafat from the leadership of the PLO was most notable in its clear failure to bring any credible response from

the occupied territories. 'There is no mood on the West Bank to accommodate the king on this,' a Western diplomat was quoted as saying in the **International Herald Tribune**. 'It must be shattering for him. There hasn't been a single credible response from the West Bank.'

However, the unity of the PLO has been further threatened by a revolt within its ranks by Colonel Atallah Atallah, also known as Abu al-Za'im, the Fatah representative in Jordan and assistant Chief of Staff of the PLO armed forces.

Abu al-Zaim followed Hussein's lead by openly criticising the PLO leadership for refusing to accept UN Security Council Resolution 242. In late April he refused to attend a Palestine Supreme Military Council meeting in Baghdad, and called instead for a Fatah general conference to discuss 'all outstanding issues'. He accused Arafat of being 'better suited to the run-

ning of farm than to leading a revolution', and called for an end to what he described as 'the nightmare of this tyranny'.

The PLO leadership, already weakened by Abu Musa's Syrian-sponsored revolt on the Rejectionist-wing of the movement, responded firmly by appointing Arafat's loyal deputy Khalil al-Wazir as Atallah's replacement. Arab sources report that Arafat also stopped the payment of salaries to the 1,000-strong Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) in Jordan after reports that PLA commander Col Khatib was in league with Atallah to create a split.

The Atallah revolt came as reports suggested the prospect of improved relations between Arafat's PLO and the Syrian regime. Atallah's promotion from head of PLO military intelligence following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 was one factor which provoked the Abu Musa rebellion; Atallah was blamed for incompetence as military intelligence commander for Palestinian losses during the war. Although Atallah claims to have widespread support within Fatah ranks inside Jordan, there is no evidence to back this view.

However, the Palestine News Agency, WAFA, is reported to have stopped issuing its daily bulletin in Amman, and the PLO liaison office in the Jordanian capital closed — signs that tougher restrictions on Palestinian activities have been imposed by the Jordanian authorities in the wake of Hussein's speech.

Jordan approves West Bank seats

The Jordanian parliament has approved a draft law providing for Palestinian representation in the House of Representatives. The House will now have 142 seats instead of 60: 71 seats for the East Bank (Jordan) and 71 for the West Bank (Palestine), 60 of which which are allotted to the occupied West Bank and 11 to the refugee camps in the East Bank. The move proposed by King Hussein, is seen as a new initiative by Jordan to challenge the PLO's status as sole representative of the Palestinian people.

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