



**THE BEGIN-SADAT CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES**

# **The Oslo Disaster**

Efraim Karsh



Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 123

**THE BEGIN-SADAT CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES  
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY**

*Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 123*

# **The Oslo Disaster**

Prof. Efraim Karsh

## The Oslo Disaster

Prof. Efraim Karsh

© The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies  
Bar-Ilan University  
Ramat Gan 5290002 Israel  
Tel. 972-3-5318959  
Fax. 972-3-5359195

[office@besacenter.org](mailto:office@besacenter.org)  
[www.besacenter.org](http://www.besacenter.org)  
ISSN 0793-1042

**September 2016**

Cover image: Sa'ar Ya'akov, Israel GPO

## **The Begin-Sadat (BESA) Center for Strategic Studies**

---

The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies advances a realist, conservative, and Zionist agenda in the search for security and peace for Israel. It was named in memory of Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat, whose efforts in pursuing peace lay the cornerstone for conflict resolution in the Middle East. The center conducts policy-relevant research on strategic subjects, particularly as they relate to the national security and foreign policy of Israel and Middle East regional affairs.

*Mideast Security and Policy Studies* serve as a forum for publication or re-publication of research conducted by BESA associates. Publication of a work by BESA signifies that it is deemed worthy of public consideration but does not imply endorsement of the author's views or conclusions. *Colloquia on Strategy and Diplomacy* summarize the papers delivered at conferences and seminars held by the Center for the academic, military, official and general publics. In sponsoring these discussions, the BESA Center aims to stimulate public debate on, and consideration of, contending approaches to problems of peace and war in the Middle East. The *Policy Memorandum* series consists of policy-oriented papers. The content of the publications reflects the views of the authors only. A list of recent BESA Center publications can be found at the end of this booklet.

### **International Advisory Board**

---

*Founder of the Center and Chairman of the Advisory Board:* Dr. Thomas O. Hecht

*Vice Chairman:* Mr. Saul Koschitzky

*Members:* Prof. Moshe Arens, Ms. Marion Hecht, Mr. Robert Hecht, Prof. Riva Heft-Hecht, Hon. Shlomo Hillel, Mr. Joel Koschitzky, Amb. Yitzhak Levanon, Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, Mr. Robert K. Lifton, Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney, Mr. Seymour D. Reich, Mr. Greg Rosshandler, Amb. Zalman Shoval, Amb. Norman Spector, Ms. Drorit Wertheim, Mr. Muzi Wertheim

### **International Academic Advisory Board**

---

Prof. Desmond Ball *Australian National University*, Prof. Ian Beckett *University of Kent*, Dr. Eliot A. Cohen *Johns Hopkins University*, Prof. Irwin Cotler *McGill University*, Prof. Steven R. David *Johns Hopkins University*, Prof. Yehezkel Dror *Hebrew University*, Prof. Lawrence Freedman *King's College*, Prof. Patrick James *University of Southern California*, Prof. Robert J. Lieber *Georgetown University*

### **Research Staff**

---

*BESA Center Director:* Prof. Efraim Inbar

*Research Associates:* Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaacov Amidror, Dr. Efrat Aviv, Dr. Yael Bloch-Elkon, Brig. Gen. (res.) Moni Chorev, Dr. Gil Feiler, Prof. Jonathan Fox, Prof. Hillel Frisch, Prof. Eytan Gilboa, Col. (res.) Aby Har-Even, Eado Hecht, Dr. Tsilla Hershco, Prof. Efraim Karsh, Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Mordechai Kedar, Prof. Avi Kober, Prof. Udi Lebel, Dr. Alon Levkowitz, Dr. Yaacov Lifshitz, Prof. Ze'ev Maghen, Ambassador Arye Mekel, Col. (res.) Dr. Eran Lerman, Dr. Liad Porat, Mr. Amir Rapaport, Mr. Uzi Rubin, Dr. Jonathan Rynhold, Prof. Shmuel Sandler, Maj. Gen. (ret.) Dr. Emanuel Sakal, Dr. Eitan Shamir, Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Dany Shoham, Prof. Shlomo Shpiro, Dr. Max Singer, Prof. Joshua Teitelbaum

*Director of Public Affairs:* David M. Weinberg

*Program Coordinator:* Hava Waxman Koen

*Publications Editor (Hebrew):* Alona Briner Rozenman

*Publications Editor (English):* Judith Levy



# **The Oslo Disaster**

## **Table of Contents**

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Executive Summary .....                       | 7  |
| Introduction .....                            | 9  |
| Farewell to Peace .....                       | 11 |
| A False Partner .....                         | 11 |
| A Missed Opportunity .....                    | 14 |
| Tarnished Security .....                      | 16 |
| Sustaining the "Armed Struggle" .....         | 16 |
| Hamastan Rising .....                         | 19 |
| International Implications .....              | 21 |
| The PLO Ascendant .....                       | 21 |
| Hamas's Growing Legitimization .....          | 26 |
| Israel's Growing De-legitimization .....      | 28 |
| Domestic Implications .....                   | 32 |
| Radicalizing the Israeli Arabs .....          | 32 |
| Destabilizing Israel's Political System ..... | 38 |
| Palestine Betrayed .....                      | 42 |
| Conclusion .....                              | 46 |
| Notes .....                                   | 48 |



# The Oslo Disaster

*Prof. Efraim Karsh*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Viewed from a 23-year vantage point, the Oslo “peace process” between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) stands as one of the worst-ever calamities to have hit Israelis and Palestinians.

For Israel, it has been the starkest strategic blunder in the country’s history – establishing an ineradicable terror entity on Israel’s doorstep, deepening its internal cleavages, destabilizing its political system, and weakening its international standing.

For West Bank and Gaza Palestinians, it has brought about subjugation to corrupt and repressive PLO and Hamas regimes – regimes that have reversed the hesitant advent of civil society in these territories, shattered their socioeconomic wellbeing, and made the prospects for peace and reconciliation with Israel ever more remote.

This abject failure is a direct result of the Palestinian leadership’s perception of the process as a pathway not to a two-state solution — meaning Israel alongside a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza — but to the subversion of the State of Israel; not to nation-building and state creation, but to the formation of a repressive terror entity that would perpetuate conflict with Israel while keeping its hapless constituents in constant and bewildered awe as its leaders line their pockets from the proceeds of this misery.

So long as things on the Palestinian side are permitted, or even encouraged, to remain as they are, there will be no progress whatsoever toward peace. There will be no advancement towards peace in the



framework of a French-initiated international conference, nor even in bilateral talks (were the Palestinians to be somehow coerced to return to the negotiating table).

Just as the creation of free and democratic societies in Germany and Japan after World War II necessitated a comprehensive sociopolitical and educational transformation, so it will only be when Palestinian society undergoes a real “spring” that the century-long conflict between Arabs and Jews can at long last be resolved and a semi-functioning Palestinian state come into being. This requires sweeping the corrupt and oppressive PLO and Hamas rulers from power, eliminating endemic violence from political and social life, and teaching the virtues of coexistence with Israeli neighbors.

Sadly, the possibility of a Palestinian spring, which seemed to be in the offing in 1993 when the PLO hovered on the verge of extinction and West Bank and Gaza leadership appeared eager to strike a historic deal within the framework of the Washington peace negotiations, has been destroyed for the foreseeable future by the Oslo “peace process.”

# The Oslo Disaster

*Prof. Efraim Karsh*

## INTRODUCTION

Twenty-three years after its euphoric launch on the White House lawn, the Oslo “peace process” stands as one of the worst calamities ever to have afflicted Israelis and Palestinians, substantially worsening the position of both parties and making the prospects for peace and reconciliation ever more remote.

For Israel, the process has been the worst blunder in its political history, weakening its national security in several key respects:

- On the strategic and military levels, it allowed the PLO to achieve in one fell swoop its strategic vision of transforming the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into terror hotbeds that would disrupt Israel’s way of life (to use Yasser Arafat’s words).<sup>1</sup> And while West Bank terrorism was largely curbed in the early 2000s through sustained counterinsurgency operations and the construction of a security barrier (though not before it had inflicted unprecedented pain on Israel), Gaza has become a formidable terror entity that represents a clear and present danger to the vast majority of Israel’s population. That danger can be contained through repeated military campaigns, but not eradicated altogether. The

---

Efraim Karsh, incoming director (October 2016) of the BESA Center, is Professor Emeritus of Middle East and Mediterranean Studies at King’s College London, Professor of Political Studies at Bar-Ilan University, and a Principal Research Associate (and former director) of the Middle East Forum (Philadelphia). A founding director of the programme for Middle East and Mediterranean Studies at King’s College (currently the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies), which he headed for sixteen years, he is editor of the *Middle East Quarterly* and *Israel Affairs* academic journals, and the author of over 100 scholarly articles and sixteen books, including *The Tail Wags the Dog: International Politics and the Middle East* (Bloomsbury, 2015); *Palestine Betrayed* (Yale, 2010); *Islamic Imperialism: A History* (Yale, 2006); *Arafat’s War: The Man and his Battle for Israeli Conquest* (Grove, 2003); *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East 1798-1923* (Harvard, 1999); and *Fabricating Israeli History: The “New Historians”* (Routledge, 1997).

likely creation of a similar terror infrastructure in the West Bank after the attainment of Palestinian statehood will make Israel's security predicament infinitely greater.

- Politically and diplomatically, Oslo instantaneously transformed the PLO (and, to a lesser extent, Hamas) into an internationally accepted political actor while upholding its commitment to Israel's destruction, edging toward fully fledged statehood outside the Oslo framework, and steadily undermining Israel's international standing. The ending of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian population of the territories within three-and-a-half years from the onset of the process has gone totally unnoticed (due partly to Palestinian propaganda, partly to Israel's failure to get this critical point across), with the Jewish state still subject to international opprobrium for the nonexistent "occupation."
- Domestically, Oslo radicalized Israel's Arab minority, nipping in the bud its decades-long "Israelization" process and putting it on a collision course with Israel's Jewish community. No less importantly, it made Israeli politics captive to the vicissitudes of Palestinian-Israeli relations, with the PLO and Hamas becoming the effective arbiters of Israel's political discourse and electoral process. Since 1993, only one Israeli government has completed its four-year term, with successive prime ministers and/or prime ministerial aspirants losing their jobs/bids as a direct result of Palestinian terrorism (e.g., Shimon Peres, 1996; Benjamin Netanyahu, 1999; Ehud Barak, 2001; Amram Mitzna, 2003).

On the face of it, these massive setbacks can be considered Palestinian gains. Yet one's loss is not necessarily the other's gain.

The Palestinian leadership's zero-sum approach and predication of Palestinian national identity on hatred of the "other," rather than on a distinct shared legacy, has resulted in decades of dispersal and statelessness. Its transformation of the Oslo process from a vehicle towards a two-state solution into a springboard for Israel's destruction (not to mention the kleptocratic paradise established on the backs of its long-suffering subjects) has brought Israeli-Palestinian relations

to their lowest ebb since 1948. It has reversed the hesitant advent of Palestinian civil society in the territories and shattered Palestinian socioeconomic wellbeing.

This means, in turn, that even if the PLO were to succeed in gaining international recognition of a fully fledged Palestinian state (with or without a formal peace treaty with Israel) and in preventing Hamas from seizing power, it would still be a failed entity in the worst tradition of Arab dictatorships, in permanent conflict with its Israeli neighbor while brutally repressing its unfortunate subjects.

## **FAREWELL TO PEACE**

### ***A False Partner***

“We make peace with enemies,” Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sought to reassure a concerned Israeli citizenry shortly after the September 13, 1993 conclusion of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP, or Oslo I). “I would like to remind you that the [March 1979] peace treaty with Egypt had many opponents and this peace has held for 15 years now.”<sup>2</sup>

True enough. But peace is made with enemies who have been either comprehensively routed (e.g., post-WWII Germany and Japan) or disillusioned with the use of violence: not with those who remain wedded to conflict and war. And while Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was a “reformed enemy” eager to extricate his country from its futile conflict with Israel, Arafat and the PLO leadership viewed the Oslo process not as a springboard to peace but, in the words of prominent PLO official Faisal Husseini, as a “Trojan Horse designed to promote the organization’s strategic goal of “Palestine from the [Jordan] river to the [Mediterranean] sea” — that is, a Palestine in place of Israel.<sup>3</sup>

Arafat admitted as much five days before signing the accords in Washington when he told an Israeli journalist, “In the future, Israel and Palestine will be one united state in which Israelis and Palestinians will live together”<sup>4</sup> — in other words, Israel will have ceased to exist.

And even as he shook Rabin's hand on the White House lawn, the PLO chairman was assuring the Palestinians in a pre-recorded Arabic-language message that the agreement was merely an implementation of the organization's "phased strategy" of June 1974. This strategy stipulated that the Palestinians would seize whatever territory was surrendered to them by Israel, then use it as a springboard for further territorial gains until the "complete liberation of Palestine" was achieved.<sup>5</sup>

The next eleven years till Arafat's death (on November 11, 2004) offered a recapitulation, over and over again, of the same story. In addressing Israeli or Western audiences, Arafat (and his erstwhile henchmen) would laud the "peace" signed with "my partner Yitzhak Rabin." To his Palestinian constituents, he depicted the accords as transient arrangements required by the needs of the moment. He made constant allusion to the "phased strategy" and to the Treaty of Hudaibiya, signed by Muhammad with the people of Mecca in 628, only to be disavowed a couple of years later when the situation shifted in the prophet's favor.

Arafat also insisted on the "right of return" — the Palestinian/Arab euphemism for Israel's destruction through demographic subversion.<sup>6</sup> As he told a skeptical associate shortly before moving to Gaza in the summer of 1994 to take control of the newly established Palestinian Authority (PA): "I know that you are opposed to the Oslo accords, but you must always remember what I'm going to tell you. The day will come when you will see thousands of Jews fleeing Palestine. I will not live to see this, but you will definitely see it in your lifetime. The Oslo accords will help bring this about."<sup>7</sup>

And that was the least of it. Further discrediting the idea of "two states living side by side in peace and security," the PA launched a sustained campaign of racial hatred and political incitement, unparalleled in scope and intensity since Nazi Germany. Palestinians were not only indoctrinated in the illegitimacy of the state of Israel and the lack of any Jewish connection to the land, but were also told of the most outlandish Israeli plots to corrupt and ruin them, wholly congruent with the medieval myth of Jews as secret destroyers and poisoners of wells — from the alleged killing of Palestinian children to get their internal organs, to injecting Palestinian children with the AIDS virus,

to distributing chocolate infected with “mad cow disease” in the Palestinian territories, and so on and so forth.<sup>8</sup>

This revolting practice was sustained by Mahmoud Abbas, who, in stark contrast to his international image as a “man of peace,” is cut from the same cloth as his predecessor: a rejectionist PLO veteran who has never eschewed his commitment to Israel’s destruction and who views the “peace process” as the continuation of his lifelong war by other means. An unreconstructed Holocaust denier (in his doctoral dissertation, written at a Soviet university and subsequently published in book form, he argued that fewer than a million Jews had been killed in the Holocaust, and that the Zionist movement colluded in their slaughter),<sup>9</sup> Abbas has had no qualms about reiterating the vilest anti-Semitic calumnies (as recently as June 2016, for example, he told the European Parliament that Israeli rabbis urged the poisoning of Palestinian water).<sup>10</sup>

Abbas has vowed time and again never to accept the idea of Jewish statehood, most recently in March 2014, when he rallied the Arab League behind his “absolute and decisive rejection to recognizing Israel as a Jewish state,”<sup>11</sup> and in September 2015, when he derided Israel in his UN address as “a historic injustice...inflicted upon a people...that had lived peacefully in their land.”<sup>12</sup> Back home, Abbas was even more forthright, vowing to prevent the Jews from “defiling al-Aqsa with their filthy feet” and stating that “every drop of blood that has been spilled in Jerusalem is holy blood as long as it was for Allah.”<sup>13</sup>

When this incitement culminated in a sustained wave of violence that killed scores of Israelis in a string of stabbings, cars ramming into civilians and occasional shootings, Abbas applauded it as a “peaceful popular uprising.” “We have been under occupation for 67 or 68 years [i.e., since Israel’s establishment in 1948],” he told his subjects in March 2016. “Others would have sunk into despair and frustration. However, we are determined to reach our goal because our nation stands behind us.”<sup>14</sup>

In other words, more than two decades after the onset of the Oslo process, Israel’s “peace partner” will not even accept its right to exist, and considers its very creation an “occupation” of Palestinian lands.

### *A Missed Opportunity*

What makes this state of affairs all the more tragic is that at the time of the Oslo accords, the Rabin government had a potentially far better peace partner in the form of the West Bank and Gaza leadership. To be sure, Israel's hands-off political and administrative policies during the two-and-a-half decades from the June 1967 capture of the territories to the onset of the Oslo process in 1993 enabled the PLO to establish itself as the predominant force there at the expense of the more pragmatic local leadership. But there was no blind, collective subservience to the organization's goals or means, as evidenced *inter alia* by its failure to entice the residents of the West Bank and Gaza into a popular struggle against Israel during this period (most terror attacks emanated from the outside, from Jordan in the late 1960s and then from Lebanon).

"The war that Arafat was waging against Israel was not true guerrilla warfare," wrote Palestinian author Said Aburish. "Unlike the then recent examples of the Algerians and the Vietnamese, and the resistance against the Japanese in China and the Germans in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, Arafat was operating not on home ground but from safe bases outside Israel."<sup>15</sup>

In an effort to cover up this embarrassing reality, the PLO adopted the slogan that "there is no difference between inside and outside." But there was a difference, and a rather fundamental one. Unlike the PLO's diaspora constituents (the "outside" in Palestinian parlance), who upheld the extremist dream of returning to their 1948 dwellings at the cost of Israel's destruction, West Bankers and Gazans (the "inside") were amenable to peaceful coexistence that would allow them to get on with their lives and sustain the astounding economic boom that had begun under Israel's control.

While the "outside" had no direct interaction with Israelis (or, for that matter, with any other democratic system), Israel's prolonged rule had given the "inside" Palestinians a far more realistic and less extreme perspective. Hence their perception of Israel as more democratic than the major Western nations;<sup>16</sup> hence their opposition to terror attacks and overwhelming support for the abolition of those clauses in the Palestinian Charter that called for

Israel's destruction;<sup>17</sup> and hence their indifference to the thorniest issue of the Palestinian-Israeli dispute, and the one central to the PLO's persistent effort to destroy Israel through demographic subversion: namely, the "right of return." As late as March 1999, two months before the lapse of the official deadline for the completion of the Oslo final-status negotiations, less than 15% of respondents viewed the refugee question as the most important problem facing the Palestinian people.<sup>18</sup>

Against this backdrop, the Rabin government had a unique opportunity to steer the Palestinian populace in the West Bank and Gaza in the direction of peace and statehood, possibly in collaboration with Jordan's King Hussein, who only a few years earlier had thrown his hat into the ring only to be rebuffed by Prime Minister Shamir. (In a Nablus public opinion poll shortly before the DOP signing, over two-thirds of respondents preferred Hussein to the PLO as their sovereign.)<sup>19</sup>

The PLO was hovering on the verge of extinction, having been totally ostracized by its Arab peers following its support for Iraq's brutal occupation of Kuwait. Its prestige in the territories was at one of its lowest ebbs, and Hamas was just beginning to make its mark. The radical Arab regimes were thoroughly disoriented by the collapse of their communist backers. Despite the adamant objection of the PLO, the West Bank and Gaza leadership was bent on participating in the US-sponsored peace talks between Israel and its neighbors, launched at the October 1991 Madrid Conference and continued in Washington.<sup>20</sup>

But then, instead of seizing the moment and opting for the peace partner who was far better attuned to the needs and wishes of the local Palestinian populace, and against his own personal inclination to strike a deal with the "moderate insiders" rather than with the "extremist Tunis people [i.e., the PLO leadership]," Rabin was talked by Foreign Minister Peres and his deputy Yossi Beilin (who reportedly collaborated with the PLO in obstructing the Washington talks) into surrendering the West Bankers and Gazans to an unreconstructed terror organization. That organization's leader would not hang up his ubiquitous battledress, not even for the signing of the Oslo accords or the receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize (though he graciously conceded to President Clinton's request to dispense with his pistol for the White



House signing ceremony). He used “peace” as a strategic deception aimed at promoting the eternal goal of Israel’s destruction.<sup>21</sup>

As a result, 23 years of incessant hate-mongering by the PLO/PA (not to mention Hamas, which exploited the Oslo process to become the preeminent military and political factor in the territories); countless terror attacks (including a fully fledged terror war, euphemistically named “al-Aqsa Intifada” after the Jerusalem mosque); three large-scale military encounters between Hamas and Israel; and economic collapse induced by the PA’s and Hamas’s corrupt and inept rule have extensively radicalized the West Bank and Gaza populace. A new generation of Palestinians has been born into and brought up on the vilest anti-Semitic and anti-Israel indoctrination.

## **TARNISHED SECURITY**

### ***Sustaining the “Armed Struggle”***

Apart from making the prospects of peace and reconciliation ever more remote, the Oslo process substantially worsened Israel’s security position.

At the heart of the DOP lay the conviction that it would end three decades of PLO violence and transform the organization overnight from one of the world’s most murderous terror groups into a political actor and state builder. Arafat promised as much in his letter to Rabin on September 9, 1993, which paved the way for Israel’s recognition of the PLO and the signing of the DOP four days later. “The PLO commits itself to the Middle East peace process and to a peaceful resolution of the conflict between the two sides,” he wrote. “Accordingly, the PLO renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence and will assume responsibility over all PLO elements and personnel in order to assure their compliance, prevent violations and discipline violators.”<sup>22</sup>

In the follow-up agreements on the implementation of the DOP, the PLO took this commitment a major step further by pledging to prevent any acts of violence against Israel by all groups and organizations under its jurisdiction. The May 1994 Gaza-Jericho agreement, for example,

stipulated the immediate creation of a PLO-dominated Palestinian Authority that was to “take all measures necessary in order to prevent acts of terrorism, crime and hostilities...against the Settlements, the infrastructure serving them and the Military Installation Area,” as well as “legal measures against offenders.” The PA was also to ensure that no other armed groups would be established or operate in the territories under its control apart from the official police force, and that no organization or individual “shall manufacture, sell, acquire, possess, import or otherwise introduce into [these territories] any firearms, ammunition, weapons, explosives, gunpowder or any related equipment.”

On September 28, 1995, the Israel-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II) was signed in Washington. This agreement provided for Israel’s withdrawal from the West Bank’s populated areas (withdrawal from Gaza had been completed by May 1994, apart from a small stretch of territory in the south of the Strip containing Israeli villages). The only exception was Hebron (where redeployment was completed by early 1997). The transfer of the evacuated areas to Palestinian jurisdiction similarly obligated the PA “to take all measures necessary in order to prevent acts of terrorism, crime, and hostilities,” including the disarming of all illegal armed groups operating under its jurisdiction.<sup>23</sup>

These obligations evaporated into thin air in no time. Even as the Oslo secret talks were going on, Arafat was already promising his PLO peers that he would transform the territories under his control into a “new Lebanon” – a code word for violence and internecine strife.<sup>24</sup> Once in Gaza (July 1994), he made good on his word by constructing an extensive terrorist infrastructure in flagrant violation of the DOP and in total disregard of the principal reason for bringing him in from Tunisia (to which the PLO had decamped after its 1982 expulsion from Lebanon) – that is, to lay the groundwork for Palestinian sovereignty.

Arafat refused to disarm Hamas and Islamic Jihad, as had been required by the Oslo accords, and tacitly approved the murder of hundreds of Israelis by these terror groups. He created a far larger Palestinian army (the so-called police force) than was permitted by the accords. He reconstructed the PLO’s old terrorist apparatus, mainly under the auspices

of the Tanzim, the military arm of Fatah (the PLO's largest constituent organization and Arafat's own alma mater). And he frantically acquired prohibited weapons with large sums of money donated to the PA by the international community – money that had been intended to benefit the civilian Palestinian population.

As a result, terrorism in the territories spiraled to its highest level since their capture by Israel in the 1967 war. In the two-and-a-half years between the signing of the DOP and the fall of the Labor government in May 1996, 210 Israelis were murdered – nearly three times the average annual death toll of the previous 26 years,<sup>25</sup> when only a small fraction of fatalities had been caused by West Bank- and/or Gaza-originated attacks. The lower proportion of terrorism emanating from the territories during the earlier period reflected Israel's effective counterinsurgency measures, the low level of national consciousness among the Palestinians, and the vast improvement in their standard of living under Israel's control.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, nearly two-thirds of the 1994-96 victims were murdered in Israeli territory inside the "Green Line" – over 600% of the average toll in Israel in the preceding six violent years of the Palestinian uprising (intifada).<sup>27</sup>

In September 1996, Arafat further escalated the conflict by reverting to direct mass violence. He exploited the opening of a new exit to an archaeological tunnel under the Western Wall to unleash widespread riots (the "tunnel war") in which 17 Israelis and some 80 Palestinians were killed. And while the PA quickly dropped the tunnel issue from its agenda once it had outlived its usefulness, Arafat was to repeat this precedent on several occasions. The most notable instance was his launching of the September 2000 terror war shortly after being offered Palestinian statehood by then-prime minister of Israel Ehud Barak.<sup>28</sup>

By the time of Arafat's death four years later, his war – the bloodiest and most destructive confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians since 1948 – had exacted 1,028 Israeli lives in some 5,760 attacks: nine times the average death toll of the pre-Oslo era.<sup>29</sup> Of these, about 450 people (or 43.8% of victims) were killed in suicide bombings, which were a practically unheard of tactic in the Palestinian-Israeli context prior to Oslo.<sup>30</sup> All in all, some 1,600 Israelis were murdered and another 9,000

wounded from the signing of the DOP to date – nearly four times the average death toll of the preceding 26 years.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Hamastan Rising***

But the story doesn't end here. For underlying this bloodletting was the transformation of the territories into unreconstructed terror bastions in line with Arafat's vision of making them a springboard for "a popular armed revolution" that would "force the Zionists to realize that it is impossible for them to live in Israel."<sup>32</sup> Only it was Hamas, the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood that made its debut during the 1987-93 intifada, rather than the PLO, which was to take up the mantle of Arafat's genocidal vision.

With its initial fears of repression by the newly installed PA quickly eased, Hamas not only waged a sustained terror campaign (with Arafat's tacit approval) that exerted a devastating impact on the nascent peace process (its March 1996 murder of 58 Israelis in the span of one week, for example, was instrumental in Netanyahu's electoral defeat of Prime Minister Peres two months later), but also reached an agreement with the PLO/PA on the continuation of these attacks provided they did not emanate from territories under the latter's control.<sup>33</sup> Collaboration between the two organizations peaked in March 1997, when Arafat met Hamas leaders in his office to give them a "green light" to resume terror attacks after a tactical lull.

This collaboration reached its zenith during the "al-Aqsa Intifada," in which Hamas played the leading role – especially in the field of suicide bombings, with which it carried out the deadliest and most horrific attacks inside Israel. Israel managed to destroy Hamas's (as well as the PA/PLO's) West Bank terror infrastructure, which had been responsible for virtually all suicide bombings inside its territory,<sup>34</sup> in a sustained four-year counterinsurgency campaign beginning with Operation Defensive Shield (March 29-May 10, 2002) – the biggest anti-terror operation since the 1982 Lebanon war. Nevertheless, Hamas managed to keep its Gaza base largely intact despite the targeted killing of many of its top leaders, including founding father Ahmad Yasin and his immediate successor Abdul Aziz Rantisi.

Moreover, by way of compensating for its dwindling capacity for suicide bombings (which dropped from 60 in 2002 to five in 2006), the Islamist group reverted to massive, high-trajectory attacks from Gaza. In 2004, 309 home-made Qassam rockets and 882 mortar shells were fired at Jewish villages in the Strip as well as at towns and villages within Israel (compared to 105 and 514, respectively, in 2003). The following year saw 401 and 854 respective attacks, despite Hamas's acceptance of a temporary suspension of fighting (*tahdi'a*).<sup>35</sup>

These activities left little doubt among Palestinians as to who spearheaded the "armed struggle" against Israel. When, in the summer of 2005, the Israeli government unilaterally vacated the dozen-odd Jewish villages in the south of the Strip and removed their 8,000-strong population, the move was widely viewed as a Hamas victory.

A few months later, on January 25, 2006, Hamas reaped the political fruits of its military prowess when, in its first electoral showing since the DOP (it boycotted the first parliamentary elections in 1996), it won a landslide victory, taking 74 of Parliament's 132 seats. Fatah, which had dominated the PA since its creation in May 1994, was roundly defeated, winning only 45 seats. The PLO/PA would not accept this reality, and in 2007 relations between the two groups deteriorated into violent clashes, especially in Gaza. Scores were killed and many more wounded as Hamas seized full control of the Strip.

Flushed with success and encouraged by the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Philadelphi patrol route along the Strip's border with Egypt, Hamas embarked on a massive buildup of its terror infrastructure. It smuggled vast quantities of weapons and war matériel in from Sinai through an extensive and rapidly expanding underground tunnel system; sent terrorist operatives from Gaza to Lebanon, Syria and Iran for training; and smuggled in large sums of money, mainly from Tehran, for its own use as well as for the use of other terror groups.<sup>36</sup>

Hamas's buoyant mood was further boosted by sporadic ground attacks, notably the June 2006 infiltration of Israel through an underground tunnel and abduction of an Israeli soldier, who was exchanged five years later in return for 1,027 imprisoned terrorists. (Two Israeli soldiers were

killed in the original attack and another four wounded.) Hamas also massively intensified its high-trajectory attacks on Israel's population centers. Within a year of Israel's unilateral withdrawal, there was a 430% increase in the number of rockets and missiles fired from the Strip (from 401 to 1,726). While this pace ebbed slightly in 2007 (to 1,276 attacks), it peaked at a whopping 2,048 attacks in 2008 (in addition to 1,668 mortar shells), or ten attacks per day.<sup>37</sup>

In an attempt to stem this relentless harassment of its civilian population, in December 2008-January 2009 Israel launched a large ground operation in Gaza (codenamed Cast Lead). But while the operation eroded Hamas's military capabilities and led to a vast decrease in the firing of rockets and missiles,<sup>38</sup> it failed to curb the organization's military might and political ambitions.

In the ensuing five years, Israel was forced to fight two more inconclusive wars against the Islamist group: Operation Pillar of Defense (November 14-21, 2012) and Operation Protective Edge (July 8-August 26, 2014). While Hamas's military capabilities were seriously diminished, especially during Operation Protective Edge, it nevertheless managed to hold its ground, subjecting a substantial part of Israel's population to rocket and missile attacks for seven full weeks and even succeeding in briefly shutting down Israel's foremost international airport.

## INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

### *The PLO Ascendant*

No theme has dominated the discourse of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict more than Israel's "illegitimate occupation of Palestinian lands." This charge has long been invoked to explain the origins and persistence of the conflict, to show Israel's allegedly brutal and repressive nature, and to justify the worst anti-Israel terrorist atrocities. It was therefore believed by the Oslo architects that by ceding control of the territories' population, Israel would be able to quiet the chorus of criticism and boost its international standing.

By January 1996, as noted above, Israel had withdrawn its forces from the West Bank's populated areas, with the exception of Hebron (where redeployment was completed in early 1997; withdrawal from the Gaza-populated areas had been completed by May 1994). On January 20, elections to the Palestinian Council were held. Shortly afterward, the Israeli civil administration and military government were both dissolved, leaving most of the territories' population under PLO/PA rule.

"As of today there is a Palestinian state," pronounced Arafat's Arab-Israeli advisor Ahmad Tibi a day after the elections. This upbeat prognosis was echoed by Israeli minister of the environment Yossi Sarid. Oslo's chief architect, Yossi Beilin, proclaimed the elections to have made the political process irreversible, expressing relief at the ending of Israel's occupation of Palestinian populated areas. "We have been freed of a heavy burden," he said. "I never believed in the possibility of an enlightened occupation. It was necessary to lift that burden so as to avoid becoming a target for organizations throughout the world that viewed us as oppressors."<sup>39</sup>

As it turned out, not only did Israel get no credit whatsoever for ending the "occupation" – not even after its 2005 withdrawal of the last Israeli from Gaza! – but the move went virtually unnoticed by the international community. The PLO, meanwhile, surged to unprecedented international heights, never shedding its genocidal commitment to Israel's destruction, surrendering its weapons, or abandoning its terrorist ways. So much so that during Bill Clinton's eight years in office, Arafat was welcomed to the White House more often than any other world leader (he even happened to be seated opposite the US president when he was first questioned about his affair with Monica Lewinsky).<sup>40</sup> Within five years of the signing of the DOP, the PA had received \$2.5 billion (of a pledged \$3.6 billion) in international aid, apart from some \$600 million contributed to UNRWA's activities in the West Bank and Gaza. By 2016, the US alone had committed more than \$5 billion in bilateral economic aid to the Palestinians.<sup>41</sup>

But rather than use their formidable economic leverage to pressure the PLO/PA to abide by its peace obligations, the donor states turned a blind eye to both Arafat's condoning of proxy terrorism (by Hamas and the

Islamic Jihad) and his direct use of violence. Thus, for example, though the pretext for the September 1996 “tunnel war” was patently false – the exit’s opening (hardly a reason for mass violence in the first place) had been coordinated with the PA and was a major boon to the local Palestinian merchants – the international media willfully fell for the bogus Palestinian “provocation” canard, turning aggressor into victim and victim into aggressor. So did the Security Council, which passed a special resolution condemning the Israeli behavior. Adding insult to injury, the US administration failed to veto the resolution and demanded Israeli gestures to the Palestinians.<sup>42</sup>

In these circumstances, it was hardly surprising that rather than generating international outrage, the September 2000 launch of the Palestinian war of terror shortly after being offered statehood in the Gaza Strip and most of the West Bank boosted the PA’s standing and boxed Israel into a corner. Media outlets, commentators, and politicians throughout the world blamed the premeditated violence on the supposed “provocation carried out at al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000 [i.e., Ariel Sharon’s visit to Temple Mount],” to use the words of a special Security Council resolution, which the US failed yet again to veto.<sup>43</sup> Even President Clinton, who two months earlier had publicly chided Arafat for failing to seize Ehud Barak’s generous offer of statehood,<sup>44</sup> swiftly changed tack and pressured the Israeli government for further concessions (which it made), only to be rebuffed yet again by his long-indulged Palestinian leader.

The European Union (EU) was far more scathing of Israel’s self-defense measures. Viewing the Oslo process as vindication for its longstanding embrace of the PLO as a true peace partner (articulated most forcefully in the June 1980 Venice Declaration), the EU was loath to concede that the Palestinian organization had neither abandoned its terrorist ways nor developed an interest in peace or statehood. In a meeting with French President Jacques Chirac a week after the outbreak of violence, Barak was reprimanded that “Israel is to be blamed for the violence. It all started with a serious provocation by Sharon which seems to have been coordinated with you.”<sup>45</sup>



As the terror war escalated, the EU became the PA's foremost international backer. Making no distinction between terror attacks and counterinsurgency measures aimed at their deflection, the organization blamed both sides for the continuation of violence, criticized Israel at every turn, and increased financial aid to the Palestinians despite incontrovertible evidence that much of this aid was being channeled to terror activities. In 2001-04, international disbursements doubled from an annual average of \$500 million to over \$1 billion as Arafat's terror war plunged the territories into dire economic straits.<sup>46</sup>

Determined as it was to ignore both PLO/PA excesses and the growing disillusionment in the West Bank and Gaza with Arafat's repressive and corrupt leadership, the EU stuck with the PLO leader to his dying day, scuppering US President George W. Bush's attempt to bring about "a new and different Palestinian leadership...not compromised by terror."<sup>47</sup> So did the International Court of Justice, "the principal judicial organ of the United Nations," which condemned Israel's attempt to stem the tidal wave of suicide bombings through the construction of a security barrier between its territory and the West Bank as "contrary to international law."<sup>48</sup>

The solemn pledge by Mahmoud Abbas, who succeeded Arafat as PLO chairman and PA president, to persist in his predecessor's violent and corrupt path failed to put off the Palestinians' international backers, as evidenced inter alia by their indifference to the disappearance of \$3.1 billion worth of aid between 2008 and 2012 and to Abbas's abstention from his obligation to disarm the terror groups operating under his jurisdiction as required by the Oslo accords. Instead, the Europeans sought to fast-track the implementation of the "road map to peace," drafted in 2003 by the EU, the US, Russia, and the UN (or the Quartet as they were called) by removing the demand for the cessation of violence and terrorism as a precondition for progress toward Palestinian statehood.<sup>49</sup>

Abbas's refusal either to hold new elections upon the expiry of his presidency in January 2009 or to recognize the legally appointed Hamas government, in blatant disregard of the results of the only (semi-) democratic elections in Palestinian history, failed to dent his image as a lawful and democratically oriented Palestinian leader. Nor did his categorical rejection of the idea of Jewish statehood (the root cause of

the ninety-year-long failure of the two-state solution), his virulent anti-Semitic and anti-Israel incitement, or his abandonment of the bilateral peace talks in search of a Palestinian state to be internationally imposed without a peace agreement raise any questions about his supposed interest in peace. On the contrary – with Barack Obama determined to put “daylight” between Washington and Jerusalem,<sup>50</sup> the US administration not only snubbed the Israeli government as a matter of course, but exploited blatantly anti-Israel activities (e.g., the international chorus of condemnation attending the May 2010 Mavi Marmara incident) to tighten the political noose around Jerusalem.

When in June 2009 Netanyahu broke with Likud’s ideological precepts and agreed to the establishment of a Palestinian state provided it recognized Israel’s Jewish identity, Washington did nothing to induce a Palestinian *quid pro quo*, instead demanding the complete cessation of Israeli building activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This culminated in an Israeli imposition in November 2009 of a ten-month construction freeze with a view to facilitating “meaningful negotiations to reach a historic peace agreement that would finally end the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.”<sup>51</sup>

Nothing of the sort happened. Watching the deepening schism in US-Israeli relations with undisguised glee in anticipation of substantial unreciprocated concessions, the Palestinian leadership dismissed Netanyahu’s acceptance of the two-state solution out of hand, walked away from the negotiating table upon the expiry of the construction moratorium, and sought to present Israel with the *fait accompli* of UN recognition of Palestinian statehood. This would, of course, have been in flagrant violation of the Oslo accords, which envisaged the attainment of peace through direct negotiations between the two parties.

The PA failed to garner sufficient support for this venture at the Security Council, but in November 2012 did succeed in obtaining General Assembly recognition of Palestine as a “non-member observer state.” It followed this success by setting out to join a string of international bodies and agencies, most importantly the International Criminal Court (ICC). On January 2, 2015, the “State of Palestine” acceded to the Rome Statute, the ICC’s founding treaty.

A fortnight later, the organization opened a preliminary examination into the situation in Palestine, having received jurisdiction over alleged crimes committed “in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, since June 13, 2014.”<sup>52</sup> Nine months later, on September 30, fresh from delivering yet another anti-Israel diatribe at the UN General Assembly’s annual session, Abbas joined Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for an official ceremony in which the Palestinian flag was hoisted for the first time outside the international organization’s headquarters in New York.<sup>53</sup>

The significance of these developments cannot be overstated. Twenty-four years after its exclusion from the US-orchestrated international peace talks in Madrid and its wall-to-wall ostracism by the Arab world, the PLO had recast itself in the eyes of the international community as the legitimate, peaceable, and democratically disposed ruler of the prospective Palestinian state against all available evidence to the contrary. It had succeeded in painting Israel as the main obstacle to peace, despite its ending of the occupation of the territories’ Palestinian population and consistent support for the two-state solution. The PLO had, moreover, laid the groundwork for Israel’s indictment for supposed “war crimes” and “crimes against humanity.” And all this without ever accepting the Jewish state’s right to exist as stipulated 68 years earlier by the UN, and remaining committed to its eventual demise.

### ***Hamas’s Growing Legitimization***

To make matters worse, Hamas’s steady rise in the territories was accompanied by increasing international calls for its acceptance as a legitimate political player. To be sure, in September 2003 the EU designated the Islamist group a terrorist entity (the US had done so in August 1997); but the decision remained hotly contested by some key members (notably France), with then-EU Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana reassuring the Arab League that the decision might be revisited at a later point.<sup>54</sup> This was not an entirely hollow pledge given the organization’s overt dialogue with Hamas (Solana himself had reportedly met its founding leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin).<sup>55</sup>

These contacts intensified after Hamas's electoral victory of January 2006 as the EU sought to persuade the organization to mend fences with its PLO nemesis and join the Oslo process. "I don't think the essence of Hamas is the destruction of Israel," Solana told his Israeli hosts during an October 2006 visit. "I cannot imagine that the religious imperative, the real religious imperative, can make anybody destroy another country." History had shown that people and nations "adapt to reality," he argued; hence it was "not impossible" for the Islamist group to change tack and "recognize the existence of Israel."<sup>56</sup>

While Hamas remained impervious to these hopes, violently evicting the PLO from Gaza in the summer of 2007 and raining thousands of rockets and missiles down on Israel's citizens, pressures for its political recognition continued apace. See, for instance, the June 2009 statement by the EU's foreign ministers that failed to demand that the organization forswear terrorism, recognize Israel and accept previous PLO agreements with the Jewish state.<sup>57</sup>

That such a glaring omission could occur within months of a bitter military confrontation between Israel and Hamas, caused by years of sustained attacks on the Jewish state's population centers, was indicative of the growing international acquiescence in the group's political role despite its unreconstructed genocidal ideology and countless war crimes. Small wonder that the December 2014 decision of the European Court of Justice to remove Hamas from the EU's list of terrorist organizations came on the heels of yet another war in which Hamas had criminally subjected millions of Israelis to sustained rocket and missile attacks for seven full weeks. And adding insult to injury, it was Israel, rather than Hamas, that came under intense international censure in the wake of both encounters, including two major UN "fact-finding" reports and a string of indictments by "humanitarian" organizations.<sup>58</sup>

It is true that both reports condemned Hamas's attacks on Israel's population centers as the war crimes they were. But this was little more than lip service that received paltry international attention. The reports' object was to create a thick veneer of moral equivalence that not only made no distinction between a terrorist group seeking to maximize civilian casualties (through the indiscriminate targeting of population

centers and the use of its own constituents as human shields) and a besieged democracy going out of its way to avoid such casualties, but also emphasized that “the extent of the casualties and destruction in Gaza wrought by Israeli forces far exceeded those caused by Palestinian attacks on Israel.”<sup>59</sup> (By this logic, Nazi Germany must be considered the aggrieved party in World War II, as far more Germans were killed during the conflict than their British, French, or American enemies, among many other war victims.) And while Justice Richard Goldstone, who chaired the UN “fact-finding” mission on the December 2008-January 2009 war, would later concede that “If I had known then what I know now [i.e., “that civilians were not intentionally targeted (by Israel) as a matter of policy” while “the crimes allegedly committed by Hamas were intentional”], the Goldstone Report would have been a different document,”<sup>60</sup> the report and its 2014 successor played a key role in the rapid institutionalization of the “disproportionate force” calumny hurled at Israel whenever it tries to defend itself from terror attacks by its “peace partner.”

### ***Israel’s Growing De-legitimization***

There was, moreover, another side to the ledger. For the Oslo process not only confronted Israel with the likely creation of a revanchist Palestinian state committed to its destruction (whether tacitly, as in the case of the PLO/PA, or directly, as with Hamas) and imposed severe constraints on its capacity for self-defense, but it also set in train a growing assault on its very existence coupled with a tidal wave of anti-Semitism throughout the Western world.

Of course it has long been a staple of Israel bashers to argue that they have never had anything against Judaism or Jews but only against Zionism and Zionists, and that their criticisms are to be understood as an expression of frustration with Zionism, not with Jews or Judaism. The truth, however, is that since anti-Semites have never really distinguished among Zionists, Israelis and Jews, and since Israel is the world’s only Jewish state, it has been tacitly construed as epitomizing the worst characteristics traditionally associated with Jews and has attracted the full brunt of anti-Jewish bigotry and hatred that has hitherto been reserved for individuals and communities – not least because it has reversed the millenarian Jewish

condition of dispersal, minority status and powerlessness. If prior to Israel's establishment Jews were despised because of their wretchedness and helplessness, they have hitherto been reviled because of their newly discovered physical and political empowerment.

This grim reality explains the unfettered international tolerance of the incessant Arab advocacy of Israel's destruction – from the Secretary General of the Arab League's October 1947 vow to unleash “a war of extermination and momentous massacre” against the nascent Jewish state to Abbas's rejection of the idea of Jewish statehood<sup>61</sup> – and the welcome accorded the creation of a terror group explicitly dedicated to this goal (the PLO). Indeed, in November 1974, a mere five months after announcing a new strategy for Israel's destruction (the “phased strategy”), PLO Chairman Arafat became the first non-head-of-state to address the UN General Assembly. In 1975, the year Israel suffered the indignity of the Zionism-is-racism resolution, the PLO established another precedent when it was invited to sessions of the Security Council on the same basis as member states. In 1980, just weeks after Fatah, the PLO's dominant constituent group, had reiterated its objective of liquidating Israel, the European Community issued the Venice Declaration that called for the PLO's “association” with the political process.

That these attitudes stem not from genuine concern for Palestinian wellbeing but from the Palestinians' usefulness as a lightning rod against the Jews is evidenced by the total lack of international interest in the ongoing abuse of Palestinians across the Arab world. This abuse can be found from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon, which deprives its 400,000-strong Palestinian population of the most basic human rights, from property ownership to employment in numerous professions to free movement. Nor has there been any international outcry when Arab countries have massacred or expelled Palestinians on a grand scale. The fact that King Hussein of Jordan killed more Palestinians in the course of a single month than Israel managed to do in decades was never held against him or used to tarnish the widely held perception of him as a man of peace. Kuwait's 1991 expulsion of most of its 400,000 Palestinians and the slaughter of thousands of innocent Palestinians passed virtually unnoticed by the international media. By contrast, any Palestinian or Arab casualty inflicted by Israel comes under immediate international criticism.

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that despite its formal commitment to peace with Israel, the PLO exploited its newly gained international prominence to besmirch and delegitimize its official peace partner with a view to facilitating its ultimate demise. Having failed to abolish those clauses in the Palestinian National Charter advocating the destruction of the state of Israel, in flagrant violation of its Oslo obligations, the organization sustained the more subtle forms of its malignant incitement, such as the insistence on the “right of return” – the standard Arab euphemism for Israel’s destruction through demographic subversion.

It has spread the most outlandish anti-Israel and anti-Semitic slanders and canards so as to depict Israel as heir to the Nazis, a “colonialist-settler apartheid society” that must be ostracized and eventually emasculated, as was its South African counterpart. With the apartheid canard quickly taking root among many educated Westerners, including such luminaries as Nobel Prize laureates Desmond Tutu,<sup>62</sup> Jimmy Carter,<sup>63</sup> Mairead Corrigan-Maguire,<sup>64</sup> and Toni Morrison,<sup>65</sup> Israel found itself confronted with a rapidly intensifying campaign of de-legitimization.

Nowhere was this hate fest more starkly demonstrated than at the UN’s World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (August 31-September 7, 2001), held in the South African town of Durban of all places. For eight full days, delegates from numerous countries and thousands of NGOs indulged in a xenophobic orgy of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic incitement that made mockery of the conference’s original purpose.

Posters equating Zionism with Nazism were widely distributed while tens of thousands of hate-spouting demonstrators marched in the streets carrying banners proclaiming inter alia that “Hitler should have finished the job.” Representatives of Jewish groups were subjected to taunts, physical intimidation, and organized jeering. The hate literature distributed during the conference included *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a virulent anti-Semitic tract fabricated by the Russian secret police at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and alleging an organized Jewish conspiracy to achieve world domination, alongside caricatures of Jews with hooked noses and Palestinian blood on their hands, surrounded by money,

and Israelis wearing Nazi emblems. Pamphlets reading “Nazi-Israeli apartheid” were distributed daily at conference halls alongside flyers that asked (approvingly), “what if Hitler had won?” Representatives of such repressive states as Syria and Iran objected to the inclusion of anti-Semitism or the Holocaust on the grounds that anti-Semitism was a “complicated,” “curious,” and “bizarre” concept, and reference to the Holocaust would be imbalanced or “favoritism.” Little wonder that resolutions charging Israel with “genocide and ethnic cleansing” and effectively calling for its dismantling were voted upon by regional caucuses and adopted by the NGOs’ forum at the conference.

In protest at this breathtaking bigotry, the American and Israeli delegations walked out of the conference, together with representatives of the eleven Jewish NGOs, whose proposed resolution against anti-Semitism was not included in the final document. “This forum is now *Judenrein*,” declared a prominent Jewish delegate, while US secretary of state Colin Powell denounced the “hateful language, some of which is a throwback to the days of ‘Zionism equals racism,’ or supports the idea that we have made too much of the Holocaust; or suggests that apartheid exists in Israel; or that singles out only one country in the world – Israel – for censure and abuse.”<sup>66</sup>

This protest was to no avail. The Durban hate fest was to be replicated on countless occasions and in numerous forums: from the follow-up conferences of “Durban II” (Geneva, April 20-24, 2009) and “Durban III” (New York, September 21, 2011); to the swelling tide of anti-Semitism throughout Europe and the US, largely fuelled by the rapidly snowballing Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement; to the EU decision to mark products coming from Israeli West Bank localities.

Time and again, year after year, the UN’s Commission on Human Rights discussed Israel’s supposed human rights abuses while turning a blind eye to scores of actual atrocities around the world, dedicating seven of its 24 special sessions to Israel’s “oppression” of the Palestinians compared to one session each devoted to the Darfur and Congo conflicts, where millions of people perished.<sup>67</sup> The UN rarely calls for emergency special sessions and did not see any reason to hold such a meeting to discuss genocide in Rwanda, ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, genocide



in Darfur or the horrific massacres in East Timor. Yet it saw it fit to dedicate six of the ten emergency sessions in the General Assembly's history to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while that body's annual meetings regularly feature numerous anti-Israel resolutions.<sup>68</sup>

In 2003 alone, the UN felt the need to call an unprecedented three emergency sessions – two to condemn Israel's security barrier, and one to criticize Israel for considering (not even carrying out!) the expulsion of Arafat. And yet Israel's combined use of military force over the 68 years of its existence has caused far fewer casualties and damage than each of the above horrific events, not to mention those in Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bangladesh, Bosnia, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chechnya, Colombia, Congo, El Salvador, and Eritrea (and that's only the first five letters of the alphabet. If we go to countries beginning with "I," there are Iraq and Iran).

## DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS

### *Radicalizing the Israeli Arabs*

In a Knesset debate a week after the DOP signing, Likud MK Benny Begin warned of the agreement's likely radicalization of the Israeli Arabs and made an impassioned plea for restraint: "I urge Israel's non-Jewish citizens in Wadi Ara, the Galilee, and Acre to understand that this agreement will plunge us all into a fundamental instability that might undermine the edifice we have laboriously constructed for over forty years."<sup>69</sup>

His plea proved unavailing. When in February 1994 a Jewish fanatic murdered 29 Muslims at prayer in Hebron, large-scale riots erupted in numerous Arab settlements throughout Israel, with mobs battling police for four full days. The scenario repeated itself in April 1996 when dozens of Lebanese Shiites were mistakenly killed in an Israeli shelling of terrorist targets in south Lebanon, and yet again in September 1996 during the Jerusalem tunnel riots. It reached an unprecedented peak on October 1, 2000, when the Israeli Arabs unleashed a tidal wave of violence in support of Arafat's two-day old war of terror.

For ten full days, they blocked several main roads, cutting off Jewish localities and forcing some of them to defend themselves against armed assault by neighbors with whom they had maintained cordial relations for decades. Scores of Jewish families spending the holiday season in the Galilee found themselves attacked by frenzied Arab mobs wielding Molotov cocktails, ball bearings in slingshots, stones, even firearms. Stores, post offices, and other public places were ransacked as rioters clashed with police. Forests were set ablaze. In Nazareth, thousands of Arabs marched in the streets chanting, "With our souls and our blood we will redeem Palestine." Jaffa and Haifa, the showcases of Arab-Jewish coexistence, were rocked by violence and vandalism.<sup>70</sup>

Shaken to the core, the Barak government apologized for the 13 rioters killed in violent clashes with the police and appointed an official commission of inquiry headed by deputy chief justice Theodore Orr to investigate the events. Submitting its official report at the end of August 2003, long after Barak had been swept from power, the commission viewed the riots as essentially an act of social protest emanating from the "primarily neglectful and discriminatory" handling of the Arab sector by successive Israeli governments.<sup>71</sup>

This prognosis couldn't be further from the truth. The turning of Israel's Arabs on their Jewish compatriots, in support of an external attack on their own state (i.e., the "al-Aqsa Intifada"), had nothing to do with socioeconomic deprivation and everything to do with their steady radicalization. This began with the June 1967 war, which established direct contact between the Israeli Arabs and their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza. It gained considerable momentum in the March 1976 "Land Day" riots over the planned expropriation of (largely Jewish and state-owned) lands for development, which in turn gave rise to annual waves of violence commemorating the event. It rose still further during the intifada years (1987-93), when Israeli Arabs sought to show solidarity with their brethren in the territories through acts of vandalism (burning forests, stoning cars, destroying agricultural crops and equipment) and armed attacks on Jews within Israel proper. And it skyrocketed to unprecedented heights during the Oslo years.

Not that the PLO had hitherto refrained from meddling in the affairs of the Israeli Arabs. As early as January 1973, the Palestine National Council, the organization's quasi-parliament, decided "to strengthen the links of national unity and unity in struggle between the masses of our countrymen in the territory occupied in 1948" – i.e., Israel – "and those in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and outside the occupied territory." In subsequent years, it funneled funds to Arab bodies and institutions in Israel in support of subversive activities such as the annual Land Day violence.<sup>72</sup>

Yet the Oslo process raised this involvement to a whole new level. By recognizing the PLO as "the representative of the Palestinian people," the Rabin government effectively endorsed its claim of authority over a substantial number of Israeli citizens and gave it carte blanche to interfere in Israel's domestic affairs. Such a concession would have been a recipe for trouble even under the most amicable of arrangements. Made to an irredentist party still officially committed to the destruction of its "peace partner," it proved nothing short of catastrophic.

Small wonder that from the moment of his arrival in Gaza in July 1994, Arafat set out to make the most of what Israel had handed him, indoctrinating not only the residents of the territories but also Israeli Arabs with an ineradicable hatred of Israel, Jews, and Judaism. His intention was made clear as early as his welcoming speech, which smeared his new peace partner with extensive references to the infamous Protocols of the Elders of Zion and ended with a pledge to "liberate" Israel's Arab citizens from their alleged subjugation. "I am saying it clearly and loudly to all our brothers, from the Negev to the Galilee," Arafat proclaimed, "and let me quote Allah's words: 'We desired to be gracious to those that were abased in the land, and to make them leaders, and to make them the inheritors, and to establish them in the land.'"<sup>73</sup>

Within a month of his arrival, Arafat had secretly ordered the extension of the Palestinian Authority's activities to Israel's Arabs, allocating \$10 million in initial funding and appointing Ahmad Tibi, his political adviser and an Israeli citizen, to head the subversive operation.<sup>74</sup> In subsequent years, PLO and PA interference in Israel's domestic affairs would range from mediation of internal Arab disputes, to outright interference in the Israeli political process, to the spread of vile propaganda calling for

Israel's destruction. "Zionist – your death is in my hands," proclaimed a videocassette produced by Force 17, Arafat's Praetorian Guard, and distributed in Nazareth in the mid-1990s. "The one who has forcefully robbed my land will only give it back by force. [Force] 17 in Gaza and Jaffa, 17 in Jerusalem and Haifa, 17 in Jenin and Ramleh, 17 in Lod and Acre." And the PA's daily *al-Hayat al-Jadida* put it in similarly blunt terms: "Our people have hope for the future, that the occupation state [Israel] will cease to exist."<sup>75</sup>

Nor did the PLO/PA's aggressive interference in Israel's internal affairs stop after Arafat's death. In the run-up to the March 2015 elections, for example, not only did the PA indicate its voting preferences in no uncertain terms, including during a well-publicized visit to Ramallah by the heads of the nascent unified Arab party, but on election day, Abbas reportedly called the Nazareth mayor urging him to push his constituents to go out and vote. Four months later, the Israeli minister of internal security signed a decree prohibiting the illegal operation of a Nazareth-based PA-controlled TV channel (called "Palestine 48" to evoke the "tragedy" of Israel's creation) set up a few weeks earlier.<sup>76</sup>

The incitement struck an eager chord among Arab Israeli leaders, some of whom openly identified with Israel's sworn enemies and called for its destruction. Thus we have Azmi Bishara, founding leader of the ultranationalist Balad Party (with seats in the Israeli parliament since 1999), travelling to Damascus to commemorate the death of Hafez Assad, one of Israel's most implacable enemies, from where he implored the Arab states to enable anti-Israel "resistance activities," expressed admiration for Hezbollah, and urged the Israeli Arabs to celebrate the terrorist organization's achievements and internalize its operational lessons.<sup>77</sup> His subsequent prosecution for visiting an enemy state and supporting a terrorist organization only served to boost his international profile and intensify his recklessness – so much so that in 2006 he fled Israel to avoid arrest and prosecution for treason, having allegedly assisted Hezbollah during its war with Israel in the summer of that year.

Bishara's Arab peers remained unimpressed. Ignoring legislation forbidding unauthorized visits by Israelis to enemy countries, they embarked on a string of trips to neighboring Arab states, where they

conferred with various heads of the anti-Israel “resistance” and at times even participated in violent anti-Israel activities.<sup>78</sup> Ahmad Tibi, whose years in Arafat’s service would have made him persona non grata in Hafez Assad’s Syria given the latter’s loathing of the Palestinian leader, was beside himself with joy on meeting the deceased tyrant’s son, who would soon go on to massacre hundreds of thousands of his own citizens. “Heads of state are begging to shake [Bashar] Assad’s hand, crawling to shake his hand,” he gloated at an Israeli Arab election gathering (in January 2009). “Yet what they fail to obtain despite their crawling, others get.”<sup>79</sup>

The following year, Tibi travelled to Libya with a delegation of Israeli Arab parliamentarians to meet the long-reigning dictator Muammar Qaddafi, whom he lauded as “King of the Arabs” and who was praised by one of Tibi’s peers as “a man of peace who treats his people in the best possible way.”<sup>80</sup> Confronted with scathing Knesset criticism upon their return, Knesset member Taleb Sana was unrepentant. “Israel’s enemy is Israel itself,” he said. “As Qaddafi said during the visit, they have no problem with Jews but only with Zionism. Perhaps you’ll learn and understand some time – that is: abolish the Jewish state of Israel.”<sup>81</sup>

By this time, open calls for Israel’s destruction had substituted for the 1990s’ euphemistic advocacy of this goal. Bishara, whose Balad party was predicated on making Israel “a state of all its citizens” (the standard euphemism for its transformation into an Arab state in which Jews would be reduced to a permanent minority), became increasingly outspoken after his flight from the country, predicting the Jewish state’s fate to be identical to that of the crusading states. His successor, Jamal Zahalka, preferred a more contemporary metaphor, claiming that just as South Africa’s apartheid had been emasculated, so its Zionist counterpart had to be destroyed.<sup>82</sup> And Sheikh Raed Salah, leader of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel, who never tired of crying wolf over Israel’s supposed designs on the al-Aqsa mosque, “while our blood is on their clothes, on their doorsteps, in their food and water,” prophesied the Jewish state’s demise within two decades should it not change its attitude to the Arab minority.<sup>83</sup>

Such views were by no means limited to the extreme fringes. In 2006, the “national committee of the heads of local Arab municipalities in

Israel,” the effective leadership of the Israeli Arabs, issued a lengthy document outlining its “Future Vision for the Palestinian Arabs in Israel.” The document derided Israel as “a product of colonialist action initiated by the Jewish-Zionist elites in Europe and the West,” which, it charged, had pursued “domestic colonialist policy against its Palestinian Arab citizens.” The document then rejected Israel’s continued existence as a Jewish state and demanded its replacement by a system that would ensure Arab “national, historic and civil rights at both the individual and collective levels.”<sup>84</sup>

Meanwhile, in May 2001, the “supreme follow-up committee of the Arabs in Israel” had escalated “Nakba Day” events – observed alongside Israel’s Independence Day to bemoan the “catastrophe” allegedly wrought on the Palestinians by the establishment of the Jewish state – by instituting a national minute of silence. Seven years later, as Israel celebrated its sixtieth year of existence, the committee initiated what was to become an annual event by dedicating these events to the “right of return,” the standard Arab euphemism for Israel’s destruction through demographic subversion.<sup>85</sup> Even in Haifa, the epitome of Arab-Jewish coexistence since the early 1920s, local politicians attempted to replace the name of Zionism Avenue with its pre-Israel precursor.<sup>86</sup>

It is true that most of Israel’s Arab citizens (and, for that matter, most East Jerusalem Palestinians who are entitled to Israeli social benefits and are free to travel across its pre-1967 borders) would rather retain (or obtain) Israeli citizenship, knowing full well that life in a civil, democratic, and pluralistic society, albeit a Jewish one, is preferable to what will be on offer in the prospective Palestinian state.<sup>87</sup> Yet the Oslo decades of incitement and radicalization have had a palpable effect on Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Commemoration of the October 2000 riots has often been accompanied by violence, at times coordinated with the PA, as have Israel’s defensive measures against Palestinian terrorism.

When, on March 29, 2002, the IDF launched Operation Defensive Shield against the terror infrastructure in the West Bank, violent demonstrations broke out in Arab settlements throughout Israel, and the Arab Israeli Islamist movement initiated widespread activities in support of the West Bank Palestinians. Similar violent outbursts

occurred in December 2008-January 2009, when Israel moved to end years of rocket and missile attacks from Hamas-controlled Gaza on its towns and villages (Operation Cast Lead).<sup>88</sup>

These violent eruptions reflected the sharp radicalization of Arab Israelis and the deepening divide between them and their Jewish compatriots. If in the mid-1970s one in two Israeli Arabs repudiated Israel's right to exist, by 1999 four out of five were doing so. By the time of the 2009 national elections, some 40% of Israeli Arabs were denying the existence of the Holocaust while one in two were opposed to sending their children to Jewish schools or having Jewish neighbors.<sup>89</sup>

Small wonder that the Oslo years saw the demise of Arab votes for Jewish/Zionist parties and their diversion to the increasingly militant purely Arab parties. In the 1992 elections, these parties won five of the Knesset's 120 seats; by 2009, this number had doubled, and in the 2015 elections the Arab parties won 13 seats as they ran in a joint list to beat the higher entry threshold.

### ***Destabilizing Israel's Political System***

However dramatic, the radicalization of its Arab citizens has not been Israel's worst Oslo-related domestic debacle. Far more significant has been the destabilization of the country's political system, from which it has not recovered to date. In the 23 years from the signing of the DOP, just one of the nine reigning Israeli governments completed its four-year tenure, with one term ended by the unprecedented assassination of the incumbent prime minister. Meanwhile, parliament's average lifespan dropped from 3.6 years to three years and an unprecedented number of parties were formed, torn apart, and disbanded.

Since the conflict with the Palestinian Arabs had bedeviled the Jewish national revival for nearly a century, it was only natural that the promise raised by the Oslo accords of its imminent resolution generated a tidal wave of euphoria among Israeli Jews. For over a year, they ignored the long trail of blood and mayhem wrought by the agreement, whose many casualties were infamously defined by Rabin as "the victims of peace." It was not until late January 1995 that they were shaken out of their self-

delusion by the wild celebrations in PA-controlled Gaza of the murder of nineteen Israelis in a suicide bombing, an event that Arafat glaringly failed to condemn despite Rabin's emphatic pleas.<sup>90</sup>

By the time of his assassination by a Jewish zealot on November 4, 1995, Rabin was trailing the 46-year-old Netanyahu in most polls, in some by as many as 13 points.<sup>91</sup> (Whereas Oslo I was approved on September 21, 1993 by a Knesset majority of 61 to 50, with eight abstentions, Oslo II was approved on October 5, 1995 by a 61-59 majority<sup>92</sup>, with the two deciding votes siphoned from another party by political bribery – hardly a democratic move given the centrality of the issue to Israel's national security.) And while this trend was instantly reversed by the assassination and the resulting nationwide revulsion, it was restored in early March 1996 by a string of terror attacks that murdered 58 Israelis in the span of one week and catapulted Netanyahu to the prime minister's office two months later.

Yet such was the extent of Israelis' yearning for peace that many of them continued to turn a blind eye to the mounting evidence of PLO perfidy, viewing Netanyahu's insistence that the organization abide by its obligations as an obstacle to "peace." So much so that he was accused of provoking Arafat into the September 1996 "tunnel war" (though the tunnel's opening had been coordinated with the PA and was beneficial to East Jerusalem's Arab merchants). There was a sharp drop in terror fatalities on Netanyahu's watch, from 210 during the Rabin/Peres years to 72, but he received no credit.<sup>93</sup> Quite the reverse, in fact: many misinterpreted the drop as proof of the PLO's continued commitment to the "peace process" against all available evidence to the contrary. As early as 1996, the head of military intelligence, Maj. Gen. Moshe Yaalon, had told Prime Minister Peres that Arafat was a fraud who used terror as a bargaining chip against Israel and had no qualms about violating the peace accords.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, it was Netanyahu who was increasingly viewed as the wrong person to carry the process forward.

And so it was that precisely three years after reaching the premiership on the crest of disillusionment with the Palestinian "peace partner," Netanyahu was forced out of office by rekindled hopes for restoration of this partnership. Indeed, while Arafat and the PA were pressing Israeli



Arabs to vote against the incumbent prime minister, Labor candidate Ehud Barak was claiming that Hamas's founding leader Ahmad Yasin had willed Netanyahu's reelection so as to weaken the PA and slow down the peace process. No explanation was given as to why a period marred by terror attacks (1993-96) was to be considered a "peace process" while one characterized by diminished terrorism and improving conditions in the territories (1996-99) was antithetical to peace. Nor, for that matter, was there any mention of Yasin's repeated vows to continue fighting regardless which party won the Israeli elections "because in our opinion they are two sides of the same coin."<sup>95</sup>

Before long, Barak had outlived his usefulness to Arafat and was forced to follow in the footsteps of his unfortunate predecessor – the fourth Palestinian-induced prime ministerial change in Israel in six years. When in July 2000, at the American-convened peace summit at Camp David, the ambitious prime minister offered a complete end to the Israeli presence, ceding virtually the entire territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the nascent Palestinian state and making breathtaking concessions with respect to Jerusalem, Arafat's response was an all-out terror war, at a level of local violence unmatched in scope and intensity since the attempt to abort the creation of a Jewish state in 1948.

In a desperate bid to salvage his tottering rule, Barak accepted President Clinton's proposed concessions (December 2000), which Arafat dismissed out of hand. He made further concessions during the January 2001 summit at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba – concessions which, according to the Palestinian account, "moved considerably beyond the positions presented at Camp David as 'red lines' beyond which [Israel] could not go 'without jeopardizing the state,'" including recognition of the "right of return" (albeit not the actual return of all refugees to Israel itself).<sup>96</sup> This still failed to save the day. By the time Barak went to Taba, most Israelis believed he no longer had a mandate for concessions. When it transpired that Arafat had rejected yet another Israeli offer to cede nearly the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinians together with Israeli territory, Barak's fate was sealed. On February 6, 2001, he suffered the worst electoral defeat in Israel's history and was replaced at the prime minister's office by Likud leader Ariel Sharon.

This defeat was primarily a vote of no confidence in Barak, just as his landslide victory two years earlier had been an indictment of Netanyahu. Yet it was emblematic of Labor's intractable decline. Just as the party's failure to anticipate the October 1973 war had resulted in its loss of power for the first time since the establishment of the state of Israel, so the collapse of the Oslo process dealt a mortal blow to its aspirations for national leadership.

In 1992, the Rabin-led Labor party won the elections by a comfortable majority of 44 seats to Likud's 32. By 1999, its parliamentary representation had declined to 26 (though Likud suffered a similar setback due to the widespread disillusionment with Netanyahu). Labor dropped to 19 seats in 2003 (half of Likud's strength) and to a mere 13 in 2009. And while Labor managed to make a partial recovery in the 2015 elections by uniting with a newly established party, it has failed to regain the national leadership since Barak's 2001 defeat. Likud, by contrast, has enjoyed four electoral wins over the period (in 2003, 2009, 2013 and 2015).

Moreover, even Likud's single electoral defeat during those years – in 2006, when it was reduced to a mere 12 Knesset seats – was a matter of form rather than substance, stemming as it did from Sharon's secession from the party, together with scores of leading politicians, and the formation of the Kadima Party. Sharon was incapacitated by a stroke shortly before the 2006 elections, but his soaring popularity for having put down Arafat's war of terror still sufficed to eject Ehud Olmert, his accidental successor, from the prime minister's office, and to enable Kadima to win the subsequent 2009 elections by the slimmest of margins (though it was Likud that managed to form a government). Kadima ultimately faded into oblivion in the 2013 elections.

And there lies the Oslo-generated political debacle. For while Israel's diverse political system has seen the rise and fall of sectorial parties from the earliest days of statehood (e.g., WIZO, Yemenite Association, Sephardim and Edot Mizrah, Arab, religious, ultraorthodox), the proliferation of "atmosphere parties" thriving on the general yearning for change while effectively servicing their founders' political ambitions skyrocketed to new heights during the Oslo years.

The cognitive dissonance between the realization of Palestinian perfidy and the lingering longing for peace drove many Israelis to cling to the latest celebrity hope peddler to emerge on the political scene. Thus we have the nascent Third Way Party winning four seats in 1996, only to evaporate into thin air three years later. It was then followed by the similarly disposed Center Party, which won six seats in 1999 before disappearing from the political scene in the 2003 elections, when another one-term party – One People – came into brief and unremarkable existence. The Shinui (Change) party, an offshoot of the one-term Democratic Movement for Change (DASH) that played a key role in Likud's 1977 ascendance, managed to win six and 15 seats in the 1999 and 2003 elections, respectively, before vanishing altogether in 2006.

Kadima, as we have seen, did much better by winning the premiership in 2006, but it, too, was gone by the time of the 2013 elections. So was The Movement (Hatenua), formed by Likud-defector-turned-Kadima-refugee Tzipi Livni, which was amalgamated into Labor in the 2015 elections. It remains to be seen for how long the Yesh Atid party, headed by TV personality Yair Lapid, which made an impressive debut in 2013 (19 seats, dropping to 11 in 2015), or the Kulanu Party, headed by Likud defector Moshe Kahlon, which entered the political fray in 2015 (10 seats), will survive, identified as they are with their founders' name recognition. Yet the detrimental effects of these parties, as well as those of their many failed precursors and likely successors, are bound to haunt Israel's political system and the country's governability for years to come.

## **PALESTINE BETRAYED**

International relations are rarely a zero-sum game where one's loss is necessarily the other's gain, and the Oslo process has been no exception to this rule. Not only have its massive Israeli setbacks not been translated into direct Palestinian gains, but the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza (and Palestinian diaspora communities, for that matter) has paid a heavy price for its leaders' perennial disinterest in statehood and obsession with violence. These leaders' rejection of the November 1947 partition resolution and the waging of a war of annihilation against their Jewish neighbors led to the collapse and dispersal of Palestinian

society, and their decades-long refusal to entertain the slightest concession for the sake of peace condemned their unfortunate subjects to continued statelessness (“We don’t want to negotiate with the Israelis. We’re going to fight,” Arafat told American academic Edward Said, who had passed him the Carter administration’s offer to join the peace process).<sup>97</sup> So too did the use of Oslo as a tool for anti-Israeli activities and domestic repression, rather than as the vehicle for peace and state-building it was meant to be, render these long-overdue goals ever more remote.

For all his rhetoric about Palestinian independence, Arafat was never as interested in the attainment of statehood as in the violence attending its pursuit. In the late 1970s, he told his close friend and collaborator, the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, that the Palestinians lacked the tradition, unity, and discipline to become a formal state, and that a Palestinian state would be a failure from the first day.<sup>98</sup> Once given control of the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza as part of the Oslo process, Arafat made this bleak prognosis a self-fulfilling prophecy. He established a repressive and corrupt regime where the rule of the gun prevailed over the rule of law and where large sums of money, donated by the international community for the benefit of the civilian Palestinian population, were diverted to funding racist incitement, buying weaponry, and filling secret bank accounts.

Within a short time of its establishment, the Palestinian Authority became literally the largest police state in the world, with one policeman for every 40 residents – four times as many as in Washington DC, the American city with the highest number of law enforcement officers per capita. Backed by a dozen security and intelligence services, all answering directly to Arafat, these forces were ostensibly designed to enforce law and order and to combat anti-Israel terrorism. In reality, they served as Arafat’s repressive tool vis-à-vis his Palestinian subjects, as an instrument of terror against Israel, and as guardian of the extensive protection and racketeering networks that sprang up in the territories under the PA’s control while the national budget was plundered at will by PLO veterans and Arafat cronies. (In May 1997, for example, the first-ever report by the PA’s comptroller stated that \$325 million out of the 1996 budget of \$800 million had been “wasted” by Palestinian ministers and agencies or embezzled by officials.)<sup>99</sup>

Though this breathtaking corruption played an important role in Hamas's landslide electoral victory of January 2006, the PLO/PA leadership seems to have learned nothing and to have forgotten nothing. PA President Mahmoud Abbas has sustained his predecessor's oppressive regime. He blatantly ignored the results of the only (semi-) democratic elections in Palestinian history by establishing an alternative government to the legally appointed Hamas government (which he unsuccessfully sought to topple through the denial of international funding) and refusing to hold new elections upon the expiry of his presidency in January 2009.<sup>100</sup> He also appears to have followed in Arafat's thieving footsteps, reportedly siphoning at least \$100 million into private accounts abroad and enriching his sons at the PA's expense. He blocked the timid reform efforts of his Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, and eventually forced him from office.<sup>101</sup>

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the wellbeing of the West Bank/Gaza population ebbed dramatically during the Oslo years. At the time of the DOP signing, and despite the steep economic decline in the six years of the intifada (1987-93), socioeconomic conditions in the territories were far better than in most neighboring Arab states. After two decades of constant expansion under Israeli rule, the West Bank and Gaza saw a tenfold rise in per-capita GNP.

By September 1997, nearly two years after the PA had extended its control over virtually the entire Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza, per capita income in the territories had dropped 35% from its pre-September 1993 level. This steep drop in the Palestinian economy resulted from repeated Israeli closures on the territories that were aimed at stemming the tidal wave of terrorism attending the DOP. Even with this decline, at the time Arafat launched his war of terror in September 2000, Palestinian income per head was nearly double that of Syria, more than four times that of Yemen, and 10% higher than Jordan's (one of the better-off Arab states). Only the oil-rich Gulf states and Lebanon were more affluent.<sup>102</sup>

By the time of Arafat's death in November 2004, his terror war had slashed this income to a fraction of its earlier levels. Real GDP per capita was some 35% below the pre-September 2000 level, unemployment more than doubled (from 10% to 25%; 37% among young people), and

numerous Palestinians were reduced to poverty and despondency. And while Israel's suppression of the terror war generated a steady recovery, with the years 2007-11 even recording an average yearly growth rate above 8%, the economy went into rapid decline in 2012 as the overall growth rate halved. By mid-2014, a full-blown recession had taken hold, with the growth rate dropping to -1% (0.5% in the West Bank and -4% in Gaza), a quarter of the population living in poverty (with rates in Gaza twice as high as in the West Bank), and unemployment soaring to over a quarter of the workforce (16% in the West Bank and 45% in Gaza, with a staggering 60% among Gaza youth). According to the World Bank, these unemployment figures were the highest in the world.

During the Oslo years, the difference in per capita income between the West Bank and Gaza shot from 14% to 141%. Apart from reflecting the West Bank's basic socioeconomic superiority, this widening gap was a direct corollary of Hamas's transformation of the Strip into a formidable terror entity, and the mayhem and dislocation that followed. Thus, for example, if in 1993 some 30,000 Gazans (or 26.5% of the workforce in the Strip) were employed in Israel, by 2005 this number had dropped to nil. This dire situation has remained to date, with all its catastrophic economic implications.

More recently, Palestinian estimates put the damage wrought on Gaza during the July-August 2014 confrontation with Israel at \$3 billion. Egypt's systematic destruction (beginning in 2013) of the illegal tunnel network between its territory and Gaza has been costly as well, dealing a heavy blow to the construction industry, a central pillar of the Strip's economy, and halting the inflow of funds to the Hamas government. The stoppage prevented Hamas from remunerating its employees for over a year.<sup>103</sup>

All in all, 20 years of Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza have severely constrained their inhabitants' freedoms compared to the preceding 25 years of Israeli control, and comprehensively undermined their socioeconomic wellbeing.

## CONCLUSION

Two months after the festive ceremony on the White House lawn, Oslo's chief architect Yossi Beilin gave a lengthy interview to the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*. Flushed with success at having dragged the Rabin government towards his longstanding outlook,<sup>104</sup> he dismissively brushed off criticism of the incipient peace process, arrogantly prophesying that "the greatest test of the accord will not be in the intellectual sphere, but will rather be a test of blood." Should there be no significant drop in the level of violence and terrorism "within a reasonable period of time" after the formation of the Palestinian Authority, he argued, the process would be considered a failure, and Israel would have no choice but to renege on the Oslo Accords. "This will only be a means of last resort," he said. "But if we realize that the level of violence does not subside, we will not be able to proceed, and will most certainly not implement the final-status agreement. And should there be no choice, the IDF will return to those places which it is about to leave in the coming months."<sup>105</sup>

Twenty-three years and thousands of deaths later, with the Gaza Strip transformed into an unreconstructed terrorist entity; with Palestinian leaders as adamantly opposed to Israel's existence as ever; and with their subjects brainwashed with vile anti-Semitic and anti-Israel incitement – there is no doubting the abysmal failure of Beilin's "test of blood."

Yet there has been no real reckoning by the Oslo architects and their erstwhile "peace camp" successors, both in Israel and abroad, of the worst blunder in Israel's history, and no rethinking of its disastrously misconceived assumptions – let alone any public admission of guilt or show of remorse over its horrific costs. Instead, they continue to willfully ignore the Palestinian leadership's total lack of interest in the two-state solution and serial violation of contractual obligations. They continue to whitewash ongoing Palestinian violence, belittle the extent of Israeli suffering, and blame Jerusalem for the stalled process despite the public endorsement of the two-state solution by five successive Israeli prime ministers: Peres, Barak, Sharon, Olmert, and Netanyahu.

The salient exception to this delusional pattern – President George W. Bush’s historic conditioning of Palestinian statehood on the replacement of the violent and corrupt PLO regime by “new leaders, leaders not compromised by terror”<sup>106</sup> – has been all but ignored. Not only has this same terror-tainted leadership come to be universally viewed as the prospective government of a future Palestinian state, but its goal of having this state established without negotiating with Israel, or even recognizing its right to exist, seems to be gaining ever wider currency.

This soft racism – asking nothing of the Palestinians as if they are too dim or too primitive to be held accountable for their own words and actions – is an assured recipe for disaster. For so long as not a single Palestinian leader evinces genuine acceptance of the two-state solution or acts in a way signifying an unqualified embrace of the idea, there can be no true or lasting reconciliation with Israel. And so long as the territories continue to be governed by the PLO’s and Hamas’s rule of the jungle, no Palestinian civil society, let alone a viable state, can develop.



## NOTES

- 1 Arafat's interview with *al-Anwar* (Beirut), August 2, 1968.
- 2 Roy Mandel, "'Peace is made with enemies'. Letters written to us by Rabin," *Ynet* (Tel Aviv), October 18, 2010 (Hebrew).
- 3 Faisal Husseini's interview with *al-Arabi* (Cairo), June 24, 2000.
- 4 Uzi Mahanaimi, "Arafat: I Know There Is an Agreement between Israel and Damascus," *Ha'olam Ha'ze* (Tel Aviv), September 8, 1993, pp. 3-4 (Hebrew).
- 5 "Political Program for the Present Stage Drawn Up by the 12th PNC, Cairo, June 9, 1974," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Summer 1974, pp. 224-25.
- 6 As early as October 1949 the prominent Egyptian politician Muhammad Salah ad-Din, soon to become his country's foreign minister, wrote in the influential Egyptian daily *al-Misri* that "in demanding the restoration of the refugees to Palestine, the Arabs intend that they shall return as the masters of the homeland and not as slaves. More specifically, they intend to annihilate the state of Israel" (quoted in Israel's Foreign Ministry, Research Department, "Refugee Repatriation - A Danger to Israel's Security," September 4, 1951, Israel's State Archives, ISA, FM 2564/1).
- 7 Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), "Al-Quds al-Arabi editor-in-chief: Arafat planned that Oslo accords would chase away Israelis," September 3, 2015.
- 8 For detailed discussion of these policies see Efraim Karsh, *Arafat's War* (New York: Grove, 2003), Chapters 3-6.
- 9 Mahmoud Abbas, *al-Wajh al-Akhar: al-Alaqa al-Sirriya bayna al-Naziya wa-l-Sihyuniya* (Amman: Dar Ibn Rushd, 1984).
- 10 *Haaretz* (Tel Aviv), June 23, 2016.
- 11 "Arab League rejects Israel as Jewish State," *ibid.*, March 26, 2014.
- 12 WAFA (PLO/PA official news agency), September 30, 2015.

- 13 “Abbas: every drop of blood that has been spilled in Jerusalem is holy blood as long as it was for Allah,” *al-Hayat al-Jadida* (official PA daily), September 17, 2015, as cited by PMW.
- 14 “Mahmoud Abbas: Murdering Israelis is ‘peaceful popular uprising,’” PMW, December 1, 2015; “Abbas: All of Israel is Occupation,” official PA TV, March 11, 2016, PMW, April 6, 2016.
- 15 Said Aburish, *Arafat: From Defender to Dictator* (London: Bloomsbury, 1998), p. 100.
- 16 As late as December 1996, three months after Arafat used the opening of a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel in Jerusalem to instigate a violent confrontation in which dozens of Israelis and Palestinians lost their lives, 78% of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza rated Israeli democracy as very good or good, compared to 68% for the United States, 62% for France, and 43% for the PA. Only 6.9% of Palestinians had a negative opinion of Israeli democracy. “Results of Public Opinion Poll No. 25” (Washington, DC: Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, December 26-28, 1996), p. 14.
- 17 Khalil Shikaki, “Palestinian Public Opinion about the Peace Process, 1993-1999” (Washington, DC: Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, 1999); “New Beginning,” *U.S. News & World Report*, September 13, 1993, p. 27.
- 18 “Public Opinion Poll No. 31 - Part I: On Palestinian Attitudes towards Politics,” Jerusalem Media & Communications Center, March 1999, p. 3.
- 19 Mohamed Heikal, *Secret Channels: The Inside Story of Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations* (London: Harper Collins, 1996), p. 450.
- 20 See, for example, Pinhas Inbari, *Beharavot Shvurot* (Tel Aviv: Misrad Habitahon, 1994), especially chapters 18-23.
- 21 See for example, Mamduh Nawfal, *Qisat Ittifaq Uslu: al-Riwaya al-Haqiqiya al-Kamila*, (Amman: al-Ahliya, 1995), pp. 61-63; Efraim Sneh, *Nivut Beshetach Mesukan* (Tel Aviv, Yediot Aharonot, 2002), pp. 22-23; Adam Raz, “Colliding Fronts: the ‘strange’ anatomy of Rabin’s Oslo decision,” *Israelim*, Autumn 2012, pp. 107-19 (Hebrew); Efraim Inbar, *Rabin and Israel’s National*

*Security* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999); *The Guardian*, June 21, 2004.

- 22 Geoffrey W. Watson, *The Oslo Accords: International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Agreements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 315-16.
- 23 See Articles 8, 9, 18 in the Gaza and Jericho Agreement & Articles 12-16 in the Interim Agreement, *ibid.*, pp. 333-34, 336, 356-59.
- 24 *Al Hamishmar* (Tel Aviv), October 4, 1993.
- 25 Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), “Fatal Terrorist Attacks in Israel, Sept. 1993-1999,” September 24, 2000 & “Terrorism Deaths in Israel - 1920-1999,” January 1, 2000. See also “Chronology of Terrorist Attacks in Israel: Introduction, compiled by Wm. Robert Johnston” & Global Terrorism Database. The MFA’s figures are the most reliable as they contain the name of every post-Oslo fatality.
- 26 Thus, for example, the May 1972 Lod (now Ben-Gurion) airport massacre, in which 26 people were murdered, was carried out by three Japanese terrorists arriving from Rome, while the Maalot and Kiryat Shmona massacres two years later, in which 43 people (including 30 children) were killed, were perpetrated by terrorists coming from Lebanon. So was the coastal plain massacre of March 1978, where 38 Israelis (including 13 children) were killed. Not to mention the killing of 11 Israeli athletes in the 1972 Munich Olympics, among many overseas terror attacks.
- 27 B’Tselem, “Fatalities in the First Intifada.”
- 28 For further discussion of the issue see Karsh, *Arafat’s War*, chapters 8-11.
- 29 Israel Security Agency (ISA), “Analysis of Attacks in the Last Decade 2000-2010”; MFA, “Terrorism Deaths in Israel – 1920-1999.”
- 30 MFA, “Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel since the Declaration of Principles.” The only pre-Oslo suicide bombing, in which one local Palestinian and the two bombers were killed, took place in April 1993 in the desolate Jordan Valley, outside the pre-1967 line.

- 31 MFA, "Victims of Palestinian Violence and Terrorism since September 2000."
- 32 Arafat's interview with *al-Anwar* (Beirut), August 2 1968.
- 33 *Al-Quds*, December 22, 1995; Yigal Carmon, "So Now We All Know," *Jerusalem Post*, January 5, 1996.
- 34 This was due to the fact that Gaza's small size and marginal location, far from Israel's population centers, made it a less likely springboard for the export of terrorism, not least given its cordoning in the mid-1990s by a security fence that made terrorist attacks in Israeli territory extremely difficult and drove Hamas to try to leapfrog this barrier by developing and/or acquiring surface-to-surface rockets and missiles. By contrast, the West Bank is immediately adjacent to the Israeli heartland, its fault line with Israeli territory infinitely longer than that of Gaza and totally unprotected by a land barrier until the early 2000s, when Israel began erecting a security fence that substantially slashed terrorist attacks.
- 35 Israel Security Agency (ISA), "2006 Summary - Palestinian Terror Data and Trends"; "Analysis of Attacks in the Last Decade 2000-2010"; MFA, "2004 Terrorism Data," January 5, 2015.
- 36 Thus, for example, by November 2006 Iran had already given Hamas some \$120 million, pledging another \$250 million during a visit by Prime Minister Ismail Haniya to Tehran the following month. Meyrav Wurmser, "The Iran-Hamas Alliance," Jewish Policy Center, Fall 2007. See also ISA, "2006 Summary," pp. 4, 14-15 & "Analysis of Attacks in the Last Decade 2000-2010."
- 37 ISA, "Analysis of Attacks in the Last Decade 2000-2010."
- 38 Ibid., "High trajectory shooting is the general term for indirect firing (rockets or mortar shells), its advantage being the wide range between the launching site and the target" and "Mortar shells launching attacks."
- 39 *Davar Rishon* (Tel Aviv), January 21, 1996; *Maariv*, January 22, 1996.
- 40 Tony Karon, "Clinton Saves Last Dance for Arafat," *Time*, January 2, 2001.

- 41 “Donor Investment in Palestinian Development 1994-1998. A Jointly-Prepared Report by the World Bank & The United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories,” Jerusalem, 1999, p. 14; Congressional Research Service, “U.S. Foreign aid to the Palestinians,” Washington, D.C., March 18, 2016.
- 42 Andrea Levin, “The Media’s Tunnel Vision,” *Middle East Quarterly*, December 1996, pp. 3, 5-6.
- 43 United Nations Security Council, “Resolution 1322 (2000). Adopted by the Security Council at its 4205th meeting on 7 October 2000.”
- 44 See, for example, Hussein Agha & Robert Malley, “Camp David: the Tragedy of Errors,” *New York Review of Books*, August 9, 2001; *Jerusalem Post*, July 26, 30, 2000; *The New York Times*, July 26, 2000.
- 45 *Maariv*, October 5, 2002.
- 46 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), “The Palestinian war-torn economy: aid, development, and state formation,” New York and Geneva, 2006, p. 37.
- 47 The White House, “President Bush Calls for New Palestinian Leadership,” June 24, 2002. For further discussion of the issue see Karsh, *Arafat’s War*, pp. 235-42.
- 48 International Court of Justice, “Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” Press release 2004/28, July 9, 2004.
- 49 Efraim Karsh, “Arafat Lives,” *Commentary Magazine*, January 2005, pp. 33, 40; Chloé Valdary, “An Unwelcome Palestinian Reformer,” *Wall Street Journal*, July 29, 2015; Jonathan Schanzer, “Chronic Kleptocracy: Corruption within the Palestinian Political Establishment,” Hearing before U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Washington, DC, July 10, 2012, pp. 17-18.
- 50 Scott Wilson, “Obama Searches for Middle East Peace,” *Washington Post*, July 14, 2012.

- 51 “Netanyahu declares 10-month settlement freeze ‘to restart peace talks’,” *Haaretz*, November 25, 2009.
- 52 International Criminal Court, “The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, opens a preliminary examination of the situation in Palestine,” January 16, 2015.
- 53 WAFA, September 30, 2015.
- 54 “EU’s Solana says Hamas place on terror list could be reconsidered,” *Middle East News Agency* (MENA, Cairo), as brought by the *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, September 7, 2003.
- 55 BBC, “EU’s Solana ‘secretly’ met Hamas founder in Gaza - Arabic paper in London,” July 30, 2002; Herb Keinon, “Solana flipflops on whether he met with Hamas officials,” *Jerusalem Post*, November 26, 2004.
- 56 David Horovitz, “Javier Solana to the 'Post': Hamas does not want to destroy Israel,” *Jerusalem Post*, October 27, 2006. See also Khaled Abu Toameh, Solana: “Hamas blew chance to end sanctions. Abbas aides say he must dismiss gov't,” *ibid.*, December 3, 2006; “EU's Solana says Hamas leader's statements step in right directions,” *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, January 21, 2007.
- 57 Herb Keinon, “EU keeps Quartet demands on Hamas out of resolutions on Middle East,” *Jerusalem Post*, June 17, 2009.
- 58 See, for example: United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, “Human Rights in Palestine and other Occupied Arab Territories. Report of the United Nations Fact-finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict,” September 25, 2009 (known as the Goldstone Report); United Nations General Assembly, Human Rights Council, “Report of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1,” June 22, 2015; Amnesty International, “‘Black Friday’: Carnage in Rafah during 2014 Israel/Gaza Conflict,” July 29, 2015.
- 59 Amnesty International, “‘Strangling Necks’: Abductions, Torture, and Summary Killings of Palestinians by Hamas during the 2014 Gaza Israel/ Hamas Conflict,” 2015, p. 10.

- 60 Richard Goldstone, "Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and War Crimes," *Washington Post*, April 1, 2011.
- 61 *Akhbar al-Yom* (Cairo), October 11, 1947. For background of the statement and its full translation see: David Barnett and Efraim Karsh, "Azzam's Genocidal Threat," *Middle East Forum*, Fall 2011, pp. 85-88.
- 62 "Tutu Condemns Israeli Apartheid," *BBC News*, April 29, 2002.
- 63 Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).
- 64 "Mairead Corrigan-Maguire: Stand up to Israeli Apartheid," *Stop de Bezetting*, accessed October 6, 2015.
- 65 "Morrison, Toni. Literature Nobel Prize-winning African-American novelist slams '[Israel's] long-term military, economic and geographic practice whose political aim is nothing less than the liquidation of the Palestinian nation,'" *Palestinian Genocide*.
- 66 Edwin Black, "Ford Foundation Aided Groups Behind Biased Durban Parley," *Forward*, October 17, 2003; *Jerusalem Post*, September 2, 2001; Anne F. Bayefsky, "Terrorism and Racism: the Aftermath of Durban," *Jerusalem Letter/Viewpoints*, December 16, 2001; Irwin Cotler, "Durban's Troubling Legacy One Year Later: Twisting the Cause of International Human Rights Against the Jewish People," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, August 20, 2002.
- 67 United Nations Human Right Council, Office of the High Commissioner, Special Sessions.
- 68 General Assembly of the United Nations, "Emergency Special Sessions."
- 69 The 13th Knesset's 129th session - "The Government's announcement on the signing of the DOP and the letter exchange with the PLO," September 21, 1993.
- 70 Efraim Karsh, "Israel's Arabs: deprived or radicalized?" *Israel Affairs*, January 2013, pp. 2-20; idem, "Israel's Arabs vs. Israel," *Commentary*, December 2003.
- 71 "Vaadat Orr. Vaadat Hakira Mamlachtit Leberur Hitnagshuyot ben Kohot Habitahon leven Ezrahim Israelim Behodesh October 2000. Din Veheshbon:

Nosah Ma'le" (Jerusalem, August 2000. For English summary of the conclusions see "The Official Summation of the Or Commission Report," *Jewish Virtual Library*, September 2, 2003.

- 72 "Aims of the Political Programme of the Palestinian Revolution Adopted by the 11th Palestine National Congress, Cairo, 11 January 1973," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Spring 1973, p. 170. See also *Maariv*, January 22, February 22, 1979; February 2, May 26, 1986.
- 73 *Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic*, July 1, 1994; *an-Nahar*, July 3, 1994. The Qur'anic quote is from the 28th Sura - "The Story," verse 4. See *The Koran*, translated with an Introduction by Arthur J. Abberly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 392.
- 74 For a heated debate of the episode see the 13th Knesset's 379th session, Jerusalem, October 25, 1995.
- 75 Quoted in PMW, "PA Depicts a World Without Israel."
- 76 *Jerusalem Post*, August 4, 2016; *Israel Hayom*, July 10, 2015.
- 77 *Haaretz*, June 13-17, July 11, November 4, 2001, February 26, 2002.
- 78 Thus, for example, Ahmad Tibi visited Lebanon in 2005, Jamal Zahalka and Wasil Taha visited Lebanon and Syria in 2006, Said Nafa visited Syria in 2007, and Hanin Zu'bi participated in the May 2010 violent attempt to breach Israel's naval blockade of the Hamas-held Gaza Strip.
- 79 *Haaretz*, January 12, 2009.
- 80 Ynetnews.com, April 25, 2010, February 25 2011; YouTube video of the visit. <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3880679,00.html>.
- 81 Ynetnews.com, April 27, 2010.
- 82 *Haaretz*, June 5, 2008, January 22, 2009.
- 83 *The Marker*, February 16, 2007; *Haaretz*, April 1, 2007.



- 84 Havaad Haartzi Leroshei Harashuyot Haarviyot BeIsrael, "Hahazon Haatidi Laarvim Hafalestinim BeIsrael," Nazareth, 2006, pp. 5, 9.
- 85 *Haaretz*, April 24, May 11, 2001, March 6, May 15, 2008; *Walla!News*, May 15, 2016.
- 86 *Ibid.*, April 20, 2001.
- 87 See, for example, Itamar Radai et al., "The Arab Citizens in Israel: Current Trends According to Recent Opinion Polls," Tel Aviv, Institute for National Security Studies, Strategic Assessment, 18/2, July 2015; Shibley Telhami. "2010 Israeli Arab/Palestinian Public Opinion Survey," Washington DC, Brookings Institution. For the East Jerusalem Palestinians see: David Pollock, "What Do the Arabs of East Jerusalem Really Want?," Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, September 7, 2011; Khaled Abu Toameh, "Why Palestinians Want Israeli Citizenship," Gatestone Institute, October 23 2012.
- 88 *Haaretz*, July 30, October 1, 2001, April 3, 14, 15, September 29, 2002, March 2, 2002; October 9, December 28, 2008, January 12, 2009, October 1, 2012.
- 89 "Vaadat Orr: Shaar Rishon," p. 77; Ynetnews.com, May 17, 2009; .David Koren, "Arab Israeli citizens in the 2009 elections: between Israeli citizenship and Palestinian Arab identity," *Israel Affairs*, 16/1, January 2010, pp. 124-41.
- 90 Karsh, *Arafat's War*, pp. 115-16.
- 91 See, for example: "News Analysis: Are Rabin's Harsh Words Harbinger of 1996 Elections?" *Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)*, March 25, 1995; Anshel Pfeffer, "Would It All Be Different if Yitzhak Rabin Had Lived?" *Haaretz*, October 27, 2015.
- 92 Official Knesset Website, The 13th Knesset, July 13, 1992-June 17, 1996.
- 93 Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Fatal Terrorist Attacks in Israel (Sept 1993-1999)"; *idem*, "More Israelis have been killed by Palestinian terrorists since Oslo," September 10, 1998.
- 94 Uri Dromi, "Waiting for Arafat to go away," *International Herald Tribune*, July 19, 2002; *Jerusalem Post*, January 26, 1996; *Maariv*, January 17, 1996.

- See also, " Hamas Military Leader Met Arafat before Homicide Bombings," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 1, 1996.
- 95 Barry Rubin, "External factors in Israel's 1999 elections," *Israel Affairs*, 7/2-3 (2000), pp. 207-08, 213-14.
  - 96 Karsh, *Arafat's War*, chapters 9, 12. See also: "Special Document File: The Taba Negotiations (January 2001)," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 31/3 (Spring 2002), p. 79; "EU Description of the Outcome of Permanent Status Talks in Taba," *Haaretz English Edition*, February 14, 2001; "Private Response to Palestinian Refugee Paper of January 22, 2001," Articles 1, 6, 7, *Le Monde diplomatique*, September 4, 2001.
  - 97 Edward Said, *The Pen and the Sword: Conversations with David Barsamian* (Edinburgh, AK Press, 1994), p. 137.
  - 98 Ion Pacepa, *Red Horizons. Inside the Romanian Secret Service - The Memoirs of Ceausescu's Spy Chief* (London: Coronet Books, 1989), p. 28.
  - 99 Karsh, *Arafat's War*, pp. 247-52.
  - 100 See, for example: Ali Abunimah, "When Salam Fayyad secretly urged the US to block salaries to Palestinian Authority employees," *The Electronic Intifada*, October 4, 2012; *Jerusalem Post*, May 5, 2012.
  - 101 Jonathan Schanzer, "Chronic Kleptocracy: Corruption Within the Palestinian Political Establishment," Hearing before U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Washington, DC, July 10, 2012, pp. 17-8; Bergman, *Veharashut Netuna*, pp. 162-63; Ehrenfeld, "Where Does the Money Go?" pp. 9-10; *Yediot Ahronot* (Tel Aviv), July 14, 2002.
  - 102 See, for example: "A Poorer Peace," *Newsweek*, September 1, 1997, p. 29; Keith Marsden, "The Viability of Palestine," *Wall Street Journal*, April 25, 2002; Patrick Clawson, "The Palestinians' Lost Marshall plans," *Jerusalem Post*, August 9, 2002.
  - 103 For a detailed examination of the adverse implications of Hamas terrorism on the Gaza population see Hillel Frisch, *Hamas: A Social Welfare Government or War*

*Machine*, Bar Ilan University, The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, November 2015. See also: World Bank, “Four Years - Intifada, Closures, and Palestinian Economic Crisis. An Assessment,” October 2004, pp. xv, 3, 9. 13, 29-32; idem, “Assistance Strategy FY15-16 for the West Bank and Gaza,” October 8, 2014, pp 3-5; idem, “Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,” May 27, 2015.

104 As he said in a 1997 interview: “For dozens of years I have been arguing with these people and they have opposed, like lions, my proposals regarding the PLO...Then all of a sudden Rabin brings an agreement with the PLO and all are in favor.” *Haaretz Weekly Magazine*, March 7, 1997.

105 Beilin’s interview with *Maariv*, November 26, 1993.

106 The White House, “President Bush Calls for New Palestinian Leadership,” June 24, 2002.



## Recent BESA Center Publications

### Mideast Security and Policy Studies

- No. 102 The Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt-Israel Peace, *Liad Porat*, August 2013 (Hebrew)
- No. 103 Time Is on Israel's Side, *Efraim Inbar*, August 2013 (Hebrew), September 2013 (English)
- No. 104 Armed and Dangerous: Why a Rational, Nuclear Iran Is an Unacceptable Risk to Israel, *Steven R. David*, November 2013
- No. 105 Mowing the Grass: Israel's Strategy for Protracted Intractable Conflict, *Efraim Inbar and Eitan Shamir*, December 2013 (Hebrew)
- No. 106 South Korea's Middle East Policy, *Alon Levkowitz*, December 2013
- No. 107 Israel and Kazakhstan: Assessing the State of Bilateral Relations, *Gil Feiler and Kevjn Lim*, May 2014
- No. 108 The Myth of Palestinian Centrality, *Efraim Karsh*, July 2014
- No. 109 The New Strategic Equation in the Eastern Mediterranean, *Efraim Inbar*, August 2014 (Hebrew), September 2014 (English)
- No. 110 The Ties between Israel and Azerbaijan, *Alexander Murinson*, October 2014
- No. 111 Israel's Air and Missile Defense During the 2014 Gaza War, *Uzi Rubin*, January 2015 (Hebrew), February 2015 (English)
- No. 112 Changing Japanese Defense Policies, *Eyal Ben-Ari*, February 2015
- No. 113 Obama, The Reluctant Realist, *Steven R. David*, June 2015
- No. 114 Israel's Role in the Struggle over the Iranian Nuclear Project, *Yossi Kuperwasser*, June 2015
- No. 115 Deterrence Campaigns: Lessons from IDF Operations in Gaza, *Moni Chorev*, October, 2015 (Hebrew), March 2016 (English)
- No. 116 Hamas: A Social Welfare Government or War Machine?, *Hillel Frisch*, November 2015
- No. 117 The Mediterranean as a Strategic Environment: Learning a New Geopolitical Language, *Eran Lerman*, February 2016
- No. 118 The ISIS Challenge in Syria: Implications for Israeli Security, *Hillel Frisch*, May 2016
- No. 119 Indian Responses to Israel's Gaza Operations, *S. Samuel C. Rajiv*, May 2016
- No. 120 The Return of the Russian Bear to the Middle East, *Shay Har-Zvi*, May 2016 (Hebrew)
- No. 121 Trends in US Congressional Support for Israel, *Amnon Cavari with Elan Nyer*, June 2016
- No. 122 Implications of US Disengagement from the Middle East, *Efraim Inbar*, June 2016
- No. 123 The Oslo Disaster, *Efraim Karsh*, August 2016

### Policy Memorandum

- No. 6 The National Security Council: Reflections upon the June 2012 Israel Ombudsman's Report (Hebrew), *Yehezkel Dror*, November 2012
- No. 7 The Gaza War, 2014 – Initial Assessment, *Efraim Inbar and Amir Rapaport*, December 2014 (Hebrew)
- No. 8 Perfect Storm in the Middle East, *Yaakov Amidror*, June 2015 (Hebrew), July 2015 (English)
- No. 9 Israel-Greece Relations, *Arye Mekel*, September 2015 (Hebrew)
- No. 10 Space Wars, *Aby Har-Even*, May 2016 (Hebrew)

### Colloquia on Strategy and Diplomacy

- No. 28 The IDF Force Structure (Hebrew) May 2014
- No. 29 Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations: Where to? (Hebrew) August 2014