The contributors to this volume intend to link the political discussion on the Palestine question with current debates on discourse and culture while addressing such varied fields as archaeology, memory studies, architecture, postcards, painting and photography. The Palestinian cultural landscape is a key topic, and it is explored as having been constructed through a range of media, and discourses that have fluctuated between representing social ideals on the one hand, and representing political realities on the other.

The division of the book into two major sections makes it possible to compare images produced by various interpretative communities and communicated in radically different contexts. The first part, Constructing Boundaries, explores the production of Israeli and Western discourses on Palestine and the defining power these have acquired. The second section, Discourses, focuses on representations of Palestinearticulated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and among Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza. The discursive practices are being discussed within a context of opposition, identity formation and political mobilisation, relating the question of Palestine to wider debates on the politics of culture, marginalisation and exile.

The contributors to this volume are from a wide range of academic disciplines and affiliated to institutions in Palestine, the Netherlands and the United States.

Editors
Annelies Moors
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Het Spinhuis
Discourse and Palestine
Power, Text and Context

Editors
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It is open to question whether the Declaration of Principles agreed to in September 1993 by Chairman Arafat, on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization and by Prime Minister Rabin, on behalf of Israel, will render the substance of this book historically significant but not critically relevant to contemporary discourse on either the Question of Palestine or the general encounter, cultural or political, between the Arabs and the West. Of course we know that the battle for determining the fate of Palestine and the Palestinians has always transcended the frontiers of Palestine and the Arab world. It was, probably, more decisively fought in the West, first in Europe and then by the second world war, in the United States. Palestinian Arabs and European Jewish settlers (later on Israeli settlers) confronted each other daily for the retention of the national patrimony, or for its possession respectively. The confrontation was made partially possible by the vastly unequal support extended to both communities by their principal supporters: the Palestinians, from some Arab States and eventually from much of the Third World, and the European settlers, from Europe and the United States. In important respects the battle for the consciousness – for the mind and heart – of outsiders turned out to be crucial in determining the favorable outcome of the first and second major ‘battles’ for Palestine: that of 1948, resulting in the establishment of Israel and the dispossession of the Palestinians of much of their national patrimony; and that of 1967 resulting in the occupation of the rest of Palestine and further dispossession for the Palestinians. The Declaration of Principles signified Israel’s success in finally ‘winning the war’ against the Palestinians.

The issue now is the extent to which the evolving discourse on the continuing contest, albeit in altered form, will bear the imprint of the hardened discourse of the past. It is this discourse that constitutes the principal focus of this well-presented volume of essays. Without question future analysis of the contest will benefit in important ways from the diverse narrative – based largely on interdisciplinary approaches drawing on literary, artistic and otherwise humanistic evidence – that is carefully probed, analyzed and assessed in this original anthology. The included essays were originally presented at a seminar held in Amsterdam in 1992. The peace process had already been initiated. A careful reading of the essays would have alerted the Arab and Palestinian negotiators, among others, to appreciate the ‘cultural’ context in which the political/military conflict is situated. The authors of this anthology are generally younger, quite international in background and affiliation and more attuned as
Realism Misperceived: Arab-American Discourse and the Question of Palestine

Hisham Ahmed

Introduction

One of the most influential actors involved with the question of Palestine is the United States, for it is in Washington that the most significant policy formulation regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict takes place. It is there that the conflict has been kept alive for nearly half a century, through the ongoing political, military, moral, and economic support rendered to the colonization of Palestine. Even more remarkable about the United States is the fact that it has formulated more 'peace' initiatives and proposals regarding the conflict than any other country.

A characteristic unique to the United States is the fact that policy formulation is often accompanied by 'manufacturing consent' among the public. However, the interplay between domestic determinants and foreign policy making in the United States is not the subject of our concern here. The pertinent question is whether institutions closely associated with the parties involved in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have affected the foreign policy-making process of the United States.

The size of the Arab community in the United States is generally estimated at around 2,800,000 people. This community is comprised of recent immigrants as well as descendants of the first wave of immigrants which began arriving in the 1880s. These first arrivals did not intend to become permanent immigrants, but rather came in search of a better life with the intent of returning to their places of origin when circumstances permitted. This is one of the first characteristics which distinguishes them from most other immigrant groups in the United States. This feeling that their stay was to be only temporary was one of the factors contributing to the lack of development of a cohesive community among the immigrants from the Arab world. Added to this was the fact that their allegiances to the 'old country' were primarily to a relatively small circle of family, kin, or village members, rather than to a non-existent state nationalism. It was only after this generation realized that their stay was in fact to be permanent that their moral and social values and those of their descendants began to change.
Assimilation into American society through education and the gradual replacement of Arabic with English did not, however, entail a rapid change in the political role of the Arab community. While enjoying the individual freedoms of the new social environment, they did not interact with the American political process in a way that brought about change in American perceptions of the Arab world. This generation of Arab immigrants did not have the requisite leadership to kindle political activism as a cohesive, identifiable community, in addition to which the prevalent attitude in the United States at the time was the ideal of the melting pot, whereby emphasis on national origin was not to be fostered and identification and allegiance toward the mores and values of the adopted country were to be promoted.

The next wave of immigrants from the Arab world arrived with a higher degree of political sophistication and stronger ties to both Arab nationalism in general and to specific Arab countries. They more clearly identified themselves as 'Arabs', an attitude which was reinforced by the ambient society which also recognized and identified many supposedly Arab characteristics, albeit with perjorative connotations.

It was, in fact, international politics and the concomitant negative reactions to Arabs in the United States which finally motivated the Arab-American community to found several organizations with visions beyond the framework of kinship and to establish political goals at a national level.

The creation of Arab institutions in the United States was reactive rather than initiatory: For instance, the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) was established in response to the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict. Its goals were to foster educational and intellectual efforts by Arab-American scholars and to serve as a resource on the Arab world. Since 1967 other Arab-American organizations have been created: the National Association of Arab-Americans (NAAA) in 1972, founded as a Washington political lobbying organization, the [American-Arab] Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), founded in 1980 to combat discrimination against Arab-Americans, and the Arab-American Institute (AAI), founded in 1985 to promote Arab-American involvement in the political life of the U.S. by supporting Arab-American candidates for political office and helping set up Republican and Democratic clubs in the Arab-American community.

Since their inception, a major focus of these organizations has been the question of Palestine. However, if measured by an examination of their impact on the American foreign policy-making process regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the efforts of Arab-American intellectuals and institutions cannot be said to have had much effect. The United States hegemonic designs on the Arab world are more openly pursued than at any previous time and the Israeli occupation of Palestine is more deeply entrenched than in 1967.

The objective here is to investigate the means employed by some leading Arab figures and institutions in the United States in dealing with the question of Palestine and to attempt to measure the impact of their role on American foreign policy making.

As painful as it may be to recognize, most Arab-American institutions find themselves today in a state of paralysis. In light of the unfavorable circumstances in which the Arab region finds itself at this juncture, Arab-American institutions seem to be totally unable to meet the challenges. Paralysis is not too exaggerated a term to describe this state of affairs.

By virtue of their existence in the United States they are expected to be best equipped to understand the West. The overwhelming abundance of information in the United States furnishes Arab-American institutions with materials unobtainable in the Arab world itself.

The problem is not that there have been no well-intentioned people in such institutions. There have been, in fact, some perspicacious thinkers, intently involved with some of them. However, the organizational, operational, and procedural dynamics have made the present structural and functional problems unavoidable.

The following critical analysis, however, should in no way be construed as a blanket rejection of all the undertakings of Arab-American intellectuals. Indeed, Edward Said's theorizing in Orientalism and The Question of Palestine, for example, is to be held in high esteem.

'Reasonable' Acquiescence

In many instances, the central focus of Palestinian intellectuals, particularly in the West, is to hold on to their positions and professions by sounding reasonable and accommodative. While Palestinians under occupation are in the forefront of resistance, intellectuals are lagging behind. Intellectuals tend to be on the defensive, while those most directly affected by oppression have declared an irreversible offensive.

The Palestinian scholar Hisham Sharabi has delved into the psychological/motivational dynamics of the intellectuals' stand on Palestine. Reflecting on his inner conflicted feelings, Sharabi states with passion:

Like many Palestinians in this country, I had to be "moderate" to be heard. That is, to be allowed to tell our side of the story. Our American friends showed us by example the language we needed to speak, and how to be reasonable and credible. This meant, above all, restricting our discourse to the practicalities of the present and always refraining from dredging up the past. What was the point in talking about 1917, about the dispossession, expulsion, exile, and suffering of the Palestinians when the Jews could talk about the Holocaust?

I was so "moderate" in those years that the copy editor of a book I was then writing complained that the section on the Palestinians lacked proper historical background. I had to rewrite that section by dipping less cautiously into the forbidden past, and tell how the Jewish minority in Palestine,
It is doubtful whether Sharabi would have expressed his inner feelings so frankly had it not been for the invigorating influence of the uprising on Palestinians living outside the Occupied Territories. In this context, it is obvious that the uprising is not only an unprecedented challenge to the occupation authorities. It is also a clear defiance of the belief that it is unlikely that the military superiority of the Israeli army can be challenged with the minimal resources available to Palestinians under occupation, the conventional wisdom held among the intellectual elite. In other words, the uprising can be said to be a vigorous response to the intellectuals' acquiescent stand as far as the question of Palestine is concerned.

The defeatism and acquiescence within the camp of the intellectuals, alluded to by Sharabi, is the product of confused priorities, miscalculated capabilities and, more importantly, detachment from the true essence of what it means to be a Palestinian and suffer for it.

The overriding concern of many intellectuals is 'to sound reasonable' and 'to seem moderate', even if that reasonableness and moderation lead to burying the history of Palestinian suffering. How can Arab intellectuals in the United States communicate their message to Western audiences if they are fearful and on the defensive all the time? How can the Palestinian strategy be implemented if it does not transmit to the outside world who we are and what the majority of us want to achieve? How could our goals be differentiated from fantasy if the means employed to achieve these goals are devoid of an expression of the depths of our suffering? How could Palestinian rights be retrieved if the solution proposed does not address all the components of the Palestinian problem?

Another scholar, Walid Khalidi, theorized in 1973 that the establishment of an independent secular democratic Palestinian state is not a viable option. His proposal for resolving the Palestinian problem merits some discussion, for his ideas could be seen as the point of departure for translating the Palestinian concept of establishing a national authority on any liberated part of Palestine to mean the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through diplomatic initiatives.

Although Khalidi did not advocate the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state, his prescription to accept less than what the Palestinians rejected in 1947 points to the flaw in his strategy. If the partition of Palestine was illegal upon its adoption by the United Nations, why should the Palestinians, thirty years later, consent to having less than what they were allotted in the Partition Plan? Perhaps Khalidi genuinely believed in the viability of what he proposed, but it would appear that his overriding concern was 'to sound reasonable'. The vigor behind the Israeli plans for enlarging rather than reducing their territorial hold was either miscalculated or ignored.

In his discussion of the internal policies of his proposed Palestinian state, Khalidi makes no reference to the approximately three-quarters of a million Palestinians living in the 1948 occupied territories who are treated as second-class citizens. The absence of this dimension can be linked to his proposed resolution of the problem of Palestinian refugees. Khalidi himself acknowledges that the Israeli regime would not permit the return of all Palestinians desirous of going back to their original places of residence. He further recognizes that the demographic/absorptive capacity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is limited. His proposal that monetary compensation would be effective as an alternative is not convincing at all and the ideas contained in his 'inventory' for resolving the conflict evidence many shortcomings.

How does his proposal accommodate the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, particularly those living in Lebanon and Jordan? Further, his presumption that many Palestinians living in the Gulf would prefer to remain there has been cast to the winds in light of subsequent events. In fact, one of the primary tasks of the Palestinian state is to work diligently and creatively to relieve Palestinian suffering by facilitating and encouraging the return of those who were driven out, to deepen their association with the land and to set history on a new course devoid of colonialism, statelessness, and loss of spiritual/national identity. In brief, Khalidi's formula, if implemented, would cause the Palestinians to live in a limbo of permanent statelessness.

Due to the limited economic viability and absorptive capacity of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a state, many Palestinians (perhaps more than half of the Palestinian people) would have to be settled abroad. Linking the Palestinian economy to the Israeli economy would certainly result in having the same state of dependence that exists today between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Palestinian markets will be a dumping ground for Israeli products and Palestinian labor will remain exploited by Israeli agriculturals and industrialists (Jirjis 1977: 12).

Furthermore, a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would negatively affect Palestinians who could not be absorbed into the new state. Despite the fact that Palestinian skills and expertise are central to development in the Arab world, Palestinians would undoubtedly become the target of new repressive practices in the region. Where some Arabs currently blame the Palestinians themselves for the existence of the Palestinian problem, discrimination would take a new avenue: 'Now you have your homeland, why don't you go there?' The outcome of such a development would be the deepening of frustration among Palestinians unable to return. This would either internalize conflict among Palestinians, or a new form of resistance would be born to liberate the rest of the homeland. The acceptance by Palestinian institutions of the idea...
establishing a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would mean living with the two scenarios listed above or engagement in further concessions in an attempt to pacify those Palestinians unable to return.

In other words, compensation imposed on the refugees, if it were to work, would mean the dissolution of their national identity through the tool of foreign aid. The West is not inattentive as far as such ideas are concerned. Furthermore, it is now quite evident that the Gulf states would not be interested in the stability of such a Palestinian state as proposed by Khalidi.

As outlined by Khalidi, a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip presupposes the flow of Arab economic aid, Israeli compliance with military arrangements, and United States’ willingness to work out a settlement not fully conducive to Israel’s expansionist plans. If this formula were to work, it would mean that either most Palestinians would have to give up title to the vast portion of the territory of their homeland, or resign themselves to a settlement imposed upon them. Neither option would bring a lasting peace and why should the Israeli leadership ever agree to such a proposed settlement? The military, political, and economic balance of power has been and still is in its favor.

Non-Constructive Dialogue

A brief examination of the methods employed to implement the present official Palestinian strategy demonstrates that the strategy envisaged and the means proposed by intellectuals are flawed on many grounds. It is widely believed in intellectual circles that entering into systematic dialogue with members of the rival party will contribute to the realization of Palestinian national goals. If dialogue is defined as a means of exchanging views and priorities in the hope of ultimately reaching agreement, it is generally assumed that parties to the dialogue are there as equals. Those Palestinians who engage in dialogue maintain that unless they themselves assure the Israelis of their peaceful intentions, the credibility gap will widen. It is also argued that Palestinian participation in discussions with Israelis will convey an image of Palestinian reasonableness to the outside world.

These assumptions presuppose the absence of colonial intentions on the part of the enemy. Of course, not all Israelis who participate in these dialogues adopt expansionist and colonialist intentions, but the overarching concern for the vast majority is to extract Palestinian legitimation of Israel’s colonization of no less than four-fifths of historic Palestine. On the other hand, intellectuals on the Palestinian side consider it fashionable to espouse the posture of dialogue, in essence neglecting the widely-held view that dialogue would inevitably lead to unilateral recognition of the enemy.

In an invaluable piece, entitled ‘The Pitfalls of Dialogue’, the Palestinian lawyer Jonathan Kuttab, debating the Hebrew University political science professor Edy Kaufman, succinctly outlines the problems inherent in Palestinian-Israeli dialogue (1988). For Kuttab, the most obvious, immediate pitfall of this kind of dialogue is that its participants operate on an assumption of false symmetry between the oppressed and the oppressor. While the Palestinians are the victims of the conflict and the Israelis are victimizers, dialogue, by definition, means that both the oppressed and oppressors engage in discussions on an equal footing. Because those who participate are actually doing so on an unequal footing, questions pertaining to the conflict are usually ignored. Palestinian dialogue are interested in conveying a message of reasonableness to their counterpart at the expense of confronting the central priority, which is to resolve the conflict. The existence of an asymmetrical setting and the confusion of priorities lead to a third pitfall. Palestinian entry into dialogue with Israelis is predicated on their recognition of the current status quo: recognition of the Jewish state and its boundaries, and the legitimacy of the practices of the Israeli army. Questions pertaining to ethics, historical rights, national and territorial rights are thus not dealt with, and when raised, obscured and subordinated.

Furthermore, participants compromising on essential principles in the name of moderation and pragmatism, lose credibility within their own community. Palestinian trust in those participating in dialogue diminishes with time, for they are involved in cosmetic, unproductive endeavors, with daily suffering and oppression continue. Dialogue causes the participants on both sides to be pacified, leading to the perpetuation of oppression. When dialogue becomes an end unto itself, action disappears. On the one hand, dialogue ‘assuages the conscience of members of the oppressor group to the point where they feel they do not have to do anything else’. For participants from the oppressed group, dialogue ‘becomes a safety valve for venting frustrations’. The result is that for both ‘it becomes a means reinforcing the existing oppression and therefore serves to perpetuate’ (Kuttab and Kaufman 1988: 88). Dialogue can negatively affect the morale of the oppressed and give the oppressor an impetus to exploit the willingness of some Palestinian participation by intensifying its brutal treatment without this brutality ever becoming a central issue of dialogue. In fact, if a systematic study were to be conducted on the correlation between the willingness on the part of many Palestinian intellectuals to participate in dialogue and the intensification of Israeli brutality toward the Palestinians, in all likelihood the correlation would be positive one.

Further pitfalls are that Palestinians will have to serve their Israeli counterparts by assuring Israeli public opinion of Palestinian willingness to compromise and make concessions. Also the Israelis can try to convey the image that Palestinians participating in the dialogue could function as alternative to the PLO. The oppressors can manipulate the dialogue process to serve as a tool to divide Palestinian society and given today’s increasing
political, military, and economic asymmetry between Israelis and Palestinians, the rules and determinants that govern the dynamics of dialogue are wholly applicable to the current 'peace' talks.

Expert Theorizing

Recent Palestinian strategy is in great part the product of philosophical theorizing on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by 'experts' who are either detached from the profundity of Palestinian suffering, or who lack grounding in the terminology and theories they claim to analyze. Two case studies which exemplify this phenomenon were published in what can perhaps be termed the most authoritative scholarly publication on Palestine.

In his 'The Palestinians and the Future: Peace through Realism', Emile Nakhleh (1989) thinks of realism as a term synonymous with realist. Nakhleh prefaces his argument by blaming the PLO for the absence of peace in the Middle East following the Palestinian Declaration of Independence on 15 November 1988. Nakhleh justifies his criticisms of the PLO's political program on the basis that it did not state or adopt the principles of peace clearly and unequivocally. Rather, Nakhleh informs his readers that the 'peace principles' were only alluded to and he presents his own 'program of action' without which the PLO cannot be regarded as a genuine negotiating partner. Attempting to put Israeli and American policy-makers at ease, Nakhleh insinuates that the military option has run its course in Palestinian strategy.

The assumptions outlined by Nakhleh neither reinforce an understanding of what realism is, nor what the implications of Palestinian eschewal of such a school of thought would be. The principles upon which he bases his understanding of realism as a concept can be summarized as follows: (1) Compromise is the most effective way to solve the Palestinian problem; (2) Palestinian political existence as an independent unit in historic Palestine is conditioned by Palestinian recognition of 'the reality' of Israel's 'existence'; (3) the Palestinian quest for independence can be realized only on a part of Palestine - the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; (4) maintaining the sole legitimacy of the PLO's representation of the Palestinian people requires that the PLO recognize the realities stated above; and (5) relations in the international community are governed by perceptions of security. 'Realism...defined as power' is the strongest determinant in realizing the national interests.

In addition to the fact that Nakhleh's fifth principle does not follow the logic contained in the other assumptions, and that he calls upon the Palestinians to adopt realism in achieving their national goals, he finds it prudent to play the role of a Zionist advocate. He tells us that Palestinian realism dictates acceptance of the reality of Israel's existence and the status quo maintained by U.S. backing of Israel. Palestinian realism, he urges us to believe, means that in spite of the flexibility demonstrated by the PLO, still more is required.

Nakhleh then proposes his 'program of action' which must comprise the following points: (1) Palestinian acceptance of UN Resolution 181 for partitioning Palestine; (2) The Palestinian state will have to consist of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip only, irrespective of whether it is demographically feasible for all Palestinians to live in this limited territorial zone (Nakhleh argues that his proposal is possible because Palestinians living in the 1948 occupied territories want to stay under Israeli rule); (3) The PLO must accept UN Resolutions 242 and 338, irrespective of their validity in the negotiating process; (4) Palestinians must establish political and economic cooperation with Israel and Jordan; (5) The Palestinian National Covenant must be abrogated. (The sixth and seventh provisions have no bearing on our discussion here.)

Interestingly, Nakhleh's 'analysis' and his 'program of action' were immediately followed and complemented in the same journal by Jerome Segal's formulation of a foreign policy for the independent state of Palestine. Although not an Arab intellectual, Segal's line of thinking merits serious analysis due to its powerful impact on many Arab intellectuals and on political discourse in the United States. After all, Segal is widely known to have close contacts with Palestinian intellectuals and indeed to have become a surrogate parent of Palestinian Statehood.

In his 'A Foreign Policy for the State of Palestine' (1989), Segal argues that due to its geo-political isolation and the nature of its demographic composition, the 'State of Palestine' will of necessity have to be economically and politically linked to Israel and Jordan.

Segal considers several foreign policy objectives of the State of Palestine. One primary objective is to prevent the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland by the Israeli occupation authorities. One way to avoid expulsion, Segal informs us, is for Palestinians to give in to Israeli brutality and not to respond in kind to the practices of the occupation. Segal's premise presupposes a merciful nature on the part of the occupation forces and their political leaders. His logic makes it appear that Israel's brutality is not premeditated, but rather that it is the natural response to Palestinian stone-throwing. However, even Israeli leaders recognize that Palestinian stone-throwing came in response to Israel's 'Nazi-like' behavior, as voluminously documented by the prominent Jewish scholar, Israel Shahak.

In presuming that the outbreak of war would provide the Israelis with an international context in which to expel Palestinians, Segal is correct. Here again, however, Segal fails to comprehend the dynamics of the Israeli political process. Israeli leaders have been frankly discussing the possibility of initiating a war to create a pretext for the expulsion of Palestinians. Abundant information on this issue can be obtained from the pages of the Hebrew press. The rise to power of the most extremist elements in Israel lends further plausibility.
According to Segal, the second primary foreign policy objective of the State of Palestine is to hinder the annexationist trend among Israelis. For this objective to be achieved, Segal tells us, Palestinians have to be cognizant of the Israeli motives for carrying out expulsion. For the Israelis, annexation would have to be preceded by expulsion to avoid Palestinian demographic dominance. In spite of the fact that Segal previously called upon the Palestinians to declare the establishment of their own state, Segal has now come to the conclusion that the ‘Palestinian declaration of independence will contribute to a call within Israel for annexation’ (19) thus illustrating the impracticalities of his approach.

Segal continues by saying that another primary foreign policy goal for the State of Palestine to pursue, is to bring about Israeli withdrawal. He warns that Israel cannot be pressured to withdraw and that the United States will take no steps to pressure Israel by withholding either military or economic aid. Armed struggle, Segal also contends, cannot pressure the Israelis to withdraw, despite his admission that this method worked effectively in Lebanon. Armed struggle, Segal warns, will endanger the Palestinians by creating an atmosphere conducive to further expulsion and Israeli aggression.

Segal goes on to suggest that Palestinians need to give more security guarantees to the Zionist regime to ensure Israeli withdrawal. One can easily infer that in Segal’s mind, Palestinian concerns and claims to security should not be among the foreign policy objectives of the State of Palestine.

There are several immensely contradictory elements within Segal’s treatise. On the one hand, he maintains that ‘negotiations are not absolutely necessary’. On the other hand, he argues that ‘there are certain Palestinian objectives that can be reached only through negotiations’. He continues, ‘it is very possible that negotiations may not produce a settlement’ (21). Most astonishingly, Segal recommends the Palestinians resign themselves to an infinite number of unilateral concessions. Although he recognizes the significance of giving mutual concessions in the process of conflict resolution, Segal seems to ignore this in his formulation of a foreign policy for the State of Palestine. Adjacent to Israel’s superior military capability, Segal wants to see a demilitarized Palestinian state. The corollary to Nakhleh’s advocacy of realism is Segal’s formula of Palestinian surrender and acquiescence to Israel’s desiderata.

At best, Segal’s foreign policy formulation for the State of Palestine is the product of custodialism imbedded in his attitude toward the Palestinians. At worst, the implementation of his ideas would amount to a Palestinian national suicide, the consequences of which would be irreversible. Segal’s formula would make impossible any effort on the part of the Palestinians to concretize the process of state-formation. The independent state of Palestine cannot be established without Palestinian sacrifices, long-term planning, and determined vigor. History has no recorded cases of rights being served on silver platters. With proper strategizing, Palestinians themselves can undoubtedly achieve their national goals. Segal’s strategizing is certainly no key to Palestinian success.

Irrespective of what Segal tries to portray as the advantages of a demilitarized Palestinian state, Palestinians, first and foremost, must adopt the principles of the realist school of thought and totally ignore his call for self-inflicted destruction. Segal is concerned only with promoting Israel’s perspective and gives no consideration to Palestinian security needs. It is disheartening to note that his views have been widely adopted by Palestinian intellectuals and politicians.

Although correct in reasoning that Palestinian demilitarization will limit the range of options of the Israeli military, and will ‘alter the balance of political forces within Israel’, Segal (1989: 23) does not interpret limiting the options of the Israeli military to mean the loosening of the Israeli grip on occupied Palestine. The ‘alteration’ would be in favor of the military establishment rather than the forces of ‘peace’. There exists a positive correlation between Palestinian willingness to resolve the conflict and Israel’s intransigence to contribute to a just settlement. This correlation has been well-documented by the diligent efforts of Jewish historians such as Avi Shlaim, Simha Flapan, and Ilan Pappe. This relationship is most evident today given the acceleration of Israeli settlement-building since the beginning of the Madrid talks.

Segal further has the audacity to urge Palestinians to constitutionally rule out the possibility of establishing an army. He assumes that Israel, occupying roughly four-fifths of Palestine, will overnight turn into a peace-loving entity and that Palestine on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip need have no cause for fear.

Segal concludes his campaign of pacification by indicating that if no progress toward resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is made, it would primarily be due to the Palestinian’s unwillingness to abrogate the Palestine National Covenant. For Segal it is this Covenant which constitutes the impediment to the achievement of a settlement, not the Likud political program which is unwilling to give up one inch of territory, nor the Labor political program which persistently aims to bypass Palestinian national rights. In Segal’s view, the various Palestinian commando groups are basically terrorists who should be disowned by the Palestinian state. Furthermore, Segal maintains that the return of Palestinian refugees expelled during and after the 1948 war is impractical and unrealistic. He reminds the Palestinians that realism dictates that they recognize the impossibility of resolving the refugee problem in a moral, ethical way. Following the Segalian thought to its logical conclusion would indeed mean the PLO would have to go out of existence and that the Palestine National Covenant would become an artifact of history. His thought necessitates that Palestinians foreswear the long history of their struggle and sacrifices. It is a cruel
reminder to Palestinian intellectuals that is incumbent upon them to articulate an offensive and not defensive strategy to bring about the state of Palestine. A quick glance at where the Palestinian people stand makes one wonder as to the impact Segal's thought has had on Palestinian intellectual discourse. In many regards the Palestinian people are not better off today than they were in 1948 or in 1967, as Ibrahim W. Segal has noted: "The demographic and the special reality of Palestine today is profoundly different from what it was even in 1967. Today the Palestinians have even less than 10 percent of their national patrimony wherein they may be able to establish a Palestinostan — far from the independent state which the Palestine National Council declared in Algiers in 1988 (1991: 8).

Palestinian Realism

The first pillar upon which a Palestinian strategy should be based is perpetual in nature. A thorough study of politico-philosophical terms employed in and by the West, particularly the United States, needs to be conducted and the implications of such terms should be accurately transmitted to the Palestinian people by scholars and politicians. Foremost of these terms is realism, for it has been widely used in Palestinian intellectual and political circles. Frequently, the term has been employed to mean making more concessions to the enemy. Those who believe that reliance on the tenets of the realist school of thought means further Palestinian flexibility confuse the issue, for they think that being a realist means being realistic, i.e., succumbing to the facts newly created by the occupation authorities on the ground. Such an interpretation is misleading. It shows how distant those who propagate an incorrect conception of the term are from understanding operative American political thought and behavior. It is illuminating to note here that Dean Acheson, in an address entitled 'The Prelude to Independence' delivered at Williamsburg, Virginia on 15 May 1959, urged that the United States continue to adhere to the realist school of thought: 'In our relations with the world...[an important guiding principle] must be that power can be limited only by counterbalancing power. Without that, treaties, international organization, and international law are of no use whatever. The possessor of unopposed or unopposable power can sweep them aside and make his will law.' Obviously, Dean Acheson was not alone. The emphasis of Henry Kissinger and George Schultz on realism demonstrates continuity in the trend of America's unabashed embracing of the principles of the realist school of thought. Even before the conceptualization of realism by Hans Morgenthau, the foremost author of this school of thought, the United States had relied in its foreign policy management on principles that can be safely characterized as realist. Morgenthau postulated in his Politics Among Nations that realism describes the conflictual state of the world, holds that the most effective way for putting political decisions into effect and for protecting the national interest can be achieved through the use of power and power alone, and puts little emphasis, if any, on the value of morality in international politics. Robert Gilpin's revision of some aspects of realism and his introduction of neo-realism did not alter the crux of the philosophy, namely its advocacy of the sole reliance on power to translate political ideas into action. It is quite impossible to imagine that in the foreseeable future an American foreign policy-maker would have the opportunity to emerge and occupy an influential position if he/she were not grounded in the teachings of the realist school of thought.

From this follows the conclusion that Palestinian reliance on realism as a guiding principle could not mean the furtherance of more concessions and compromises to the enemy. Realism dictates that Palestinian planners devise a mechanism whereby political strategizing can be translated into practical results. It is undeniable that Palestinian politics has most frequently been devoid of such dynamism at the leadership level. Reliance on realism entails alteration of the current Palestinian strategy and development of a strategy capable of perceiving the dynamics of political power in the United States, one whose components do not reflect wishful thinking, but rather, one which evolves out of the capacities and the desires of the Palestinian people. On the American governmental level the perception of the question of Palestine and the political system's inaccommodation of Palestinian interests is not caused by lack of information about Palestinian suffering. The issue is political and ideological in nature and the establishment of cohesiveness between American and Palestinian interests is unattainable. Therefore, a Palestinian strategy should subscribe to the actual and not the imaginary realism described above.

Obviously, the dynamics of intellectualism have changed and the priorities have shifted among Palestinian decisions-makers. The central focus today does not seem to be Palestinian public opinion. Among Palestinian intellectuals and policy-makers, the overarching concern seems to be centered on American public opinion. It is the American formulation for resolving the conflict that is being gradually inculcated into Palestinian thinking on the official level, while Palestinian formulation on the public level is being ignored, suppressed, or denigrated. In this there is an interesting irony. As Palestinian resistance was concentrated in Jordan until the early 1970s, the belief was that the road to Jerusalem would have to go through Amman; following the Palestinian-Jordanian conflict in 1970 and the subsequent transference of Palestinian resistance to Lebanon, it was said that the road to Palestine would have to go through southern Lebanon and now that Palestinian resistance is dispersed and the leadership centered...
in Tunis, the belief seems to be that the road to Jerusalem has to pass through Washington, D.C.

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