

The Arab Israeli Conflict: What Is Next?

Mohamed Rabie

The first contact between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and certain elements of the Israeli political establishment occurred in 1974. Abu Iyad, the most radical PLO leader at the time met with Israelis in Romania, signaling PLO willingness to deal with Israel and seek a peaceful solution to the Arab Israeli conflict. Israeli Palestinian contacts were renewed few years later by Dr. Isam Sartawi, a PLO operative; he met with representatives of the Israeli government and the World Zionist Organization several times; most meetings were held in Vienna, Austria. Dr. Sartawi was encouraged by Bruno Kreisky, the Jewish chancellor of Austria who worked tirelessly to promote peace in the Middle East. Kreisky met with PLO chairman Yasser Arafat in 1974 and in 1979 invited him to visit Vienna; thus giving legitimacy to the PLO and Palestinian struggle for freedom and self-determination. In 1983, Dr. Sartawi was assassinated; yet contacts between Israelis and Palestinians continued and were expanded following the forced evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982; several Israeli Knesset members and prominent Jewish Americans made regular trips to Tunis where they held talks with the PLO leadership. Meanwhile, dialogue groups seeking to narrow the gap between Arabs and Israelis mushroomed; several forums were established in Europe, the United States, Palestine/Israel, and elsewhere.

At the end of 1988, the PLO accepted US conditions for a dialogue; and the United States recognized the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Following that announcement, President Reagan authorized the US ambassador in Tunisia to open a dialogue with representatives of the PLO, and the peace process was launched, causing expectations on all sides to rise. However, no breakthroughs were made due to several reasons; most notable among them is the American unconditional support of Israel and failure to act as an honest mediator. In 1991, following the conclusion of the Gulf war to liberate Kuwait, President George H. W. Bush and Secretary of State James Baker pressured all parties to attend the Madrid Peace Conference; the conference gave birth to several working committees meant to address the major issues of the conflict but produced nothing. 22 years have passed since the opening of the US-PLO dialogue and almost 20 years since the Madrid Conference was convened and no peace has been achieved. In fact, the chances for an Arab-Israeli peace have worsened, not improved.

The Oslo Accords

The failure of the Madrid process to produce tangible results on the one hand and the intensification of the Palestinian Intifada which started in December 1987 on the other led the PLO and the Israeli government of Mr. Yitzhak Rabin to negotiate and conclude the Oslo Accords in 1993. The Accords called for the creation of a political process to facilitate mutual recognition and lead to peace. Whereas the PLO recognized "the right of the state of Israel to exist in peace and security," the Israeli prime minister said in his statement that he "has decided to recognize the PLO

as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process." Thus, the Accords gave Israel the legitimacy it sought while giving the Palestinian people nothing of substance in return. Nevertheless, the accords called for the creation of a Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza but failed to recognize the Palestinian national rights or call for freezing Jewish settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. When I read the text of the Accords in the New York Times days before it was signed in the White House on September 13, 1993, my first reaction was: "this agreement as is will only lead to creating a Palestinian administration to facilitate continued Israeli occupation."

Subsequent agreements led Israel to hand over some parts of the occupied West Bank to the PA. However, Israeli appropriation of Palestinian land, and the expansion of Jewish settlements, and the intensification of discrimination against the Palestinian people accelerated. Efforts to insulate the Jewish colonialists from the natives of the land and make life intolerable for them led Israel to erect hundreds of barriers and build a separation wall that divides families and villages, preventing Palestinians from moving freely within the West Bank, sometimes within their tiny villages: all of this was done in the name of security but was intended to encourage Palestinians to leave their homes and homeland. Today, Jewish settlers living on confiscated Palestinian land in the West Bank and Jerusalem exceed 500,000 and form an armed militia whose only objective is to intimidate Palestinians, confiscate their land and force them to leave. Professor James Ron of The Johns Hopkins University criticized the Israeli settlement policy warning that it might lead to civil war; "If Israel is ever to dismantle settlements, withdraw from East Jerusalem and relinquish its grip over Palestine, it must first undergo a traumatic internal upheaval. By adopting and diligently pursuing an expansionist, colonialist policy in the occupied Palestinian territories," The Israelis, "have created a frightening ghost whose very existence drives the Israeli public toward more radicalism and polarization as it deepens its fear and sense of insecurity."

The Oslo Accords produced neither a solid basis for negotiations nor a realistic outline for a mutually acceptable peace settlement. In fact, the process had failed to define its point of departure and, more importantly, its destination, causing negotiations to fail miserably; they produced nothing except Palestinian frustration and, at times, rage. Professor Shlomo Avineri of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem said on November 28, 2000, "The Oslo process was aimed at creating confidence-building measures. We now have less confidence than we had the first day after Oslo." On August 10, 2001, Avineri was quoted in the *Washington Post* saying; "We remain in a neocolonial relationship with the Palestinians, which forces us to do things that are incompatible with being a democracy. It coarsens Israeli life, making us all racists. Every time we see an Arab, we assume he's a terrorist. And it is utterly demeaning for the Palestinians, who are lined up and searched like cattle every day." In 2002, Mr. Sharon, who refused to recognize the Oslo Accords and accept the Road Map of 2003, ordered his troops to reoccupy the areas under the control of the PA, practically cancelling the Oslo Accords and ending all hopes for peace. Several attempts were made thereafter to revive the dormant peace process but no progress was made.

Looking at life conditions in the occupied territories, the settlements activities, the separation wall which Palestinians call the apartheid wall, and the general mood of both Palestinians and Israelis, we must conclude that 17 years of intensive negotiations under the Oslo process have made peace more remote than ever before. Considering the Oslo achievements, the accords accomplished what they were intentionally or unintentionally meant to accomplish; ending Palestinian quest for freedom, legitimizing Israel's racist nature, and creating a Palestinian administration to facilitate continued Israeli occupation. Palestinian security forces which the United States built in the West Bank are not employed to protect the Palestinian people or defend their land from Jewish settlers but to provide security for Israel while it continues to expand Jewish sovereignty over the rest of Palestine.

In 1991, when Secretary Baker pressured Yitzhak Shamir to attend the Madrid Peace Conference, The Israeli Prime Minister said that he will negotiate for ten years without signing a treaty. In light of what has happened since then, Shamir vastly underestimated the will and deviousness of his followers who managed to negotiate for 20 years without committing themselves to a settlement. Mr. Dov Weissglas, director of Mr. Sharon' office, described the strategic goal of Sharon's diplomacy in an interview in *Ha'aretz* in 2004 as being "to secure the support of the White House and Congress for Israeli measures that would place the peace process and Palestinian statehood in formaldehyde." He further said that "the purpose of Sharon's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza was to gain US acceptance of Israel's unilateralism, not to set a precedent for an eventual withdrawal from the West Bank." Formaldehyde is a gas used to prevent the deterioration of dead bodies and create the illusion that they are still alive. Yes, Israeli deception has succeeded in manipulating successive US administrations and putting the peace process where they wanted it to be.

Obama and Netanyahu

When Benyamin Netanyahu became Israel's Prime Minister in 2009, he made the resumption of negotiations subject to certain conditions that violate UN resolutions and the principles that facilitated the creation of the 'peace process' in the first place. Netanyahu placed conditions that would prejudge the outcome of negotiations regarding all core issues of the conflict; the right of return for the Palestinian refugees, the status of Jerusalem, the borders of the Israeli and Palestinian states, the fate of the Jewish colonies built in the West Bank and Jerusalem, and the Palestinian right to self-determination.

As for the refugees, Netanyahu said, "There must be a clear understanding that the Palestinian refugee problem will be resolved outside Israel's borders." Yet he failed to define such borders; Israel in fact is the only state in the world that has no self-defined or internationally-recognized borders. The Only borders that Israel could legitimately claim are those defined by the UN partition plan of 1947; General Assembly resolution 181 divided Palestine almost equally between Jews and Palestinian Arabs; however, Israel was able to increase its share by 50 percent as

a result of the ethnic cleansing campaign it conducted in 1948. Regarding the Jerusalem issue, Netanyahu said, "Jerusalem must remain the united capital of Israel." And because he does not acknowledge that Israel is in the West Bank as an occupation power, he neither agreed to freeze settlement activities as demanded by President Obama and international law, nor recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self determination and statehood. In fact, the term 'Palestinian national rights' does not exist in Israel's lexicon; and is never used by Zionists in America or Europe.

And to make the probable impossible, Netanyahu demanded that Palestinians recognize Israel as the state of the "Jewish people." Such a demand makes Israel a super empire claiming to represent people who are citizens of other states and do not live within its borders; people who may not wish even to be identified with its racist ideology. Israel wants to make all Jews in the world regardless of their wish, nationality, place of residence and political beliefs subject to its jurisdiction and partners in its racist, colonialist enterprise.

The United States and several other European nations insist that only Palestinians and Israelis are able to negotiate a settlement; as a consequence, they keep trying to resurrect a dead peace process. While Palestinians and Israelis did work together before, history tells us that they have failed time and again to make peace on their own. Former French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine said on July 7, 2001 in Rome that "the outside world is becoming convinced that the Israelis and Palestinians are no longer capable of resolving their differences. We cannot leave the Israelis and Palestinians alone in this atmosphere of growing hate and panicky fear." In fact, no Israeli or Palestinian leader has ever had the courage to articulate a peace plan that has a chance of being accepted by the other. And because of political fragmentation and ideological infighting within each camp, hopes that Israelis and Palestinians could somehow make peace on their own are illusory.

Today, Israel has a widely fragmented society and a deeply divided government, making it impossible for any Israeli government to sign a peace treaty, even if the proposed deal incorporates the wish list of Netanyahu in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. The only time that Israelis and Palestinians were able to produce an agreement with little outside help happened 17 years ago when they signed the "Oslo Accords". However, time has proven that the accords were not meant to launch a genuine peace process to settle the conflict; instead, they were a mere scheme to create a Palestinian administration to foster Israeli occupation and colonization, nothing more and nothing less. Mr. Henry Siegman, the director of the Middle East Project who led the American Jewish Congress from 1978 to 1994, wrote recently "the Middle East peace process may well be the most spectacular deception in modern diplomatic history."

Due to these facts, and because of America's unconditional and undisciplined support of Israel, articulating a comprehensive peace settlement to the Arab Israeli conflict has become the responsibility of the international community. It was hoped that President Obama would lead such an effort and help achieve peace; unfortunately, he adopted the same disastrous policies of his

predecessors; calling for negotiations that lead to nowhere. And by so doing, Obama failed to change US foreign policy, allowing it to continue to be an extension of Israeli policy. For example, past American administrations have used the veto in the UN Security Council 32 times to protect Israel from international criticism and thus enable it to continue its colonialist, hegemonic policies in Palestine, more than the total number of vetoes cast by all other permanent members of the Security Council. The US, moreover, has failed repeatedly to support UN resolutions calling for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories as stipulated by UN resolutions 242 and 338.

The Nation magazine said on June 21, 2010, "Israel's occupation would not have been possible without tens of billions in US military aid, without dozens of UN vetoes cast by Washington, without the State Department's back-room strong-arming other nations. It would not have been possible without the dishonesty of a US media establishment that habitually twists or refuses to report basic facts about the Israel-Palestine conflict. It would not have been possible without the active collusion or cowardly silence of the vast majority of the Democratic Party and liberal policy establishment, which for too long has bowed under the intimidation of AIPAC and other right-wing Zionist organizations, including Christian Evangelicals, all of which claim to defend Israel but which in fact support the most retrograde forces in Israeli society - elements that are leading Israel on a path of self-destruction."

While exposing the destructive impact of the US-Israel relationship on Israel, the Nation fails to explain the disastrous impact of this relationship on the United States; how it is leading American on a path of self-destruction. The so-called "special relationship" has caused the United States to lose its international credibility, corrupt the American political process, and make US foreign policy an oppressive force protecting Israeli evil acts from international condemnation and international law. The media, meanwhile, has become a major force falsifying rather than revealing facts, concealing Israeli crimes, and misleading the American public. The Democratic Party and the liberal policy establishment and the neoconservative forces have become an army of mercenaries working on behalf of Israel to cheat the American people and make them pay in blood and money for everything Israel wants to do and likes to be done. In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq because destroying the Saddam regime was on Israel's wish list; and today America is fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Yemen and several other Middle Eastern states in order to protect Israel from its enemies. The US aid to Israel exceeds \$10 billion annually; however, if the cost of supporting Israel since it was created in 1948, and fighting its dirty wars, and bribing its enemies were to be added, the total would reach several trillion dollars.

Many American intellectuals and former officials have criticized US Middle East policy in the past; but the army has never got involved in this uncomfortable debate before. Things, however, seem to have changed; Gen. David Petraeus told the US Senate in March 2010 that the Arab-Israeli conflict "hurts America's ability to advance its interests in the Middle East." On the 13th of April 2010, President Obama said that resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute was a "vital national security interest of the United States," adding that conflicts like this one end up "costing us significantly in

terms of both blood and treasure." In other words, the US president now says that the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which he seems to blame Israel for, threatens the safety of American soldiers who are fighting extremists in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, and costs the loss of American lives and resources. Anthony Cordesman, a strategic thinker who works at *the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D C*, said in May 2010, "The depth of America's moral commitment [to Israel] does not justify or excuse actions by an Israeli government that unnecessary makes Israel a strategic liability when it should remain an asset. It does not mean that the United States should extend support to an Israeli government when that government fails to credibly pursue peace with its neighbors." Anthony Cordesman who supported US invasion of Iraq in 1991 and again in 2003, and never failed to defend Israeli occupation and crimes in Palestine, is acknowledging that Israel does want to commit itself to making peace, and that it is no longer an asset as claimed before. Nevertheless, the Obama administration has so far failed to articulate a peace plan, or even make an official policy statement stating where it stands.

Despite committing his administration to achieving peace in the Middle East, and reaching out to the Muslim world in an unprecedented fashion, and raising expectations across the region, Obama has failed to advance the cause of peace one inch. Meanwhile, his unsuccessful attempt to get Netanyahu to freeze the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem have alienated and angered both Israelis and Palestinians. However, Obama's apparent failure is not unique; all previous peace initiatives have gotten nowhere for one simple reason that no American or European leader has enough courage to admit; the reason is the consensus reached long ago by Israel's ruling elite that Israel will never allow the emergence of a Palestinian state that denies Israel effective military and economic control over the West Bank. To be sure, Israel would most likely allow the creation of a number of isolated enclaves or Bantustans in the West Bank that Palestinians could call a state; not because Zionists believe that Palestinians have the right to a state of their own, but to prevent the formation of a bi-national state in which Palestinians would eventually become the majority.

Just one year after the 1967 war, Moshe Dayan, who was at the time Israel's defense minister, described his plan for the future as "the current reality in the territories... What exists today must remain as a permanent arrangement in the West Bank." Ten years later, at a conference in Tel Aviv, Dayan said: "the question is not what the solution is but how do we live without a solution." When former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir was asked about the fate of the Palestinian people, she said, "where are the Palestinians; they do not exist." Israeli President Shimon Peres said upon his return to Israel after signing the Oslo Accords, "We are not negotiating with the Palestinians; we are negotiating with ourselves. The question is how much we are willing to give them. They have no leverage over us." Ehud Barak, the 'dovish' former prime minister said regarding the Palestinian refugees' right of return, "there is no right and there is no return." Geoffrey Aronson says, "Living without a solution, then as now, was understood by Israel as the key to maximizing the benefits of conquest while minimizing the burdens and dangers of retreat or

formal annexation." Meanwhile, the process of transforming the West Bank and Gaza into dispersed and poverty-stricken Bantustans has enabled Israel to impose its sovereignty over the entire Palestinian territories; from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

Henry Siegman wrote recently, "Since the failed Camp David summit of 2000, and actually well before it, Israel's interest in a peace process has been a fiction that has served primarily to provide cover for its systematic confiscation and deepening occupation of Palestinian land." He said further that the evacuation of Gaza settlements was intended to serve as the first step in creating a series of Palestinian Bantustans. The siege imposed on Gaza since 2006 and the devastating destruction it sustained as a result of the Israeli military attack in late 2008 and early 2009 shows us what these Bantustans would look like if their residents do not behave according to Israeli dictates. When Israel occupied Gaza in 1967 it made it a prison where people live on the hope of being freed one day; however, the election of Hamas in 2006 has transformed Gaza from a prison to a concentration camp where the old die of lack of healthcare and abject poverty, and children live under conditions that deny them access to adequate food, safe shelter, medicine, good education and hope. Going back to the old process of negotiations, therefore, is not a recipe for peace but for more frustration and despair that breeds violence.

Where do we go from here?

The so-called Arab Israeli conflict has never been an Arab Israeli conflict only; it is rather a conflict between a colonialist enterprise fuelled by a racist Zionist ideology and the community of civilized nations; it is a conflict between an army of settler colonialists and all decent people who detest colonialism and reject racism. Though the Palestinian people have been the major victims of this Zionist enterprise, every nation in the world has paid and continues to pay a price for the existence of Israel. It is a well known but rarely acknowledged fact that the creation of Israel at the expense of the Palestinian people is the root cause of Middle East instability, European and American sense of insecurity, and violence in many parts of the world; it is the force that encourages radicalism and justifies terrorism in the eyes of many Muslims in Europe, in the United States, in Asia and elsewhere. In fact, American soldiers and civilians killed inside and outside the United States due to US immoral support of Israel and in defense of its colonial policies outnumber all Palestinians killed by Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers since 1967. Gen. Petraeus called the conflict one of the "root causes of instability" and "obstacles to security in the region which aids al-Qaida." He argued further that "serious progress in the peace process could weaken Iran's reach, as it uses the conflict to fuel support for its terror group proxies."

I believe that the United States will not be able to restore its sense of security, mend relations with the rest of the world, particularly the Muslim world, restore morality to its foreign policy, and begin to solve its chronic problems at home as long as Israel is a state. The strong arms of AIPAC and other Zionist organizations in America, and the corrupt US Congress will not allow any administration to pressure Israel or even stop supporting its illegal policies and criminal acts in

Palestine and elsewhere. As a consequence of these facts and developments, the question that must be raised is what should be done? In my view, there is only one option; to dismantle the Israeli apartheid system the way the South African apartheid system was dismantled, and create in its place a new democratic state where Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs live with equal rights and obligations.

Peter Munch wrote recently in *The Atlantic Times*, "In order to protect the existence of a Jewish state, Israel relies on the power of walls. Israel reacts to any kind of danger by isolating itself. Israel not only builds barricades along its borders but in its mind... the country is in danger of becoming its own captive." In fact, Israel has surrounded itself with walls from all sides except the west side where the Mediterranean Sea lies. But in an attempt to control that side, Israel committed a massacre against human rights activists representing 32 nations when a peace flotilla attempted to break the siege of Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid to its people. In the wake of this tragedy, Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery said; "World public opinion is turning against us. This is a slow process, it resembles the accumulation of water behind a dam. The water rises slowly, quietly, and the change is hardly noticeable. But when it reaches a critical level, the dam bursts and the disaster is upon us. We are steadily approaching this point. This event points again to one of the most serious aspects of the situation: we live in a bubble, in a kind of mental ghetto, which cuts us off and prevents us from seeing another reality, the one perceived by the rest of the world." Nevertheless, Zionist Jews do not seem to see or care; they seem to say what Ben Gurion once said; "It is not important what the Gentiles say, it is important what the Jews do."

Issues that scare Europeans and Americans most, particularly the increasing radicalization of Muslims everywhere, and the spread of terrorism cannot be solved without establishing peace and justice in the Middle East. General David Petraeus told the US Senate that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has foreign policy and national security ramifications for the United States. "The conflict foments anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of U.S. favoritism for Israel. Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of U.S. partnerships with governments and peoples in the Area of Responsibility... Meanwhile, Al-Qaeda and other military groups exploit that anger to mobilize support." A few days earlier, Vice President Joe Biden told Netanyahu in Jerusalem, "What you're doing here undermines the security of our troops who are fighting in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan." However, the idea that a dead peace process could be resurrected because the U.S. has a new enlightened president who is aware that peace in the Middle East is in the US national interest is naïve and dangerous. "It's dangerous because failed negotiations are worse than no negotiations. What they do is induce a new cycle of despair that generates a new cycle of violence," says Richard Falk. The failure of the 2000 Camp David summit was followed by the second Intifada which caused the killing and maiming of thousands of Palestinians and paved the way for Sharon to become Israel's prime minister and for Hamas to form the Palestinian government in 2006.

Since all peaceful options have been tried and failed, we are left with only one option; the dismantling of the Zionist entity. An international campaign should be launched to delegitimize Israel as a colonialist, racist entity that occupies the land of another nation uses brutal force to subjugate its indigenous population, denies the natives their human and national rights, confiscates their land, and discriminates against them on the bases of religion and race. Recent weeks and months have witnessed a surge in activities to boycott Israel and expose its apartheid system; in the United Kingdom, in Norway, in Italy, in Sweden and on the campuses of several American and European universities; students, labor unions, writers, poets, artists, and university professors are participating in this campaign. The international community, for the sake of peace and fairness, should organize a general boycott of all Israeli goods and institutions, similar to the one that led to the liquidation of the apartheid system in South Africa. Neve Gordon, an Israeli tenured professor at Ben Gurion University, wrote in the Los Angeles Times a few months ago, "It is indeed not a simple matter for me as an Israeli citizen to call on foreign governments, regional authorities, international social movements, faith-based organizations, unions and citizens to suspend cooperation with Israel. But today, as I watch my two boys playing in the yard, I am convinced that it is the only way that Israel can be saved from itself."

On March 26, 2008, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) appointed professor Richard Falk a UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories. On December 9, 2008, the United Nations released a statement by Falk expressing deep concern over the "desperate plight" of civilians in Gaza. Falk said: "Israel still maintains its Gaza siege in its full fury, allowing only barely enough food and fuel to enter to stave off mass famine and disease." He outlined steps that must be taken to avoid a "humanitarian catastrophe" that include implementing the "responsibility to protect" a civilian population from collective punishment, and a determination of "whether the Israeli civilian leaders and military commanders responsible for the Gaza siege should be indicted and prosecuted for violations of international criminal law," which *The Jerusalem Post* said would go before the International Court of Justice at The Hague in the Netherlands. On December 27, 2008 Falk issued a new statement condemning the December 2008 Israeli strikes on Gaza as "war crimes:" he also condemned nations which provided Israel military support and participated in the siege of Gaza. In March 2009, Falk stated that Israel's offensive in Gaza constituted a war crime of the "greatest magnitude," and called for an independent group to investigate the war crimes committed on both sides.

I met Professor Falk for the first time in June 1991 during our participation in the "European Conversations" conference held in Sweden; he was then teaching international law at Princeton University. I asked him one evening about his Zionist credentials, saying, in light of your harsh criticism of Israeli settlement policies, do you consider yourself a non-Zionist Jew? He answered, "To tell you the truth, I cannot say that." I saw Falk again in October 2009 in Washington DC where he gave a lecture titled, "Imagining Israel - Palestine Peace: Why International Law matters". I took the opportunity to remind him of the question I asked 18 years earlier and ask him the same question again. His answer this time was clear and enlightening, "You cannot be for

human rights and a Zionist." Zionism is racism; no one can hide this fact any more, and no propaganda can beautify its ugly face.

Following the Israeli attack on Gaza in 2009, the UN Human Rights Council appointed Judge Richard Goldstone to investigate alleged Israeli war crimes. The Goldstone report stated that "the lack of accountability for war crimes and possible crimes against humanity [in the Occupied Palestinian Territories] has reached a crisis point; the ongoing lack of justice is undermining any hope for a successful peace process and reinforcing an environment that fosters violence." The report added, "There is strong evidence to suggest that numerous serious violations of international law, both humanitarian and human rights law, were committed by Israel during the military operations in Gaza." Such findings confirm allegations made by human rights groups inside and outside Israel, including B'Tselem, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others. Commenting on the Goldstone report, Falk said this "does confirm the view held overwhelmingly outside the United States that Israel is an oppressor of the Palestinian people in the occupation and is relying on crimes against humanity and war crimes in order to maintain control." 30 brave Israeli soldiers who witnessed Israeli crimes in Gaza published a moving document called "Breaking the Silence" in which they in effect say that they were told to be indiscriminate in order to eliminate risks of Israeli casualties. Due to their honest reporting, both Falk and Goldstone have become in the eyes of Zionists "self-hating Jews."

Henry Siegman wrote in the Nation magazine on January 25, 2009, "Israel has crossed the threshold from 'the only democracy in the Middle East' to the only apartheid regime in the western world. Support for this government means supporting a regime that disfranchises and dispossesses the Palestinian people. When a state's denial of individual and national rights of a large part of its population becomes permanent, it ceases to be a democracy. By definition, democracy preserved for privileged citizens - while all others are kept behind checkpoints, barbed-wire fences and separation walls commanded by the Israeli army - is not a democracy but its opposite." Therefore, America's 'special relationship' with Israel must be considered an immoral policy to sustain a colonial, racist, and undemocratic state for which the American people have paid and continue to pay a tremendous price in material as well as human terms. European states supporting Israel are also supporting a settler colonialist state that practices discrimination and commits crimes against humanity; a state whose very existence undermines international law and threatens world peace and security.

As Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity continue, and Israel's racist nature is exposed and documented, Israeli false claim of being the only democracy in the Middle East is shattered; meanwhile, more facts related to Zionist falsification of history are being discovered. Dr. Shlomo Sand, a Tel Aviv University professor and historian published a book, '*The Invention of the Jewish People*,' in which he argues that there are no Jewish people and there have never been a Jewish people. Professor Sand proves beyond doubt that Jews are not a race or a nation. According to Sand's findings, the claimed exile never happen and Jews were not dispersed by the

Romans; he also argues that archeological discoveries in Palestine refute Jewish claims to the land of Palestine. He even says that all Zionist leaders who came to Palestine before 1936 knew that the exile never happened and that the majority of Palestinians are the decedents of the Israelites who inhabited parts of Palestine in earlier times. Modern Jews, he explains, were invented in the 19th century by European Jewish historians who used few facts and much imagination to write a history of Jews in retrospect going back to the 'mythical Kingdom of David' in order to create a national myth around which European Jews could unite, formulate a 'nation' and claim a right to have a state in Palestine.

Conclusion

No option to achieve peace would be acceptable or viable if it does not lead to freeing the Palestinian people from the chains of Israeli occupation and discrimination, and freeing all Jews from hatred and a superiority complex that threatens world peace as well as the world Jewry. The only option capable of achieving this goal is the one that seeks to establish a secular, democratic state on the entire land of Palestine where all Israeli Jews and all Palestinian Arabs live as equal citizens of one state. As more people around the world join the struggle for peace and justice in Palestine and support the ongoing campaign to delegitimize the Israeli apartheid system, pressure will mount on Israeli and non-Israeli Zionists to accept such an eventuality. Meanwhile, consensus will be building slowly among Jews and Palestinians for the establishment of a democratic state where all Jews living today in Palestine/Israel and all Palestinians living inside and outside Palestine would have the right to live together in peace with equal rights and obligations.

The Failure of the peace process and the political and ideological polarization within Israel has led to the death of the Israeli, European and American peace camps. As a result, Jews committed to the racist Zionist enterprise have adopted the Likud position, while the more liberal ones, recognizing the racist nature of Zionism, are slowly joining the international movement to delegitimize Israel. One of those people is the grandson of former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the son of Benny Begin who is a leading Likud member supporting the on-going ethnic cleansing campaign started by his late father. The late Begin was a terrorist whose Irgun gang, in cooperation with the Lehi gang headed by Yitzhak Shamir, committed the Deir Yassin Massacre on April 9, 1948, during which more than 100 innocent villagers were murdered; Begin claimed in his memoirs that without the Deir Yassin massacre, Israel would have never been created. Terrorism that characterized the behavior of Jewish gangs in Palestine before the creation of Israel in 1948 has become a state-sponsored terrorism after the occupation of the rest of Palestine in 1967. If Begin says without the Deir Yassin massacre Israel would have never been created, the Israeli establishment seems to say today, without a new massacre every few months; Israel would not be able to survive. It is high time for the world to recognize Israel for what it really is and join the fight against colonization, racism, apartheid, and state-sponsored terrorism.

The current situation in the Middle East is dangerous and unsustainable; it is costing all concerned parties dearly. While the American and European peoples live in fear, people in

Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan and elsewhere are dying of violence and deprivation. Extremist forces within the American and European societies will continue to manipulate the masses and undermine the ethics and values and vitality that made those societies great. The Europeans have no excuse not to get fully engaged in the fight for human rights and human dignity; some of them must also acknowledge that they are directly responsible for the tragedy of the Palestinian people and the tragic creation of the state of Israel. Britain promised the Zionists a homeland in Palestine in 1917 in order to create a buffer zone separating Arabs in Africa from Arabs in Asia; it also helped Jewish settlers enter Palestine and acquire public land to build walled settlements. Nazi Germany committed untold crimes against European Jews; and to cleanse its conscience of those crimes, it provided Israel with more than 150 billion dollars in cash, tanks, submarines and other military equipment. France provided the Zionist entity with the nuclear technology to become a nuclear power threatening every nation its missiles reach. All states that back Israel must realize that they are fostering colonialism, promoting racism, defending crimes against humanity, and enabling Israel to violate UN resolutions and international law with impunity. Israel represents today the most serious challenge to western values of equality, justice, democracy, tolerance and freedom of religion.

The fight within the Muslim world as well as within the Arab world has never been over moderation, radicalism, terrorism or hating the West and how to destroy its way of life; it has always been over ideas and ideals and ways to achieve justice for all. Therefore, the fight against radicalism and terrorism will not succeed using bombs and missiles to kill and be killed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere; the only way to end terrorism is to seek justice, peace and equality, and eradicate racism, hunger and poverty. While Israeli Jews enjoy living on Palestinian land and in Palestinian homes, Palestinians die every day in refugee camps while they are still alive.

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