



INTERNATIONAL  
SOLIDARITY  
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ITALIA

## **Boicottare Israele: una pratica non violenta**

di Diana Carminati e Alfredo Tradardi, DeriveApprodi 2009

### **Tutto quello che non siamo riusciti a inserire nel samizdat – parte prima**

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ISM-Italia, [www.ism-italia.org](http://www.ism-italia.org) [info@ism-italia.org](mailto:info@ism-italia.org)

Torino, 6 novembre 2014

## 1. Gli autori

**Diana Carminati Marengo**, professore associato di Storia dell'Europa contemporanea presso l'Università di Torino sino al 2004, si è occupata di problemi di storia della Resistenza in Piemonte; successivamente di studi riguardanti la costruzione del discorso dell'identità locale a fine ottocento, su nazionalismo, militarismo, guerra e sistema patriarcale e di studi sulla storia delle donne e della storia di genere, dei quali sono stati pubblicati alcuni articoli. È stata direttrice nel 1995-98 del Cirsde (Centro interdipartimentale di studi e ricerche sulle donne) presso l'Università di Torino. Ha lavorato dall'inizio degli anni '90 all'interno della rete italiana delle Donne in nero contro la guerra, nei Balcani e, negli ultimi quattro anni, in Palestina/Israele seguendo progetti internazionali (con OMS e Comune di Torino) con i Centri delle donne di Haifa e Gaza che si occupano di violenza contro le donne.

E' stato ripubblicato recentemente il suo saggio *Langa partigiana '43 - '45*, a cura di Araba Fenice, Boves 2007.

**Alfredo Tradardi**, ingegnere, ha lavorato dal 1960 al 1991 alla Olivetti di Ivrea.

È stato assessore alla cultura nel Comune di Ivrea nel '77 - '79 e nel '92 - '93.

È uno dei soci fondatori della associazione culturale itàca.

Ha organizzato, tra l'altro, *John Cage a Torino e Ivrea* nel maggio 1984 e il *Convegno Memorie e Utopie* nel 1987 a Ivrea, a 20 anni dal famoso Convegno per un Nuovo Teatro del 1967, tenutosi sempre a Ivrea.

Dall'inizio del 2002 segue il problema palestinese. All'inizio del 2006 ha promosso la costituzione di ISM-Italia, gruppo di supporto dell'ISM palestinese, del quale è uno dei coordinatori.

Ha collaborato a organizzare nel gennaio 2003 la tournée in Palestina della Compagnia di Pippo Delbono con lo spettacolo *Guerra* e nell'ottobre 2009 sempre in Palestina quella del Coro Bajolese (Piemonte) e di Pulcinella, al secolo Brunello Leone.

Ha coordinato il gruppo di lavoro che ha tradotto in italiano *La pulizia etnica della Palestina* di Ilan Pappé, pubblicato da Fazi editore nel 2008 e promosso la pubblicazione di:

*Politica* (poesie scelte) di Aharon Shabtai, Multimedia 2009

*Il nuovo filosemitismo europeo e 'il campo della pace' in Israele* di Yitzhak Laor, Le Nuove Muse 2008

*Non ci sarà uno Stato palestinese* di Ziyad Clot, Zambon 2011

*Controrrente* di Ilan Pappé, Zambon 2012

Boicottare Israele: una pratica non violenta è stato anche pubblicato in tedesco dalla casa editrice Zambon nel 2011 con il titolo *Israel-BoyKott: ein gewaltfreies Vorgehen*.

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Riotta	Gianni	97,115n
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- M. Allegra, "Che stato è Israele", in "Conflitti globali", n. 6, "Israele come paradigma"
- Diana Carminati, "I diplomatici delle Nazioni Unite e le regole dell' "impero": le verità scomode di Alvaro de Soto, James D. Wolfensohn, John Dugard, Richard Falk e Matt Svensson", relazione al seminario "Le democrazie occidentali e la pulizia etnica della Palestina", Torino, 5-6 maggio 2008
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Sessione di apertura

*Perché questo seminario* di Alfredo Tradardi ISM-Italia

Panel 1: Un nuovo secolo di barbarie

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*Genocidio a Gaza e Pulizia Etnica in Cisgiordania* di Ilan Pappè Exeter University

*La Politica Italiana e Europea in Medio Oriente* di Giulietto Chiesa Parlamento Europeo

*Il Modello Israeliano di Occupazione e Repressione* di Giorgio S. Frankel Giornalista

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*La catastrofe dell'informazione occidentale* di Vladimiro Giacchè Analista politico

*Medio Oriente, Escalation Militare, Rischi di Guerra Nucleare* di Angelo Baracca Università di  
Firenze

*Palestina e Israele. Le impossibili simmetrie* di Sergio Cararo, giornalista (Forum Palestina)

*La Risposta Italiana all'Appello Palestinese al Boicottaggio (BDS)* di Diana Carminati Università di  
Torino

*Oltre Totem e Tabù, note a margine del saggio di Ilan Pappé* di Flavia Donati Psichiatra

Website

Badil [www.badil.org](http://www.badil.org)

BDS Movement [www.bdsmovement.net](http://www.bdsmovement.net)

Boicotta Israele [www.boicottaisraele.it](http://www.boicottaisraele.it)

BRICUP [www.bricup.org.uk](http://www.bricup.org.uk)

Forum Palestina [www.forumpalestina.org](http://www.forumpalestina.org)

ISM [www.palsolidarity.org](http://www.palsolidarity.org)

ISM-Italia <http://sites.google.com/site/italyism> e [www.frammenti.it](http://www.frammenti.it)

PACBI [www.pacbi.org](http://www.pacbi.org)

Stop the Wall [www.stophewall.org](http://www.stophewall.org)

Per altri indirizzi utili <http://www.bdsmovement.net/?q=node/54>

## 5. Articoli citati

Capitolo 3-Nota 3

**The South Africa Moment in Palestine Justin Podur interviews Omar Barghouti, April 05, 2009**, By Omar Barghouti and Justin Podur

Omar Barghouti is an activist and writer based in Palestine. He was one of the early advocates of a Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions strategy against Israel's occupation and apartheid policies. He was one of the headline speakers of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) 2009. I interviewed him in Toronto on March 2, 2009.

Justin Podur (JP): Perhaps we should start with an outline of the call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS), and the demands of the call.

Omar Barghouti (OB): The BDS call is based on an analysis that the oppression of Palestinians has three basic forms. First, the occupation and colonization of those lands occupied since 1967. Second, the denial of the right of return to Palestinian refugees forcibly displaced in 1948 and since. Third, the system of racial discrimination against the indigenous Palestinian citizens of Israel. The demand is to end these injustices: to end the occupation of the lands occupied in 1967, to allow the right of return to Palestinian refugees, and to end the apartheid system against Palestinian citizens of Israel.

The call appeals to Palestinian society in all three segments of the Palestinian people, and is the first call in decades to get the approval of all these segments. Since the Oslo agreements of 1993, the "Palestinian people" has been redefined to include only the first segment, those living in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. But this excludes the Palestinian citizens of Israel and the refugees, who form the overwhelming majority of Palestinians. You will hear this exclusion when you hear poll results like: "60% of Palestinians support Hamas" - the poll will have only taken place in the West Bank and Gaza.

The BDS calls for institutional boycotts, divestment, and sanctions until Israel fully complies with international law and human rights principles.

An important part of the BDS call is that it adopts a rights-based, not a solutions-based approach. It does not endorse a one-state or two-state solution, only the accommodation of basic rights, without which there will never be a just and sustainable peace. That is why it is supported by all three components of Palestinian society.

Another aspect is that the BDS call appeals explicitly to conscientious Israelis to join us in the struggle to end injustice. It is nonviolent, but it has the support, at least on paper, of the entire political spectrum of Palestinian parties.

JP: Earlier today, you gave a presentation at York University's Centre for International Security Studies (YCISS) arguing for an academic boycott. One of your arguments was that there are limits to academic freedom, that academic freedom is trumped by other rights, such as the right to life. Do you think this argument of limits to academic freedom is necessary to advocate the academic boycott? Does this mean that if you are an absolutist on free speech, you can't endorse the academic boycott?

OB: Since it is an institutional boycott and not an individual boycott, there is no problem with inviting individual Israeli academics to express themselves. It would not prevent any individual Israeli academic from speaking his or her mind, or from going to a conference, so long as they do not officially represent any Israeli academic institution. So at face value it is not a problem. But it does seek the severing of institutional ties, research agreements, and exchange programs, so if you think that these exchanges are basic to academic freedom, severing them will curtail academic freedom in some way. So an absolutist would not be able to support it.

Interestingly though, the liberals who are so deeply opposed to BDS on academic freedom grounds did not make a peep when Birzeit University near Ramallah was closed for nearly four years. They did not say anything when the Islamic University in Gaza was bombed this last December. There is an outcry against BDS because of the hypothetical academic freedom that

might be curtailed if the strategy is successful, but there is no such outcry from the same sectors when real suppression of academic freedom happens. There are two conclusions one can draw from this. Either these people are hypocrites, or they perceive Palestinians as not fully human and academic freedom is a monopoly for full humans, and "non-whites" need not apply. Those two are really the only possibilities.

JP: BDS, a strategy aimed at isolating Israel, comes at a moment when Israel is trying, with some success to isolate the Palestinians, and divide them.

OB: One argument by Israel's apologists is, the real problem isn't Israel, the real problem is that Palestinians can't get it together. But colonizers divide natives to rule. So the divisions in Palestinian society are a self-fulfilling prophecy. Usually the criticism that we can't get it together comes from people who wouldn't support us anyway. When we were united, they weren't with us. Now we're divided, and they're still not. Also, many of those calling for Palestinian unity now as a condition for lifting the criminal siege on Gaza are the same governments and politicians who rejected the outcome of Palestinian democratic elections in 2006 and struck us with a siege as punishment.

Regardless, this is one of the most difficult periods for the Palestinian movement because our official leadership is for all intents and purposes working for the other side. Every movement has quislings, but to have the official leadership on the other side, collaborating openly with the oppressor, we have never seen that.

Actually, BDS is helpful to the Palestinian movement in this sense as well. Besides its main effect, the desired effect of trying to make Israel a pariah and isolating it to force it to accede to respect international law and basic Palestinian rights, BDS unifies Palestinians on a civil resistance platform when they badly need points of unity. The consensus behind BDS is so strong that even the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah won't attack it publicly. They imprison, arrest, and do much worse to Palestinians on Israel's behalf, but they haven't condemned BDS.

JP: Do they have any support to lose by doing something like that?

OB: Not very much, but yes.

JP: One thing that bothers me about the South Africa parallel is the centrality that is placed on BDS in the South African case. It seems to me that apartheid was ended by South Africans, and that international solidarity, including BDS, played a relatively small role by comparison.

OB: It was the straw that broke the camel's back. Without it you could not have ended apartheid. Apartheid was de-legitimized internally by what the ANC was doing, but without the international pariah status, the regime would not have collapsed. And remember that apartheid was at its worst towards the end. The last few years were the worst of all, very brutal and repressive.

JP: What about the argument that BDS is premature until the groundwork has been done, until there has been enough education?

OB: This neglects the fact that it is easier to educate when you have the right campaign. If you have no clarity of goals or tools or endgame, your educational campaign will be ineffective. With BDS, you have a clear endgame - the recognition of full inalienable rights for Palestinians - and you have a clear strategy, nonviolent BDS. That is why the movement has grown the way it has. In the Palestinian context, the BDS movement has grown rather quickly. It started at Durban in 2001, but it really grew considerably in 2005 with the BDS call from more than 170 civil society organizations, political parties and unions. Today it is starting to reach the mainstream, you have the UN, the General Assembly President, Special Rapporteur Richard Falk, actions in dozens of countries. This is becoming a mass movement now.

JP: Another objection that is raised is that BDS shuts down dialogue and weakens the Israeli left, which will be needed if any progress is to be made.

OB: It does not make sense to have illusions about an Israeli "left." By international standards of the term, there is no left in Israel. There are leftist individuals and tiny, marginal, but very principled groupings, but no movement that can be called left. Those groups in Israel that identify themselves as "the left" are Zionist, therefore racist, and are opposed to almost all the 3 basic rights of the Palestinian people, as mentioned above. There is an overwhelming consensus

among Jewish Israeli political parties against granting Palestinian their inalienable rights. I will give you a specific example. There was a petition that circulated to every single one of the 9000 Israeli academics. The petition was not about BDS, or apartheid. It was simply about basic academic freedom. It simply urged the Israeli authorities to allow free movement at the hundreds of roadblocks and checkpoints in the West Bank for all Palestinian academics and students going to their schools and universities. No demand to lift the roadblocks. No demand to end the occupation. An easing of the checkpoints, for the sake of academic freedom, a freedom that supposedly trumps all other freedoms. Only about 400 out of the 9000 Israeli academics signed it. Imagine if the petition had called for ending the occupation!

JP: And what about the argument that rather than working for BDS on campuses, students should work to create affiliations with Palestinian universities?

OB: We can't accept wheeling and dealing. The BDS movement is principled. We can't break it for bribes. There is no symmetry in principle - an affiliation with an Israeli university is not balanced by an affiliation with a Palestinian university - because there is no symmetry in reality. There is no middle ground between the oppressors and the oppressed. Treating Palestinian and Israeli institutions on equal footing means accepting Israel's racist and colonial policies and whitewashing the complicity of Israeli institutions in maintaining the Israeli occupation and other forms of oppression.

I will give you an example. Sting came to Israel. The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) wrote to him to ask him not to perform in Israel. He didn't cancel, but he offered to come to Ramallah. We wrote, during apartheid, would you have balanced a performance in Sun City by going to Soweto? He conceded that he wouldn't. But by the time we had the exchange he had already performed in Israel. Ultimately, he promised to "take into consideration" our position if he is ever invited to perform in Israel again.

Roger Waters from Pink Floyd was going to perform in Tel Aviv, but, after amicable negotiations with Palestinian artists and PACBI, and as a compromise, he moved the concert to Peace Valley, a village in Israel with a semblance of equality between Palestinian and Jewish citizens. He negotiated with us for months, which told us something about him: that he's a person of principle. We organized a tour of the Apartheid Wall for him and urged him to make an explicit statement, before and during the concert, against the occupation and the Wall. He agreed. He went to Bethlehem, and spray painted "Tear Down This Wall" on the Wall. It was covered by AP, Reuters, and media outlets that ignored the concert. It was a major victory for us, and he delivered on all his promises. The point is, we can't accept the idea that there's symmetry. What Roger Waters did was acceptable because it was not symmetry. He publicly recognized and condemned the occupation and its manifestations.

JP: Could artists, like academics, claim that they should be above BDS and above politics? It seems to me that if they want to, they have to be artists first, and reject their own position in the system.

OB: Speaking as a choreographer, I don't see any reason to exclude the cultural. If they want to be above politics, they should be against occupation and colonial oppression. It is a no brainer - occupation infringes all rights. There is no free expression under occupation. Here's an example. Ohad Naharin, the famous Israeli director of Batsheva dance troupe, said something like "I continue to do my work, while 20 km from me people are participating in war crimes ... the ability to detach oneself from the situation - that is what allows one to go on." He is apathetic to war crimes done by his government, in his name, but says I am an artist, so it is beneath me. I ignore it. He doesn't ignore it, though. When dancers in his troupe are sent on reserve duty, they go and serve in the occupation army. Batsheva has never condemned the occupation. In fact, no Israeli cultural institution has ever called for ending the occupation.

JP: Are there any other objections to BDS that you would want to answer?

OB: I am always eager to debate with anyone but I have been getting very few good rebuttals. It has come down to just bullying. Zionists have lost the ability to persuade; all they resort to now is bullying, smear campaigns and intellectual terror to suppress dissent and muzzle all

serious debate on Israel. These are their weapons of choice. The main one being the smear of anti-Semitism. But even that is being so over-used, and falsely and illegitimately used, that it is also losing its sting. The truth is Israel and the Zionist movement have failed to produce any effective weapon to counter BDS. They realize this, and they are in panic. Justin Podur is a Toronto-based writer.

Cap 4-Nota 1

Ilan Pappé, **Genocidio a Gaza e Pulizia etnica in Cisgiordania**,  
Seminario *La guerra israelo-occidentale contro Gaza*, 24.01.2009  
(trascrizione a cura di ISM-Italia non rivista dall'autore)

Voglio iniziare inviando da qui i migliori auguri a Karma Nabulsi e a suo padre ricoverato in ospedale e spero che abbiate modo di ascoltarla in un futuro prossimo perchè è una persona straordinaria, una persona eccezionale, una voce animata da una grande umanità in un mondo sempre più disumanizzato.

Voglio cercare di spiegare che cosa manca nel modo in cui i media riferiscono del massacro palestinese a Gaza.

Ci sono tre elementi, che non ritroviamo in quasi nessuno dei resoconti che ci vengono forniti dai media, nè li ritroviamo nelle reazioni da parte dei politici, degli intellettuali, nel loro atteggiamento nei confronti di quello che succede sul terreno. Non fanno riferimento alla storia, alla ideologia e alla giustizia, non c'è nessun riferimento a questi tre elementi. Mostrano delle foto, delle immagini, ci inviano delle descrizioni orrende e spaventose di bambini, di donne e uomini che vengono uccisi; parlano dell'atto terribile, spaventoso della guerra come se si trattasse di una guerra qualsiasi e se non si tiene conto della storia, dell'ideologia e della giustizia, e della storia della Palestina in generale, e di quella di Gaza in particolare, non solo non si riuscirà a capire perché è in corso il massacro e le uccisioni, ma non riusciremo neanche a prevenire un fatto del genere in futuro.

Dobbiamo studiare la storia della Palestina, dobbiamo vedere i collegamenti tra i bombardamenti e l'espulsione dei palestinesi nel 1948 e i bombardamenti e la pulizia etnica nel 2009. Il nesso tra tutto questo è la medesima strategia, la medesima metodologia, solo le armi sono diventate più letali e più moderne. Nel '48 la maggior parte dei massacri perpetrati si sono verificati perché l'esercito israeliano non ha lasciato nessuna possibilità ai palestinesi di abbandonare i loro villaggi e le loro città. La striscia di Gaza è come un enorme villaggio palestinese del 1948 dove la gente non sa dove andare, non sa dove ripararsi, dove la gente combatte disperatamente in una lotta impari, impossibile per la sopravvivenza.

Ci sono altre analogie tra il 1948 e il 2009. Nel 1948 quell'evento è stato definito una guerra come se il popolo palestinese nel 1948 fosse un esercito e non abitanti di villaggi e di cittadine, civili che non avevano neanche potuto prevedere quello che sarebbe loro accaduto. Oggi i media e le élite politiche dell'occidente parlano di una guerra e quindi bisogna fare un raffronto tra le due parti per cercare di equilibrare le due posizioni, come se in un massacro o in una situazione di genocidio o di pulizia etnica si debbano in qualche modo mostrare i due punti di vista. C'è anche lo stesso silenzio, o meglio il complotto del silenzio, da parte della comunità internazionale ed è certamente ancora più inaccettabile oggi nel 2009 di quanto non lo fosse già nel 1948. Nel '48 non c'erano mezzi come la televisione e i crimini spaventosi commessi contro il popolo palestinese sono stati perpetrati tre anni dopo l'Olocausto, quindi tutti questi pretesti non sono pretesti che possono essere fatti valere nel 2009.

Dobbiamo anche prendere in esame la storia del 1967: sappiamo oggi che dal 1967 in poi, fin dal primo giorno di occupazione della Cisgiordania e della striscia di Gaza, l'élite politica, culturale e militare israeliana ha deciso che Cisgiordania e Gaza sarebbero stati sempre sotto il controllo israeliano. E nessun governo, nessun partito politico sionista si è mai discostato da questa decisione. Hanno cercato di nascondere questa decisione strategica da parte israeliana, hanno persino inventato di sana pianta un processo di pace, per coprire, mascherare questa strategia che era tesa ad un controllo duraturo dei territori con tutti i mezzi possibili. Il 20% della Palestina

storica che gli israeliani non avevano occupato nel '48, sono riusciti ad occuparla nel '67. Volevano anche nascondere il fatto che non sanno o non hanno saputo dal '67 cosa fare dei milioni di palestinesi che risiedono in queste zone occupate da Israele nel 1967.

Col passare degli anni la strategia israeliana è diventata chiara: mantenere un controllo diretto e indiretto sui territori e far sì che la popolazione nei territori fosse mantenuta in uno stato permanente di prigionia. Se poi la gente si comporta bene, cioè non oppone resistenza a questo controllo diretto o indiretto da parte di Israele, potrà anche godere di una prigione a cielo all'aperto. Una prigione che poteva anche essere definita lo stato palestinese. Se resistono come hanno fatto nell'87 e di nuovo nel 2000 saranno sottoposti ad un regime carcerario di massima sicurezza, con punizioni collettive, pulizia etnica, uccisioni di massa e come ultima possibilità a un totale annientamento.

Ma dobbiamo anche prendere in considerazione l'ideologia.

Se noi non analizziamo i collegamenti tra l'ideologia sionista e i tipi di crimini cui abbiamo assistito a Gaza, non solo non riusciremo a spiegare perché gli israeliani stanno facendo quello che fanno, ma saremo incapaci di prevenire il prossimo caso di politica di genocidio e di massacri. L'ideologia è un fenomeno dinamico nella storia, inizia sulla base di una idea precisa su elementi fondamentali su cui si ancora; poi si modifica per adeguarsi a delle circostanze mutate. Questo è il motivo per cui l'idea iniziale del sionismo, quella relativa all'identità nazionale, all'autodeterminazione ebraica, alla sicurezza, hanno subito una evoluzione quando il progetto sionista si è trasformato in un progetto colonialista sul terreno. Il sionismo non è nato così, è diventato una ideologia razzista che disumanizza i palestinesi come singoli individui e come collettività proprio sulla base di un profondo convincimento, che è il fulcro del movimento sionista, e cioè che fino a quando ci sono palestinesi in quella che era la Palestina, non c'è né sicurezza, né prosperità per il popolo ebraico che ha fondato lo stato d'Israele e che risiede nello stato d'Israele.

Le elite intellettuali e accademiche israeliane hanno modi molto sofisticati, molto articolati di spiegare questo tipo di convincimento e questa formula. Ma ogni cittadino medio dello stato d'Israele conosce perfettamente questa percezione ideologica e questa è l'unica forza ideologica autentica che ispira, definisce e plasma le idee dei cittadini nei confronti dei palestinesi come essere umani.

La disumanizzazione significa che ogniqualvolta in Israele ci si sente minacciati come società o di fronte ad un minaccia esistenziale per la propria sopravvivenza, si deve abbandonare qualunque principio morale, qualunque inibizione, per praticare l'espulsione o il genocidio o per imprigionarli in un enorme ghetto.

Sfortunatamente parte di questa percezione disumanizzata dei palestinesi è stata adottata dall'occidente come una nuova ondata di islamofobia.

Non c'è un collegamento tra l'esperienza degli ebrei in Europa, che fa parte della storia dell'Europa e dovrà sempre essere parte dell'agenda europea, e sicuramente dell'agenda italiana e tedesca, e la colonizzazione sionista della Palestina. Solo se scindiamo il piano di discussione tra questi due elementi, cioè il dibattito sulla questione ebraica in Europa e il progetto sionista in Palestina, riusciremo ad arrivare ad una pace e alla riconciliazione tra Israele e la Palestina.

E dovremmo anche parlare di giustizia. Come possiamo modificare una realtà in cui storia ed ideologia ci insegnano che un movimento politico e ideologico che aveva creato uno stato nel '48 non si fermerà finché non avrà completato il suo progetto di distruggere il popolo palestinese?

Come confrontarci con questo quando le elite politiche e i media occidentali si rifiutano di descrivere la realtà sul terreno e non ci danno un quadro della realtà? Come possiamo noi confutare le menzogne, la propaganda che per sessanta anni hanno mascherato un caso molto semplice e chiaro di pulizia etnica e di genocidio? Come voi sapete, a differenza di quello che ci viene insegnato nella maggior parte della letteratura e delle narrative il male è qualcosa di molto semplice, tutt'altro che complesso. E il bene è molto difficile da realizzare. E la storia della Palestina e di Israele è la storia del male e non del bene. E tutti gli sforzi fatti dagli israeliani di descrivere questo fenomeno come una realtà complessa sono un tentativo di nascondere una storia molto semplice e infausta di colonialismo, di occupazione, di pulizia etnica e adesso di genocidio. Quindi come

confrontarci con questo quando abbiamo questa cappa di propaganda a livello accademico, a livello dei media e a livello politico, qualcosa che dà impunità ai crimini israeliani e sionisti? La situazione ideale da augurarsi sarebbe quella che la società che è causa di questo male, che ha commesso questi crimini, cambiasse dal suo interno, cambiasse le sue politiche e ideologie in modo che non ci fosse spargimento di sangue e non fosse necessario usare la violenza per poter porre termine alla violenza.

Ma sfortunatamente la storia ci insegna che il problema di questa impostazione, cioè un cambiamento dall'interno, è che richiede tempi molto lunghi e visto il ritmo della devastazione che ha colpito la Palestina, non deve stupirci che molti di noi ritengono che non ci sia il tempo di aspettare che la società israeliana modifichi il proprio atteggiamento e le proprie politiche. Tre giorni fa ad Haifa, nella sala del teatro Al-Maidan, 400 persone hanno ascoltato le voci di ebrei che si oppongono contro la guerra a Gaza. Alcune di queste persone sono state menzionate oggi da Alfredo e Angelo. Ma erano le uniche voci che si sono levate per dirlo, non serviva più di una sala di teatro per raccogliere le voci che si levavano contro il genocidio di Gaza. Non c'era bisogno come c'era bisogno qui di avere un'altra sala, di creare video-collegamenti, perché nessun altro ci sarebbe stato ad occupare un'altra sala.

Quindi se noi aspettiamo che ci sia questo cambiamento dall'interno, parliamo di modificare l'impostazione ideale, l'atteggiamento mentale del 99% degli ebrei, siamo di fronte a un progetto storico impossibile.

Cosa ci ha insegnato la storia quando una società si rifiuta di cambiare il suo atteggiamento razzista, la sua ideologia fascista, razzista e genocidaria? In Europa la decisione è stata quella di utilizzare una forza militare massiccia per porre termine all'esistenza di regimi razzisti. Io sono un pacifista, la mia famiglia vive ancora tutta in Israele e quindi non appoggierei mai la distruzione militare dello stato di Israele, quindi per me questa opzione non è fattibile, anche se posso capire perché molte persone disperate possano pensare o sperare che questa sia la soluzione. Il Sudafrica ci ha insegnato che c'è un'altra possibilità, quella del boicottaggio, delle sanzioni e del disinvestimento. Il vantaggio è non solo quello di evitare altri spargimenti di sangue ma di mostrare che non c'è bisogno di convincere ogni bianco o sudafricano a smettere di essere razzista. L'apartheid è caduta prima che tutti i bianchi sudafricani non fossero più razzisti. E' finita quando l'élite politica, culturale ed economica ha cominciato a perdere i vantaggi materiali, i vantaggi in termini di prestigio all'estero che aveva ottenuto dal sistema razzista dell'apartheid. E questa deve essere la via giusta da seguire per porre termine alla politica violenta e genocidaria di Israele, per poter rendere giustizia alle vittime del passato.

Ma io non sono ingenuo e so che l'Europa e l'America non sono pronte ad adottare questo modello, preferiscono il tipo di modello adottato nel 1948, nel 1967 e adesso nel 2009. Una delle cose più spaventose che si sono verificate è che alcuni palestinesi ed europei, insieme ad alcuni americani, mossi dalle migliori intenzioni, hanno contribuito al successo della propaganda e della mitologia di parte israeliana che non ci consente di creare un movimento di massa e efficace di boicottaggio e di sanzioni che possano essere foriere di pace e riconciliazione per Israele e per la Palestina.

Avendo adottato da Oslo il modello della soluzione basata sui due stati, abbiamo direttamente contribuito a rendere gli israeliani immuni da qualunque pressione importante esercitata dalla comunità internazionale affinché ponessero termine a questa politica criminale che perpetravano sul terreno. Non importa che voi crediate più o meno fermamente nella soluzione dei due stati o pensiate che non ci siano altre soluzioni: il discorso dei due stati è quello che garantisce che Israele attacchi dei palestinesi innocenti impunemente e ne ucciderà altri, bambini, donne e uomini, la prossima volta proprio per questo discorso dei due stati. L'élite politica occidentale con il nuovo leader Barack Obama non farà nulla.

Quindi in conclusione io direi, noi dobbiamo garantire che quello che l'élite politica, economica e culturale dell'occidente non è disposta a fare, noi siamo disposti a farlo in quanto società civile. Non lasceremo la storia agli storici: in qualunque momento, in qualunque occasione noi dobbiamo ricordare alla gente che ci ascolta che dal 1948 in poi, senza neanche un giorno di

interruzione, la pulizia etnica della Palestina è andata avanti e la pulizia etnica è un crimine contro l'umanità, è il peggior crimine contro l'umanità. Da sessanta anni il mondo ha consentito ad Israele di commettere questo crimine, compresa l'ultima pagina che ha scritto nel 2009. Dobbiamo ricordare a chi ci ascolta, dovunque essi si trovino, che l'ideologia dello stato di Israele è una ideologia razzista, immorale, inaccettabile nel 2009 ed è vergognoso che l'Unione Europea sia disposta a consentire ad Israele di avere uno status particolare, anche se i politici europei sanno benissimo quale sia la natura dell'ideologia e delle politiche che si ispirano a questa ideologia e noi non accetteremo Barack Obama e la nuova amministrazione americana come una evoluzione nuova e positiva fintanto che Barack Obama e la sua amministrazione non contesteranno questa ideologia immorale e razzista e le politiche collegate a questa ideologia. Nessun essere umano degno può veramente accettare quello che lo stato di Israele rappresenta nel 2009 .

Infine diremo a chi ci ascolta che l'attuale opera diplomatica in corso aiuta gli israeliani a portare a compimento il progetto criminoso che avevano iniziato nel 1948. Se questo progetto non viene fermato lascerà i palestinesi fuori dalla Palestina e fuori dalla storia. Non è troppo tardi e ci sono delle forze valide all'interno di Israele e all'interno della Palestina, certo non sono numerose, ma esistono e possono agire per realizzare qualche cosa di molto diverso sul terreno, una situazione in cui tutti siano eguali, dove chiunque, sia esso stato espulso o sia immigrato in quella terra, goda degli stessi diritti e possa condividere con gli altri un pezzo di terra molto piccolo che consenta soprattutto al mondo arabo, al mondo musulmano, di affrontare altre questioni importanti al loro ordine del giorno, piuttosto che essere di fronte a questa continua ingiustizia, un'ingiustizia nei confronti della quale la maggioranza dei popoli del mondo restano in silenzio, non fanno nulla e spero che il primo segnale del fatto che si sia riusciti per lo meno a modificare l'opinione pubblica di questo paese sia rappresentato dal fatto che la prossima riunione possa tenersi nella grande sala dell'università di Roma e il rettore dell'università possa essere la persona che inaugura democraticamente la seduta.

Cap 4-Nota 3

### **Risoluzione ONU 181 di partizione della Palestina**

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piano\\_di\\_partizione\\_della\\_Palestina#Materiali\\_e\\_testo\\_della\\_Risoluzione\\_181](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piano_di_partizione_della_Palestina#Materiali_e_testo_della_Risoluzione_181)

Cap 4-Nota 5

### **Dichiarazione di indipendenza dello Stato di Israele, 14 maggio 1948**

In ERETZ ISRAEL è nato il popolo ebraico, qui si è formata la sua identità spirituale, religiosa e politica, qui ha vissuto una vita indipendente, qui ha creato valori culturali con portata nazionale e universale e ha dato al mondo l'eterno Libro dei Libri.

Dopo essere stato forzatamente esiliato dalla sua terra, il popolo le rimase fedele attraverso tutte le dispersioni e non cessò mai di pregare e di sperare nel ritorno alla sua terra e nel ripristino in essa della libertà politica.

Spinti da questo attaccamento storico e tradizionale, gli ebrei aspirarono in ogni successiva generazione a tornare e stabilirsi nella loro antica patria; e nelle ultime generazioni ritornarono in massa. Pionieri, ma'apilim e difensori fecero fiorire i deserti, rivivere la loro lingua ebraica, costruirono villaggi e città e crearono una comunità in crescita, che controllava la propria economia e la propria cultura, amante della pace e in grado di difendersi, portando i vantaggi del progresso a tutti gli abitanti del paese e aspirando all'indipendenza nazionale.

Nell'anno 5657 (1897), alla chiamata del precursore della concezione d'uno Stato ebraico Theodor Herzl, fu indetto il primo congresso sionista che proclamò il diritto del popolo ebraico alla rinascita nazionale del suo paese.



Questo diritto fu riconosciuto nella dichiarazione Balfour del 2 novembre 1917 e riaffermato col Mandato della Società delle Nazioni che, in particolare, dava sanzione internazionale al legame storico tra il popolo ebraico ed Eretz Israel [Terra d'Israele] e al diritto del popolo ebraico di ricostruire il suo focolare nazionale.

La Shoà [catastrofe] che si è abbattuta recentemente sul popolo ebraico, in cui milioni di ebrei in Europa sono stati massacrati, ha dimostrato concretamente la necessità di risolvere il problema del popolo ebraico privo di patria e di indipendenza, con la rinascita dello Stato ebraico in Eretz Israel che spalancherà le porte della patria a ogni ebreo e conferirà al popolo ebraico la posizione di membro a diritti uguali nella famiglia delle nazioni.

I sopravvissuti all'Olocausto nazista in Europa, così come gli ebrei di altri paesi, non hanno cessato di emigrare in Eretz Israel, nonostante le difficoltà, gli impedimenti e i pericoli e non hanno smesso di rivendicare il loro diritto a una vita di dignità, libertà e onesto lavoro nella patria del loro popolo. Durante la seconda guerra mondiale, la comunità ebraica di questo paese diede il suo pieno contributo alla lotta dei popoli amanti della libertà e della pace contro le forze della malvagità nazista e, col sangue dei suoi soldati e il suo sforzo bellico, si guadagnò il diritto di essere annoverata fra i popoli che fondarono le Nazioni Unite.

Il 29 novembre 1947, l'Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite adottò una risoluzione che esigeva la fondazione di uno Stato ebraico in Eretz Israel. L'Assemblea Generale chiedeva che gli abitanti di Eretz Israel compissero loro stessi i passi necessari da parte loro alla messa in atto della risoluzione. Questo riconoscimento delle Nazioni Unite del diritto del popolo ebraico a fondare il proprio Stato è irrevocabile.

Questo diritto è il diritto naturale del popolo ebraico a essere, come tutti gli altri popoli, indipendente nel proprio Stato sovrano.

Quindi noi, membri del Consiglio del Popolo, rappresentanti della Comunità Ebraica in Eretz Israele e del Movimento Sionista, siamo qui riuniti nel giorno della fine del Mandato Britannico su Eretz Israel e, in virtù del nostro diritto naturale e storico e della risoluzione dell'Assemblea Generale delle Nazioni Unite, dichiariamo la fondazione di uno Stato ebraico in Eretz Israel, che avrà il nome di Stato d'Israele.

Decidiamo che, con effetto dal momento della fine del Mandato, stanotte, giorno di sabato 6 di Iyar 5708, 15 maggio 1948, fino a quando saranno regolarmente stabilite le autorità dello Stato elette secondo la Costituzione che sarà adottata dall'Assemblea costituente eletta non più tardi del 1 ottobre 1948, il Consiglio del Popolo opererà come provvisorio Consiglio di Stato, e il suo organo esecutivo, l'Amministrazione del Popolo, sarà il Governo provvisorio dello Stato ebraico che sarà chiamato Israele.

Lo Stato d'Israele sarà aperto per l'immigrazione ebraica e per la riunione degli esuli, incrementerà lo sviluppo del paese per il bene di tutti i suoi abitanti, sarà fondato sulla libertà, sulla giustizia e sulla pace come predetto dai profeti d'Israele, assicurerà completa uguaglianza di diritti sociali e politici a tutti i suoi abitanti senza distinzione di religione, razza o sesso, garantirà libertà di religione, di coscienza, di lingua, di istruzione e di cultura, preserverà i luoghi santi di tutte le religioni e sarà fedele ai principi della Carta delle Nazioni Unite.

Lo Stato d'Israele sarà pronto a collaborare con le agenzie e le rappresentanze delle Nazioni Unite per l'applicazione della risoluzione dell'Assemblea Generale del 29 novembre 1947 e compirà passi per realizzare l'unità economica di tutte le parti di Eretz Israel.

Facciamo appello alle Nazioni Unite affinché assistano il popolo ebraico nella costruzione del suo Stato e accolgano lo Stato ebraico nella famiglia delle nazioni.

Facciamo appello - nel mezzo dell'attacco che ci viene sferrato contro da mesi - ai cittadini arabi dello Stato di Israele affinché mantengano la pace e partecipino alla costruzione dello Stato sulla base della piena e uguale cittadinanza e della rappresentanza appropriata in tutte le sue istituzioni provvisorie e permanenti.

Tendiamo una mano di pace e di buon vicinato a tutti gli Stati vicini e ai loro popoli, e facciamo loro appello affinché stabiliscano legami di collaborazione e di aiuto reciproco col sovrano popolo

ebraico stabilito nella sua terra. Lo Stato d'Israele è pronto a compiere la sua parte in uno sforzo comune per il progresso del Medio Oriente intero.

Facciamo appello al popolo ebraico dovunque nella Diaspora affinché si raccolga intorno alla comunità ebraica di Eretz Israel e la sostenga nello sforzo dell'immigrazione e della costruzione e la assista nella grande impresa per la realizzazione dell'antica aspirazione: la redenzione di Israele.

Confidando nell'Onnipotente, noi firmiamo questa Dichiarazione in questa sessione del Consiglio di Stato provvisorio, sul suolo della patria, nella città di Tel Aviv, oggi, vigilia di sabato 5 Iyar 5708, 14 maggio 1948.

Cap 4-Nota 23

**Peace Now: Israel planning 73,300 new homes in West Bank By Sara Miller, Haaretz Correspondent, 02.03.2009**

A report by the Israeli left-wing NGO Peace Now released Monday says that the government is planning to build more than 73,300 new housing units in the West Bank.

Peace Now estimates that if all of the units are built, it would mean a 100-percent increase in the total number of Israeli settlers. The report says that some settlements, including the two largest Ariel and Ma'aleh Adumim, would double in size.

According to the report, approval has already been granted for the construction of 15,000 housing units, and is pending for a further 58,000 units.

The report states that 5,722 of the planned housing units are in East Jerusalem, and some 9,000 units in total have already been built.

Peace Now says that a new right-wing government presents the danger of "expanding settlement growth at a rapid pace... with the clear intention of destroying the possibility of a two-state solution."

Prime Minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu of the rightist Likud party, tapped to form the new government after the February 10 elections, has expressed his opposition to a two-state solution. He also said that while a Likud government would not build new settlements, it would allow natural growth in existing ones.

But the Peace Now report says 17,000 units are planned for Gush Etzion, near Bethelehem, to be built outside existing settlements.

The report also states some 19,000 of the planned homes would be built beyond the route of the West Bank separation fence, including in Kiryat Arba in Hebron and Ariel.

In total, the report says, the planned West Bank homes account for 22 percent of housing units currently planned by the Housing Ministry.

Responding to the report, the Housing Ministry said Peace Now was making "a big deal out of nothing."

It said the plans gave only a general picture of the potential for settlement building and actual projects and construction were conditional on policies set by the ministers of housing and defense.

MK Yaakov Katz of the right wing National Union on Monday welcomed the news that Israel is pushing ahead with construction in the West Bank.

"We will make every effort to realize the plans outlined by [Peace Now official Yariv] Oppenheimer," Katz told Army Radio on Monday. "I expect that, with God's help, this will all happen in the next few years, and there will be one state here."

National Union is pushing for increased settlement construction as part of a coalition deal with Netanyahu, and Katz is among those jostling for the post of Housing Minister.

Settlement expansion has long been a source of contention between Israel and the international community, in particular the U.S. The Obama administration is planning to put heavy pressure on the new Israeli government to freeze all settlement construction.

Deputy U.S. State Department Spokesman Gordon Duguid issued a response later Monday, saying "what we do have to say we have said many times from this podium, that we call on both

sides not to take any actions that exacerbate tensions in the region. But I don't have any particular information on this report."

Cap 4-Nota 26

**Prof. Dror's duty By Akiva Eldar, Haaretz, 21.01.2009**

A few years ago, Yehezkel Dror sought to help an intelligent prime minister to whom he had the privilege of giving advice by warning against what the professor of political science called "a logical failure."

Dror asked the prime minister about the probability that his policy would succeed; the answer was a 70-80 percent chance of success. "Then you think there is a 20-30 percent chance that the policy you have chosen could fail," the professor said, then going on to ask: "What are you preparing to do in case it does?"

Dror says that although the two men had a good personal relationship, the prime minister asked him to leave his office at that point. According to Dror, he was not permitted to see the prime minister for a month afterward, by order of the head of the prime minister's bureau. This anecdote appears in Dror's book, "Epistle to an Israeli Jewish-Zionist Leader" (Carmel Publishers, in Hebrew).

Prof. Dror has spent a lifetime preaching to leaders who make fateful decisions without consulting experts, and then refuse to assume responsibility for the subsequent failures. And now that the public is all ears, wanting to hear Dror's comments on a prime minister who is suspected of "logical failures" that cost the lives of 33 soldiers, he has fallen silent.

According to media reports over the weekend, Dror gave in to pressure from his fellow members of the Winograd Committee, which is examining the performance of decision makers in the Second Lebanon War. The others pressed for less harsh language in the final report, scheduled to be released next week. He also relinquished his demand to append his own minority opinion to the document.

In fact, Dror has already expressed his view concerning Ehud Olmert's decisions in the final stages of the war. Just days before the committee was assembled, Dror published a document entitled "A Breakout Political-Security Grand-Strategy for Israel," under the auspices of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University. In that paper, Dror addressed the premier's claim that the result of the last 60 hours of fighting, when those 33 soldiers were killed, was United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the war.

"The wording of Resolution 1701 does include components which constitute an Israeli achievement," Dror writes, "but this is more the result of U.S. pressure than the results of Israeli achievements on the battlefield... Moreover, it remains doubtful whether Resolution 1701 will have long-term significance, and deducing that Israel has genuinely succeeded in improving its international standing [thanks to] the resolution requires one to strain one's imagination."

Dror argues that the lack of success in wiping out the bulk of Hezbollah's ranks, the fact that the organization's leaders were unhurt, and the damage that Israel had sustained on the military front and in terms of economical infrastructure have weakened Israel's deterrence capabilities.

It is the country's leader who is primarily responsible for this, according to Dror. Before authorizing a major military operation, the prime minister has a duty to question the chief-of-staff as one would a "hostile witness," Dror wrote. The premier should have then brought up the highest-ranking officer's answers in discussion with the top brass at the Foreign Ministry, the Mossad intelligence service, the National Security Council, and among advisors who are experts on political and security-related matters.

The process, Dror says, can be completed within two to three days. Therefore, "lack of time is not a valid excuse for shortcuts that thwart decisions." Testimonies by witnesses who appeared before the committee reveal that nothing was done in this regard at all.

Olmert's advocates maintain that the prime minister has already drawn the right conclusions from his mistakes, and should therefore be treated leniently. But even today it seems doubtful that Olmert would score so much as a passing grade in Dror's test.

"A new radical approach is needed to defend our homes," Dror writes about the problem with the Gaza Strip, "by posing harsher deterrence together with preemptive strikes ... No entity which isn't a state, and is not susceptible to deterrence, must be allowed to possess an offensive array like Hezbollah's ballistic capabilities. A similar ability must not be allowed to emerge in Palestine."

Yet the professor does not support imposing a total boycott on Hamas, nor is he in favor of preconditioning negotiations with Syria on demands that it abandon support for terrorism.

The political scientist has presented six "urgent recommendations which must and can be followed regardless of other avenues of oversight and investigation." A substantial part of these recommendations can be found in the Winograd interim report, which was released last April. Almost nothing has been done since then.

In the preface to his report for the Begin-Sadat Center, Dror wrote that the document had been written before he had been appointed to the committee. He promised that after the committee concludes its work, he will have the right to update and publish the document.

Now that the committee's other members have silenced him, this is no longer his right - but rather his duty.

Cap 4-Nota 27

**All the dreams we had are now gone by Shahar Smooha, Haaretz, 21.07.2007**

NEW YORK - Even on a steaming hot day such as descended on New York last Monday, the Middle East looks very far away from the office of James D. Wolfensohn, 29 stories above Sixth Avenue in Manhattan. Construction staff in work boots, wearing hip-hugging tool belts, are still working industriously to complete the renovations - Wolfensohn is renting the entire floor. That will happen very soon, at which time Wolfensohn, 73, who was president of the World Bank for 10 years (1995-2005) and then spent 11 months as the Middle East envoy of the Quartet (the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations), will launch his new adventure. His sons are now working to raise \$500 million to develop alternative fuel sources, and he will head up the vast new fund.

Wolfensohn's period in the Middle East has left its mark on him. He may have left Israel and the Palestinian territories at the end of April 2006, but Israel and the territories have not yet left him. Which is understandable.

An Australian-born American Jew, Wolfensohn arrived in the region three months before the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, brimming with good intentions. His decade as head of the World Bank, his relaxed temperament and his intimate acquaintance with the leaders of the Quartet made him an ideal candidate for the post of special envoy. His father, who served with the Jewish Battalions in World War I, planted emotional ties to Zionism and the region in his heart.

Wolfensohn landed in the Middle East in May 2005 in order to monitor the Israeli disengagement from Gaza and to help heal the badly ailing Palestinian economy. In the beginning he was full of hope: He was able to raise \$9 billion (\$3 billion a year for three years) to bolster the Palestinian economy, and in November 2005, three months after the disengagement, he served as the mediator between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in negotiations on transit routes and on access to and from the Gaza Strip. He also donated money of his own to help the Palestinians buy Israeli-owned greenhouses in Gaza.

However, the departure of Ariel Sharon from the political arena in January 2006, the fact that Wolfensohn's efforts were constantly undermined by none other than the U.S. administration, and the rise of Hamas to power combined to derail his mission. At the end of April 2006, fed up with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, and after understanding that he would not get backing from the Quartet, he decided to pack it in. He returned to the United States, where he divides his

time between Manhattan and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and tried to leave the failed mission behind him.

For more than a year, Wolfensohn kept his feelings about his year in the Middle East to himself. He watched, appalled, as the disengagement plan failed and as violence continued to rage in the region. It was only after the recent takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas and the appointment of former British prime minister Tony Blair to the post he held that Wolfensohn agreed to speak on the record. Indeed, the impression is that he considers it his duty to do so.

#### Lost dreams

Even before he is asked about his reaction to Blair's appointment as the Quartet's emissary, Wolfensohn opens the conversation with something of a self-justification: "I don't think that when negotiations are going on at various different levels - and I'm reasonably well informed about what's going on - that intervention by a third party really adds much."

The current situation in the Middle East leaves him in despair. "I think it was certainly easier in that glowing moment when there appeared to be an agreement that would give hope to the Palestinians and security to the Israelis - and you need to have both. You need to have a secure Israel, which is very clear, and you need to have a Palestinian community that feels it can have hope. The polls show that Israelis and Palestinians have such a balance - they'd like to come to a deal on borders, they'd like to reach a situation in which each can get on with their lives and live side by side for centuries. I think the average person, whether it be Hamas or Fatah, or religious or not religious, would love to settle down and live.

"I think that there was a framework for that in the agreement that Condi [Condoleezza] Rice announced in my presence and in the presence of the European representative Javier Solana," Wolfensohn continues. "But in the months following, every aspect of the agreement was abrogated. In fact, the sadness of it is that the last remaining aspect - the opening to Egypt [via the border crossing] - has seen the international observers reducing their representation because of non-usage [of the terminal]. So all the dreams that we had then have now gone, and beyond that you now have an elected Hamas government and a split with Fatah and [PA Chairman] Abu Mazen, with a new prime minister, and you've got Hamas in Gaza. So we have an added difficulty in that we don't have two parties now, we have three. And one with whom neither of the other two wishes to deal."

However, in Wolfensohn's view, none of the sides can allow itself to observe from afar the new reality that has emerged in the region and to wait for it to change. "The reality is that you have 1.4 million Palestinians living in Gaza and you can't wish them away, you can't leave Gaza as a place where the rich and the intellectuals and the powerful can get out, and leave just the people who can't make a living - or can make a living if they could, but have no leadership. And military use or subjugation doesn't solve the problem, it seems to me."

It is Wolfensohn's view that "in the interest of Israel, in the interest of the Palestinians, there is a need to get things back to a situation where there is representation of all the Palestinian people in an entity that can deal with Israel to bring about, if Israel wishes, a two-state solution, which appears to be a thing Secretary [of State] Rice is now committed to." The situation, he says, cannot simply "be allowed to lie there, because just pretending that 1.4 million people can live in a sort of prison is not a solution at all. So I think it's going to require, on the part of Tony Blair or someone, some real negotiations to try and get this started."

Asked about another possible way out of the deadlock - with Israel taking the initiative and exerting pressure on the Palestinian population to rid itself of the Hamas leadership, or assassinating the organization's leaders in order to pave the way for Fatah to take control again - Wolfensohn shrugs his shoulders. "I'm not at all sure that Israel can determine what happens in Palestine, the Palestinian territories. There's been no evidence up to now that a decision taken by the Israelis will determine what the Palestinians do. I don't think personally that a military solution is a solution," he says dryly.

Corruption at the crossings

Wolfensohn sounds hurt and disappointed as he describes the slide into violence after the disengagement from Gaza. "Part of the reason it happened, in my view, is that the conditions in Gaza deteriorated so terribly," he explains. "If you recall, in the time of the withdrawal there was a day or two of people looting, but within 48 hours it was under control. Things were peaceful in Gaza, and this was not because of a military presence of the Israelis. It was because the Palestinians recognized that if they want to have any hope, they need to be in a more peaceful mode."

He toured the Gaza Strip with Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) immediately after the PA asserted its authority there, and recalls a euphoric atmosphere that dissipated very quickly.

"I remember seeing the greenhouses with the chairman and looking at the fruits and everything, and there was a joyous atmosphere: 'Boy, we're about to get this going and we're going to have hotels by the beaches and we're going to have tourism and it's going to be fantastic, and the Palestinians really know how to be hosts.' But in the months afterward, first of all Arik [Sharon] became ill and the current prime minister came in, and there was a clear change of view."

At that time, Wolfensohn recalls, powerful forces in the U.S. administration worked behind his back: They did not believe in the border terminals agreement and wanted to undermine his status as the Quartet's emissary. The official behind this development, he says, was Elliot Abrams, the neoconservative who was appointed deputy national security adviser in charge of disseminating democracy in the Middle East - "and every aspect of that agreement was abrogated."

The non-implementation of the agreement naturally had serious economic consequences. According to Wolfensohn, the shattering of the great hope of normality, which the Palestinians experienced so deeply when the Israel Defense Forces and the settlers left the Gaza Strip, brought about the rise of Hamas. "Instead of hope, the Palestinians saw that they were put back in prison. And with 50 percent unemployment, you would have conflict. This is not just a Palestinian issue. If you have 50 percent of your people with no work, chances are they will become annoyed. So it's not, in my opinion, that Palestinians are so terrible; it is that they were in a situation where a modulation of views between one and the other became impossible.

"And you can blame the Palestinians because there were those among them who were firing rockets or you can blame the Israelis for overreacting," he continues. "But either way - whichever side you take - the situation that emerged was that you had 50 percent of the population frustrated, no resources, and a border which was corrupt on both sides. I saw it with my own eyes: Israelis and Palestinians, arm in arm, walking off together and clearly pricing how you could get your truck to the top of the line or get it through at all. It was an absolutely transparently corrupt system at the border - you had to buy your truck's way across. I thought it was a disgrace."

The issue of the greenhouses is especially painful to Wolfensohn because of his personal contribution to them. "Everything was rotting because you couldn't get the fruit. And if you went to the border, as I did many times, and saw tomatoes and fruit just being dumped on the side of the road, you would have to say that if you were a Palestinian farmer you'd be pretty upset. So my view is to try and not demonize the Palestinians. I'm not denying that there are Palestinians who fire rockets and do terrible things; I know that that happens. But to get a fundamental solution, you have to have hope on both sides."

Wolfensohn is not naive. He knows that the Hamas election victory in January 2006 did not derive only from the collapse of the border-crossings agreement after the disengagement, but also from the years-long corruption of the Fatah leadership. He says he cautioned Fatah representatives with whom he was in contact about this danger, but they ignored him.

"Fatah wasn't that popular at the time. A lot of people thought that the Fatah leadership was overpaid. The Palestinians, at least, did. They thought they had a dishonest leadership - not, I think, at the level of Abu Mazen, but at a ministerial level. They felt that there was an elite class that was taking advantage of the situation, and that the only way they could get some improvement was by electing a group that, at least at the time, was perceived as straightforward. My own opinion is that the decision to move to Hamas was partly ideological, but partly because of the failure of the Fatah leadership. I know that to be the case and so does everybody who was there." Wolfensohn had

discussions with the Fatah leadership, he says, "but at the time they were pretty self-confident. If you look at [Mohammed] Dahlan, the people who were there, the informal leaders - there wasn't a lot of talk about Hamas ousting them."

Didn't they think it was a problem for them to drive their shiny Mercedes through refugee camps?

Wolfensohn: "I thought it was and said so many times. It's not only that, it's also the building of the big houses, the private armies. They said their polls showed that they'd win. What can you do? I'm an outsider. For any outsider there's a level to which you cannot penetrate."

Even though Wolfensohn identified the danger already then - in contrast to many observers and commentators, who see America's insistence on holding democratic elections in the PA as the factor that enabled Hamas to become so strong - he does not view this as a mistake. "I think that's a very hard question to answer, because although it's pretty clear that the tide had turned in terms of support for Hamas, there had been a promise of elections. I think probably that I, too, would have taken the position to press on, in the hope that the outcome might have been different."

### Surprised by Bush

James Wolfensohn was born in Sydney, Australia in 1933. He is a graduate of the faculty of law of the University of Sydney, was the captain of the Australian fencing team at the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne, and served as an officer in the Royal Australian Air Force. After the Olympics he entered Harvard Business School, emerging with an MBA. He was then employed briefly by the Swiss-based cement company Holderbank (now Holcim), before returning to Australia and working in a number of banking firms, specializing in investments.

His principal employer in this period was the investment bank J. Henry Schroders. He served as a senior executive in the institution's London headquarters before becoming the managing director of its New York branch, a post he held from 1970 until 1976. Afterward Wolfensohn held a senior position with Salomon Brothers, the Wall Street investment bank.

In the 1970s, he became friends with the cellist Jacqueline du Pre and began to study the instrument with her when he was 41. He continues to take this hobby seriously and performs on various occasions. Wolfensohn says that if peace is ever attained between Israel and the Palestinians, he has an agreement in principle with Ehud Barak ("I like Ehud Barak, but that's largely because he's a pianist") and with a Palestinian violinist to give a joint concert.

Wolfensohn became an American citizen in 1980 and was already then considered a candidate to head the World Bank, after the tenure of Robert McNamara. When this did not happen, he established an investment firm bearing his name, and devoted much of his time to philanthropic activity. Among other public service activities, he was chairman of Carnegie Hall in New York and of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington.

In 1995, he was nominated by then-U.S. president Bill Clinton to be president of the World Bank, and won the unreserved support of the bank's board. His term was unanimously extended for another five years in 2005, making him the third person to hold the presidency for two consecutive terms (after Eugene Black and McNamara). During his term of office, Wolfensohn placed the emphasis on changing the institution's organizational culture, focusing attention not only on making loans, but also on creating economic growth in the Third World and reducing the rate of poverty throughout the world. He was surprised, he says, that President George Bush let him continue as president of the World Bank, instead of appointing one of his people to the post.

"No Democratic appointee kept his job, and he wanted to put in [Paul] Wolfowitz, so it was clear to me that I couldn't stay a day longer at the World Bank," he reveals. "It was very clear that it wasn't personal. It was practice. But they then asked me if I'd take on this other term, which was hugely unusual and I have no idea why it happened. I was very surprised, and delighted."

### 'Small print'

According to James Wolfensohn, the major blame for the failure of his Middle East mission lies with him. "I feel that if anything, I was stupid for not reading the small print," he admits. "I was

never given the mandate to negotiate the peace." The mandate he received, he says - which is identical to the one Tony Blair has now been given - was solely to try to improve the economic situation in the territories and to improve the Palestinians' situation in general, whereas he naively thought that this included intervention to advance peace.

"To be quite honest with you, I was so anxious to try to help. I was getting out of the World Bank, and I thought, you know, this is a good place to start. I was full of ideas and good intent, and everybody would see me and they would all discuss the peace process with me. I was given enough rope so that I could go to the G7 [meetings of finance ministers from seven industrialized nations] and see any leader that I wanted, and when I got out of the bank I just continued, not because of the need to see them, but because I thought this job was pretty good, because I was really helping to do something that I was keenly interested in."

In 2005, Wolfensohn's access to the G7 leaders may have made it easier for him to extract from them a commitment for a \$9-billion package to ameliorate the situation of the Palestinian economy. However, he says, afterward Condoleezza Rice and Elliot Abrams made it very clear to him that intervention in peace negotiations was not within his purview. "I had to fight my way into the November [2005] meeting when Secretary Rice announced the six-point plan. I was there with Javier Solana when it was announced, and what I didn't realize was that that was the death penalty, because after that the Israelis and the Americans took apart that agreement one by one, and I knew less and less what was happening. And my team of 18 people was fired. So I was left with no office and no people, and even though they asked me to stay on, it was pretty clear to me that the only thing to do was to get out."

Asked whether the disengagement plan was not one big mistake, because of its unilateral character and because Israel has been attacked relentlessly from the Gaza Strip since its implementation, Wolfensohn waxes nostalgic for Ariel Sharon. "I don't think it was a mistake, if it had been followed by the second part of the disengagement - to create a self-sustaining entity that could be the first step to Palestinian statehood that could allow the Palestinians to live their lives and develop a sense of national integrity. That was an opportunity that was missed, and at the heart of it was Arik [Sharon]. He was an unlikely negotiator of peace because of his record, but I have to say that personally I found him very pragmatic. I can't say that he was fond of Palestinians, but he knew that for the future, you couldn't have an Israel full of Palestinians. That demographic imperative made it essential that there would be some kind of two-state solution."

Sharon, Wolfensohn continues, "was hugely suspicious of me, as he was of the Quartet, but in the end he accepted me and I think I knew what was in his mind. I think he saw the Gaza withdrawal as a very positive thing. When Condi [Rice] came over for those meetings in November [2005], he and I at that stage were becoming pretty good friends. He got up from the table where he was sitting with Condi - and that's something he never did - came across to my table and gave me a hug. He was prime minister, so it was for me to [rise to] greet him, but he did it in a very obvious way. I think personally that he had the strength and the standing, and in my opinion the determination to move through with the two-state solution.

"I don't blame [Prime Minister Ehud] Olmert. He doesn't have the strength or the leadership that Arik had. Arik, as you remember, confronted the nation and said, 'If you want to attack someone, attack me.' Ehud [Olmert] has not had the standing and his popularity is quite low," Wolfensohn adds, smiling.

"I have no doubts that I may have made tactical, strategic mistakes, but the basic problem was that I didn't have the authority. The Quartet had the authority, and within the Quartet it was the Americans who had the authority. It was not a Quartet decision to close the office," he explains, in a very unsubtle hint. "There was never a desire on the part of the Americans to give up control of the negotiations, and I would doubt that in the eyes of Elliot Abrams and the State Department team, I was ever anything but a nuisance."

Not such a big deal



Wolfensohn is convinced that he was also perceived as a nuisance by Olmert and by Dov Weissglas, Sharon's close adviser, who stayed on in the initial period after Sharon was incapacitated by a stroke. Wolfensohn feels that he may have been able to wield influence in matters of little importance, but that he did not have access to the real decision makers after Sharon's departure. "I was mature enough to understand that at the main gate, I had no position," he says.

"My worry for Tony Blair is that if you read the mandate he has - it's exactly the same as mine. It talks about helping both sides, helping the Palestinians, but there's nothing there about negotiating peace. I would only hope that there's a greater mandate given to him, because even with the superior standing that he has over the standing I had, if he doesn't have a mandate ... If halfway through the negotiations your office is closed and someone takes over the negotiations, you have to say you failed," Wolfensohn says, breaking into loud, bitter laughter.

Did you speak with Blair after his appointment?

"I have no comment on that."

How do you assess his chances?

"Better than mine were. He is closer to George Bush. He was prime minister. I do not believe there's much time. I think it is difficult. But we're fortunate to have somebody with experience."

Precisely because he views himself as an analyst who observes the global arena from a bird's-eye view, Wolfensohn is convinced that the Palestinians - and even more, the Israelis - cannot allow themselves to waste time. He also disputes the prevailing concept in the region, which holds that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is central to the future of the world.

"In the end, both sides have to recognize that they are 11 million people in a sea of 350 million Arabs," Wolfensohn says, and goes on to illustrate the proportions numerically: "Over the last four years, the war in Israel and Palestine has cost the international community - including military expenditure - somewhere between \$10 and \$20 billion. The Iraq war has cost \$600 billion. The Afghanistan war has cost between \$50 billion and \$100 billion. You have a nuclear threat in Iran, you have the issue of Syria and which way it goes, and you have a doubling of the Arab population in something like between 10 and 15 years. So instead of 350 million, there will be 700 million. Israel may grow from six million to eight million, if they're lucky, or nine million.

"There has to be a moment when Israelis and Palestinians understand that they are a sideshow," Wolfensohn continues. "The real global politics is the politics of war and the politics of nuclear weaponry and the weight of the population. In the Western press the Israeli-Palestinian conflict gets a lot of coverage, but you should see the press in the developing countries, as I did when I visited more than 140 countries: It's not such a big deal there. I don't see any way to argue that Israel's position is improving."

Wolfensohn carefully avoids giving a reply to the question of whether the continuation of the conflict and the worsening of Israel's situation are liable to produce a regime with apartheid characteristics. At the same time, he notes that Israel has for some time been suffering from a brain drain, and adds that when the country reaches junctures of major decisions, the strength of the security establishment always overcomes that of the civil forces in society.

"The expenses on military and intelligence in Israel are probably greater than in any democracy I know of, and I can understand that, given the situation, but as a continuing characteristic of the country, I don't think it's hopeful. To me it is so bloody sad that all the creativity you have in Israeli youth has to go through this experience in the army, risking their lives," Wolfensohn says, casting his gaze far beyond Central Park. "Israeli youth finish high school and spend two-three years in the army, and then go to Thailand and other places and smoke pot to get over it, then come back and start their lives when they're 24. I don't think that's an ideal way for the next generation of Israel to live their lives."

Did your mission in Israel change the way you perceive Zionism and Israel?

"No. I still believe in that. But Israelis and Palestinians really should get over thinking that they're a show on Broadway. They are a show in the Village, off-off-off-off Broadway. I hope I don't get into too much trouble for saying this, but what the hell, that's what I believe, and I'm 73."

Cap 4-Nota 29

**Palestinian Holocaust Richard Falk, TFF Associate, June 29, 2007**

And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?  
William Butler Yeats, The Second Coming

There is little doubt that the Nazi Holocaust was as close to unconditional evil as has been revealed throughout the entire bloody history of the human species. Its massiveness, unconcealed genocidal intent, and reliance on the mentality and instruments of modernity give its enactment in the death camps of Europe a special status in our moral imagination. This special status is exhibited in the continuing presentation of its gruesome realities through film, books, and a variety of cultural artifacts more than six decades after the events in question ceased. The permanent memory of the Holocaust is also kept alive by the existence of several notable museums devoted exclusively to the depiction of the horrors that took place during the period of Nazi rule in Germany.

Against this background, it is especially painful for me, as an American Jew, to feel compelled to portray the ongoing and intensifying abuse of the Palestinian people by Israel through a reliance on such an inflammatory metaphor as 'holocaust.' The word is derived from the Greek *holos* (meaning 'completely') and *kaustos* (meaning 'burnt'), and was used in ancient Greece to refer to the complete burning of a sacrificial offering to a divinity. Because such a background implies a religious undertaking, there is some inclination in Jewish literature to prefer the Hebrew word 'Shoah' that can be translated roughly as 'calamity,' and was the name given to the 1985 epic nine-hour narration of the Nazi experience by the French filmmaker, Claude Lanzmann. The Germans themselves were more antiseptic in their designation, officially naming their undertaking as the 'Final Solution of the Jewish Question.' The label is, of course, inaccurate as a variety of non-Jewish identities were also targets of this genocidal assault, including the Roma and Sinti ('gypsies'), Jehovah Witnesses, gays, disabled persons, political opponents.

Is it an irresponsible overstatement to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalized Nazi record of collective atrocity? I think not. The recent developments in Gaza are especially disturbing because they express so vividly a deliberate intention on the part of Israel and its allies to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty. The suggestion that this pattern of conduct is a holocaust-in-the-making represents a rather desperate appeal to the governments of the world and to international public opinion to act urgently to prevent these current genocidal tendencies from culminating in a collective tragedy. If ever the ethos of 'a responsibility to protect,' recently adopted by the UN Security Council as the basis of 'humanitarian intervention' is applicable, it would be to act now to start protecting the people of Gaza from further pain and suffering. But it would be unrealistic to expect the UN to do anything in the face of this crisis, given the pattern of US support for Israel and taking into account the extent to which European governments have lent their weight to recent illicit efforts to crush Hamas as a Palestinian political force.

Even if the pressures exerted on Gaza were to be acknowledged as having genocidal potential and even if Israel's impunity under America's geopolitical umbrella is put aside, there is little assurance that any sort of protective action in Gaza would be taken. There were strong advance signals in 1994 of a genocide to come in Rwanda, and yet nothing was done to stop it; the UN and the world watched while the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of Bosnians took place, an incident that the World Court described as 'genocide' a few months ago; similarly, there have been repeated allegations of genocidal conduct in Darfur over the course of the last several years, and hardly an

international finger has been raised, either to protect those threatened or to resolve the conflict in some manner that shares power and resources among the contending ethnic groups.

But Gaza is morally far worse, although mass death has not yet resulted. It is far worse because the international community is watching the ugly spectacle unfold while some of its most influential members actively encourage and assist Israel in its approach to Gaza. Not only the United States, but also the European Union, are complicit, as are such neighbors as Egypt and Jordan apparently motivated by their worries that Hamas is somehow connected with their own problems associated with the rising strength of the Muslim Brotherhood within their own borders. It is helpful to recall that the liberal democracies of Europe paid homage to Hitler at the 1936 Olympic Games, and then turned away tens of thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. I am not suggesting that the comparison should be viewed as literal, but to insist that a pattern of criminality associated with Israeli policies in Gaza has actually been supported by the leading democracies of the 21st century.

To ground these allegations, it is necessary to consider the background of the current situation. For over four decades, ever since 1967, Gaza has been occupied by Israel in a manner that turned this crowded area into a cauldron of pain and suffering for the entire population on a daily basis, with more than half of Gazans living in miserable refugees camps and even more dependent on humanitarian relief to satisfy basic human needs. With great fanfare, under Sharon's leadership, Israel supposedly ended its military occupation and dismantled its settlements in 2005. The process was largely a sham as Israel maintained full control over borders, air space, offshore seas, as well as asserted its military control of Gaza, engaging in violent incursions, sending missiles to Gaza at will on assassination missions that themselves violate international humanitarian law, and managing to kill more than 300 Gazan civilians since its supposed physical departure.

As unacceptable as is this earlier part of the story, a dramatic turn for the worse occurred when Hamas prevailed in the January 2006 national legislative elections. It is a bitter irony that Hamas was encouraged, especially by Washington, to participate in the elections to show its commitment to a political process (as an alternative to violence) and then was badly punished for having the temerity to succeed. These elections were internationally monitored under the leadership of the former American president, Jimmy Carter, and pronounced as completely fair.

Carter has recently termed this Israeli/American refusal to accept the outcome of such a democratic verdict as itself 'criminal.' It is also deeply discrediting of the campaign of the Bush presidency to promote democracy in the region, an effort already under a dark shadow in view of the policy failure in Iraq.

After winning the Palestinian elections, Hamas was castigated as a terrorist organization that had not renounced violence against Israel and had refused to recognize the Jewish state as a legitimate political entity. In fact, the behavior and outlook of Hamas is quite different. From the outset of its political Hamas was ready to work with other Palestinian groups, especially Fatah and Mahmoud Abbas, to establish a 'unity' government. More than this, their leadership revealed a willingness to move toward an acceptance of Israel's existence if Israel would in turn agree to move back to its 1967 borders, implementing finally unanimous Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Even more dramatically, Hamas proposed a ten-year truce with Israel, and went so far as to put in place a unilateral ceasefire that lasted for eighteen months, and was broken only to engage in rather pathetic strikes mainly taking place in response to Israeli violent provocations in Gaza. As Efraim Halevi, former head of Israel's Mossad was reported to have said, 'What Israel needs from Hamas is an end to violence, not diplomatic recognition.' And this is precisely what Hamas offered and what Israel rejected.

The main weapon available to Hamas, and other Palestinian extremist elements, were Qassam missiles that resulted in producing no more than 12 Israeli deaths in six years. While each civilian death is an unacceptable tragedy, the ratio of death and injury for the two sides is so unequal as to call into question the security logic of continuously inflicting excessive force and

collective punishment on the entire beleaguered Gazan population, which is accurately regarded as the world's largest 'prison.'

Instead of trying diplomacy and respecting democratic results, Israel and the United States used their leverage to reverse the outcome of the 2006 elections by organizing a variety of international efforts designed to make Hamas fail in its attempts to govern in Gaza. Such efforts were reinforced by the related unwillingness of the defeated Fatah elements to cooperate with Hamas in establishing a government that would be representative of Palestinians as a whole. The main anti-Hamas tactic relied upon was to support Abbas as the sole legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, to impose an economic boycott on the Palestinians generally, to send in weapons for Fatah militias and to enlist neighbors in these efforts, particularly Egypt and Jordan. The United States Government appointed a special envoy, Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton, to work with Abbas forces, and helped channel \$40 million to buildup the Presidential Guard, which were the Fatah forces associated with Abbas.

This was a particularly disgraceful policy. Fatah militias, especially in Gaza, had long been wildly corrupt and often used their weapons to terrorize their adversaries and intimidate the population in a variety of thuggish ways. It was this pattern of abuse by Fatah that was significantly responsible for the Hamas victory in the 2006 elections, along with the popular feelings that Fatah, as a political actor, had neither the will nor capacity to achieve results helpful to the Palestinian people, while Hamas had managed resistance and community service efforts that were widely admired by Gazans.

The latest phase of this external/internal dynamic was to induce civil strife in Gaza that led a complete takeover by Hamas forces. With standard irony, a set of policies adopted by Israel in partnership with the United States once more produced exactly the opposite of their intended effects. The impact of the refusal to honor the election results has after 18 months made Hamas much stronger throughout the Palestinian territories, and put it in control of Gaza. Such an outcome is reminiscent of a similar effect of the 2006 Lebanon War that was undertaken by the Israel/United States strategic partnership to destroy Hezbollah, but had the actual consequence of making Hezbollah a much stronger, more respected force in Lebanon and throughout the region.

The Israel and the United States seemed trapped in a faulty logic that is incapable of learning from mistakes, and takes every setback as a sign that instead of shifting course, the faulty undertaking should be expanded and intensified, that failure resulted from doing too little of the right thing, rather than is the case, doing the wrong thing. So instead of taking advantage of Hamas' renewed call for a unity government, its clarification that it is not against Fatah, but only that "[w]e have fought against a small clique within Fatah," (Abu Ubaya, Hamas military commander), Israel seems more determined than ever to foment civil war in Palestine, to make the Gazans pay with their wellbeing and lives to the extent necessary to crush their will, and to separate once and for all the destinies of Gaza and the West Bank.

The insidious new turn of Israeli occupation policy is as follows: push Abbas to rely on hard-line no compromise approach toward Hamas, highlighted by the creation of an unelected 'emergency' government to replace the elected leadership. The emergency designated prime minister, Salam Fayyad, appointed to replace the Hamas leader, Ismail Haniya, as head of the Palestinian Authority. It is revealing to recall that when Fayyad's party was on the 2006 election list its candidates won only 2% of the vote. Israel is also reportedly ready to ease some West Bank restrictions on movement in such a way as to convince Palestinians that they can have a better future if they repudiate Hamas and place their bets on Abbas, by now a most discredited political figure who has substantially sold out the Palestinian cause to gain favor and support from Israel/United States, as well as to prevail in the internal Palestinian power struggle.

To promote these goals it is conceivable, although unlikely, that Israel might release Marwan Barghouti, the only credible Fatah leader, from prison provided Barghouti would be willing to accept the Israeli approach of Sharon/Olmert to the establishment of a Palestinian state. This latter step is doubtful, as Barghouti is a far cry from Abbas, and would be highly unlikely to

agree to anything less than a full withdrawal of Israel to the 1967 borders, including the elimination of West Bank and East Jerusalem settlements.

This latest turn in policy needs to be understood in the wider context of the Israeli refusal to reach a reasonable compromise with the Palestinian people since 1967. There is widespread recognition that such an outcome would depend on Israeli withdrawal, establishment of a Palestinian state with full sovereignty on the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as capital, and sufficient external financial assistance to give the Palestinians the prospect of economic viability. The truth is that there is no Israeli leadership with the vision or backing to negotiate such a solution, and so the struggle will continue with violence on both sides.

The Israeli approach to the Palestinian challenge is based on isolating Gaza and cantonizing the West Bank, leaving the settlement blocs intact, and appropriating the whole of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. For years this sidestepping of diplomacy has dominated Israeli behavior, including during the Oslo peace process that was initiated on the White House lawn in 1993 by the famous handshake between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat.

While talking about peace, the number of Israeli settlers doubled, huge sums were invested in settlement roads linked directly to Israel, and the process of Israeli settlement and Palestinian displacement from East Jerusalem was moving ahead at a steady pace. Significantly, also, the 'moderate' Arafat was totally discredited as a Palestinian leader capable of negotiating with Israel, being treated as dangerous precisely because he was willing to accept a reasonable compromise. Interestingly, until recently when he became useful in the effort to reverse the Hamas electoral victory, Abbas was treated by Israel as too weak, too lacking in authority, to act on behalf of the Palestinian people in a negotiating process, one more excuse for persisting with its preferred unilateralist course.

These considerations also make it highly unlikely that Barghouti will be released from prison unless there is some dramatic change of heart on the Israeli side. Instead of working toward some kind of political resolution, Israel has built an elaborate and illegal security wall on Palestinian territory, expanded the settlements, made life intolerable for the 1.4 million people crammed into Gaza, and pretends that such unlawful 'facts on the ground' are a path leading toward security and peace.

On June 25, 2007 leaders from Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority met in Sharm El Sheik on the Red Sea to move ahead with their anti-Hamas diplomacy. Israel proposes to release 250 Fatah prisoners (of 9,000 Palestinians currently held) and to hand over Palestinian revenues to Abbas on an installment basis, provided none of the funds is used in Gaza, where a humanitarian catastrophe unfolds day by day. These leaders agreed to cooperate in this effort to break Hamas and to impose a Fatah-led Palestinian Authority on an unwilling Palestine population. Remember that Hamas prevailed in the 2006 elections, not only in Gaza, but in the West Bank as well. To deny Palestinian their right of self-determination is almost certain to backfire in a manner similar to similar efforts, producing a radicalized version of what is being opposed. As some commentators have expressed, getting rid of Hamas means establishing al Qaeda!

Israel is currently stiffening the boycott on economic relations that has brought the people of Gaza to the brink of collective starvation. This set of policies, carried on for more than four decades, has imposed a sub-human existence on a people that have been repeatedly and systematically made the target of a variety of severe forms of collective punishment. The entire population of Gaza is treated as the 'enemy' of Israel, and little pretext is made in Tel Aviv of acknowledging the innocence of this long victimized civilian society.

To persist with such an approach under present circumstances is indeed genocidal, and risks destroying an entire Palestinian community that is an integral part of an ethnic whole. It is this prospect that makes appropriate the warning of a Palestinian holocaust in the making, and should remind the world of the famous post-Nazi pledge of 'never again.'

Cap 4-Nota29

**Alvaro de Soto, End of Mission Report, may 2007**

<http://www.ism-italia.org/autori/altre-nazionalita/alvaro-de-soto/>

Cap 4-Nota 30

**I diplomatici delle Nazioni Unite e le regole dell' "impero": le verità scomode di Alvaro de Soto, James D. Wolfensohn, John Dugard, Richard Falk e Matt Svensson di Diana Carminati**

Seminario "*Le democrazie occidentali e la pulizia etnica della Palestina*"

Torino, 5- 6 maggio 2008

Da molti anni in Italia, ma in particolare dal 2006, si rileva nel discorso pubblico sulla questione Palestina/Israele, nei media, nei dibattiti, negli interventi dei politici, e in generale anche nelle analisi di parte dei gruppi del movimento pacifista un appiattimento/congelamento su alcuni punti ritenuti imprescindibili:

- l'unica soluzione possibile è quella dei 2 stati per 2 popoli (Road Map)
- l'impossibilità di un dialogo con Hamas "entità nemica", come governo di terroristi
- la piena legalità del nuovo governo palestinese di Salam Fayyad nominato nell'estate 2007, dopo il cosiddetto "colpo" di Stato di Hamas a Gaza. [Senza l'approvazione del Parlamento]
- il 'dovere' di riconoscere il diritto all'esistenza dello stato d'Israele,
- il sicuro esito positivo di negoziati, che si protraggono all'infinito, fra i leader israeliani e palestinesi, con la mediazione equidistante delle democrazie occidentali.

Sui giornali italiani si leggono molti articoli sulle cronache più drammatiche, che restano cronache.

Pochi gli interventi delle due parti ma solo fra gli intellettuali accreditati, quelli ritenuti 'moderati', pochissimi articoli di analisi della realtà sul terreno. Un'assoluta omologazione del discorso con l'accettazione delle verità che provengono dalle dichiarazioni ufficiali dei governi dell'"impero" e dei suoi alleati. Ma leggendo nelle riviste politiche on line in lingua inglese fra le più accreditate, che accolgono gli scritti sul M.O. e non solo, degli studiosi e analisti politici, si notano le differenze, le molte voci di critica sulla politica dei governi occidentali e del governo israeliano.

Articoli in cui si possono trovare parole, molto spesso tabù in Italia, come 'pulizia etnica', 'genocidio', campo di concentramento, apartheid, sino a quella bruciante in Europa, di 'olocausto' palestinese<sup>1</sup>, [e per evitare immediate strumentalizzazioni ricordo l'uso più frequente e meno esclusivo di questo termine fra gli studiosi di lingua inglese per descrivere altre situazioni, come per es. nel libro del sociologo e urbanista americano Mike Davis e nel suo titolo "Olocausti tardovittoriani" (pubblic.in Italia 2002), relativo al genocidio dei nativi operato dall'imperialismo inglese nelle sue colonie, in particolare in India. Parole che si riferiscono a realtà tragiche nella storia di cui alcuni studiosi hanno iniziato a vedere la ricomparsa in questa fase e a costruire i percorsi genealogici<sup>2</sup>. Si possono ricordare anche le minacce fatte ai palestinesi da Matan Vilnai, ministro israeliano a fine di febbraio scorso, che ha usato la parola Shoah.]

A queste analisi si sono aggiunte nell'ultimo anno più frequenti, le voci di alcuni 'addetti ai lavori', i diplomatici dell'ONU che lavorano nelle commissioni dei diritti umani e che denunciano le menzogne della politica occidentale per quanto riguarda il M.O. e in particolare la situazione nei territori occupati di Palestina.

Espongo qui alcune di queste voci

**Alvaro de Soto**

Alvaro de Soto, è un diplomatico peruviano, con una lunga esperienza diplomatica in varie parti del mondo (Nicaragua, Cipro, Thailandia, Sahara ecc)

<sup>1</sup> V. articolo di Richard Falk, "Il percorso strisciante verso l'olocausto palestinese" in TSPFR, il 29 giugno 2007.

<sup>2</sup> V. Federico Rahola, *Conflitti globali*, n. 4

E' stato coordinatore speciale delle NU per il MEPP (Middle East Peace Process)  
Rappresentante personale del Segretario Generale ONU presso il PLO e PA (Palestinian Liberation Organisation) e Palestinian Authority.

E' stato inviato speciale ONU nel Quartetto della Road Map dal maggio 2005 al maggio 2007

La Road Map era stata 'immaginata' dal Dipartimento di Stato USA nel 2002 e organizzata nel 2003, con un percorso suddiviso in tre fasi e avrebbe dovuto terminare a fine 2005 con la creazione di uno stato palestinese indipendente ed effettivo, "viable".

De Soto scrive il suo rapporto, datato 5 maggio 2007, che viene pubblicato su "The Guardian" il 13 giugno 2007, in cui descrive la mutata la situazione sul terreno nei Territori palestinesi occupati e a Gaza in pochissimi mesi, già dal 2005, mutamento non solo locale ma che presenta cambiamenti per la problematica della regione. Fra gli eventi principali descritti in breve sintesi quelli che segnano un punto di svolta decisivo:

A) IL RITIRO UNILATERALE ISRAELIANO DALLA STRISCIA DI GAZA, da parte di Sharon ("la fuga in avanti").

Sulla decisione del ritiro unilaterale da parte di Sharon, de Soto afferma: "Esso non segnò in nessun modo una conversione di Sharon all'idea di uno stato palestinese indipendente e effettivo (viable), ma fu una mossa spettacolare che mise nella 'formaldeide' la Road Map.

Di messa in "formaldeide" aveva parlato molto chiaramente il capo dello staff di Sharon, Dov Weisglass in un'intervista con Ari Shavit su Ha'aretz del 8 ottobre 2004<sup>3</sup>.

Che afferma: "Ho posposto questo incubo dei coloni indefinitamente. Questo è il significato di quanto abbiamo fatto. Il significato è il congelamento del processo politico. E quando congeli quel processo impedisce il costituirsi di uno stato palestinese e impedisce la discussione sui profughi, i confini e la questione di Gerusalemme". [su questo punto e sulle iniziative per congelare la Road Map da parte del consigliere del Dipartimento di Stato USA, Elliot Abrams insieme a Dov Weisglass si può trovare conferma nell'art. di Kathleen Christison<sup>4</sup>, analista CIA per 35 anni in M.O. e nel libro di Tanya Reinhart in "The Road Map to Nowhere. Israel/Palestine since 2003", Verso 2006 (in francese, *L'héritage de Sharon*, La fabrique éditions, 2006), non ancora pubblicato in Italia].

Tutta questa manovra, scrive de Soto, servì ad ottenere concessioni vitali da USA (assicurazioni per il non ritiro dei coloni e rifiuto al ritorno dei profughi palestinesi, prosecuzione della costruzione del muro e degli insediamenti nella Cisgiordania).

B) 26 GENNAIO 2006: LE ELEZIONI NEI TERRITORI PALESTINESI OCCUPATI E STRISCIA DI GAZA

1) In una breve introduzione ai fatti De Soto descrive l'accordo negoziale al Cairo del marzo 2005 tra Fatah, Hamas e fazioni palestinesi per organizzare elezioni nei territori e a Gaza.

Erano elezioni importanti perché da 9 anni non si votava più e questa era una delle condizioni della prima fase della Road Map anche perché Hamas, movimento di opposizione armato, ma ormai molto radicato nella società, accettava di partecipare e di trasformarsi da gruppo militante armato in gruppo che accettava la dinamiche politiche del processo democratico.

Si guardava a queste elezioni come tappa nell'evoluzione dei palestinesi verso la democrazia. In Israele si continua a non essere d'accordo (Sharon nell'estate all'Assemblea dell'ONU minaccia di non gradire Hamas nel programma elettorale). Abu Mazen da parte sua afferma che vincerà e inizierà a disarmare i gruppi armati. Ma era importante che Hamas, benché indicato dopo il 2001, come gruppo terrorista, fosse coinvolto in un processo politico ed elettorale e poiché avrebbe avuto seggi in un Parlamento democraticamente eletto, avrebbe dovuto essere sostenuto nella sua evoluzione e quindi avrebbero dovuto essere aperti spazi di dialogo. Così, nel

<sup>3</sup> Citato in T. Reinhart, *The Road Map to Nowhere*, Verso 2006.

<sup>4</sup> K. Christison, "Thoughts on the Attempted Murder of Palestine. The Siren Song of Elliot Abrams" in Counterpunch, 26.7.2007

settembre 2005 dopo discussioni e dopo colloqui telefonici con Abu Mazen, il Quartetto delibera che si è favorevoli a lasciar liberi tutti i palestinesi di partecipare alle elezioni.

Con la vittoria di Hamas vi sono le immediate reazioni di USA

Il 30 gennaio 2006 vi è una riunione urgente del Quartetto a Londra. Escono intanto comunicati da parte degli americani Elliot Abrams e David Welch (che è sia assistente segretario nel Dipartimento di Stato, sia inviato USA nel Quartetto), che indicano pressioni fatte in particolare sui diplomatici ONU, anche con sinistre allusioni a tagliare da parte USA i budget dei programmi ONU se il Segret. Generale non avesse avallato posizioni USA e cioè che “ogni futura assistenza per ogni nuovo governo sarebbe stata rivista dai donatori sulla base dell’accettazione da parte del nuovo governo) dei principi di non violenza, il riconoscimento del diritto a esistere di Israele, l’accettazione dei precedenti accordi e obblighi, inclusa la Road Map”<sup>5</sup>

Su questi punti cedono i rappresentanti EU e Russia: e benché De Soto sostenga una posizione diversa viene approvata quella americana.

De Soto afferma che da quel momento viene sempre più snaturata l’essenza del Quartetto, che si trasforma in un “*gruppo dedicato solo a imporre sanzioni su di un governo democraticamente eletto da un popolo sotto occupazione e a definire impossibili pre-condizioni per il dialogo*” (p.19).

#### I RISULTATI DI QUESTA POLITICA SUI PALESTINESI E SULLA PROSPETTIVA DELLA SOLUZIONE 2 POPOLI 2 STATI

Inizia immediatamente quasi il blocco dei finanziamenti dei donatori e il blocco da parte di Israele del trasferimento all’Autorità nazionale palestinese dei diritti di dogana e delle tasse pagate dai palestinesi (v. protocollo di Parigi negli accordi di Oslo con il PLO) e che sono la maggior risorsa dell’Autorità palestinese per il pagamento degli stipendi agli impiegati nelle strutture istituzionali della AP (settori insegnanti, medici ecc) significano la sottrazione alla AP delle capacità di pagare i servizi e quindi di dare servizi alla popolazione, in violazione di tutti gli obblighi di uno stato occupante su una popolazione occupata. De Soto dice: “E quello è denaro palestinese”.

De Soto cita poi una pronta dichiarazione di C. Rice per la delegittimazione immediata di Hamas: “Hamas non è “all’altezza delle responsabilità di governo” e risponde “come fa un governo a governare quando è privato degli attributi della sua sovranità (tasse, controllo dei confini, accesso alle risorse, monopolio uso della forza).

Vi sono pressioni e ricatti di Usa e Israele per un ri-allineamento dei palestinesi “moderati” sulle posizioni occidentali e per una emarginazione di Hamas dalla politica e società palestinese. Esse creano forti disagi nella leadership di Fatah, che decide di non entrare nel governo con Hamas. De Soto scrive che si sarebbe potuto da subito invece formare un Governo di Unità nazionale ed evitare danni alle istituzioni politiche e sofferenze alla popolazione.

Ma la politica americana e soprattutto il Dipartimento di Stato con Elliot Abrams, consigliere speciale per il M.O. e David Welch sono fermamente decisi da subito a bloccare un governo di Hamas. De Soto non analizza il periodo dell’estate 2006 con l’assedio di Gaza, i ripetuti bombardamenti, e la guerra di Israele contro il Libano. Non rientra nella politica del Quartetto.

Ricorda brevemente:

- l’inverno 2006-07 e l’inizio delle gravi violenze fra Fatah e Hamas.
- l’incontro dei due leaders alla Mecca nel marzo 2007, la proposta di un governo di unità nazionale
- la formazione di un Governo di Unità Nazionale nell’aprile 2007

Sulla politica USA e il programma israelo-americano di organizzare la guerra civile fra Fatah e Hamas, ricordiamo l’articolo apparso su Electronic Intifada di Virginia Tilley, docente di relazioni Internazionali all’Università di Johannesburg, “*Chi ha fatto il colpo di stato a Gaza?*”, 18

<sup>5</sup> P. 18. Su Elliott Abrams e sulle sue immediate iniziative insieme a Dov Weisglass, capo dello staff di Sharon, subito dopo la definizione della Road Map e per il suo congelamento, scrive K. Christison ivi e vedi ancora T. Reinhart



giugno 2007 e quello di Kathleen Christison, analista CIA per 35 anni ed esperta di Medio Oriente “*Thoughts on the Attempted Murder of Palestine. The Siren Song of Elliot Abrams*” in Counterpunch il 26.7.2007 e negli ultimi mesi la ricerca di David Rose “The Middle East. The Gaza Bombshell” pubblicata in “Vanity fair”, aprile 2008, sul “colpo di stato” a Gaza del giugno 2007, colpo tentato da Fatah, nella persona di Mohamed Dahlan, capo dei servizi di sicurezza Fatah, ampliamento finanziato dagli USA e Israele per dividere politica e società palestinese. E per ora riuscito.

Di questa ricerca e analisi i giornali italiani non hanno scritto, salvo i brevi articoli di “il manifesto”, “Liberazione”, “il Riformista”.

Nel maggio 2007 De Soto finisce il suo mandato e si dimette.

#### I GIUDIZI SULLA POLITICA DEL QUARTETTO E SULLA SUA ‘ESSENZA’

Che cos’è il Quartetto?

De Soto definisce la politica occidentale sul M. Oriente come “The Big Game”, il grande Gioco, dell’imperialismo inglese a fine ‘800, descritto da Kipling.

Esso funziona come un “gruppo di amici” degli USA, anche se “gli USA non sentono la necessità di consultarsi strettamente con il Quartetto ad eccezione di quando gli conviene”. Gli Usa sono uno dei maggiori e indispensabili “giocatori” in M.O., insieme a Israele, ma è anche vero che Israele non vorrebbe nessun terzo come mediatore. Il suo governo si sente perfettamente capace di trattare con i suoi interlocutori, “senza intermediari, molte grazie”.<sup>6</sup>

Mentre i palestinesi gradirebbero invece avere gli USA come mediatori forti, come terza parte.

Come può funzionare una partecipazione reale del Quartetto (e cioè delle democrazie occidentali e ONU) quando in realtà i giochi sono già fatti e chi decide è USA e Israele? E prendono iniziative al di sopra delle risoluzioni ONU e del diritto internazionale?

Inoltre, in questa situazione di diplomazia reticente e di situazione sul terreno così favorevole Israele non permetterà mai la costituzione di uno Stato palestinese autonomo e effettivo (“viable”) perché gioca su alcune pre-condizioni e precisamente:

a) sul riconoscimento di Israele del suo diritto ad esistere, come? come stato ebraico, cosa che viene spesso omessa sui giornali. E soprattutto entro quali confini? Anche nei territori occupati?

Israele sapeva/sa perfettamente che Hamas non potrebbe mai accettare questa condizione posta in questo modo. E’ perciò, scrive, una richiesta ‘fasulla’ [*a sham*].

A sua volta Israele non ha mai riconosciuto in precedenza il diritto a esistere di uno stato palestinese, o il diritto dei palestinesi ad avere uno stato, ma poi quale? Entro quali confini? In quali dei territori occupati? Perché finora è stato riconosciuto il PLO e l’AP come interlocutori, e allora l’equivalente sarebbe riconoscere solo il governo israeliano come legittimo rappresentante del popolo ebraico.

Per tutti questi motivi, questa pre-condizione (prima del negoziato), afferma de Soto è una scusa per non iniziare il negoziato.

b) sull’altra precondizione, il problema sicurezza, egli afferma, Israele non sarà mai sicuro perché con la sua politica di oppressione e violenza “incoraggia” la violenza dei palestinesi<sup>7</sup>.

Afferma come la dinamica occupazione/resistenza, il ciclo di violenza/repressione, “stagione dopo stagione, raccolgono ciò che seminano” e come nelle continue perquisizioni nei quartieri e nelle case “*Quanti futuri martiri per quartiere si possono collocare in una pre-lista fra i bambini e adolescenti che vedono i loro genitori umiliati dai soldati israeliani che irrompono con violenza nelle loro case?*”. E su questo tema indagava, qualche anno fa, il puntuale documentario “Arna’s Children”, del regista israeliano Julian Mer Khamis.

<sup>6</sup> P. 25

<sup>7</sup> p. 29 “*Israeli policies (...) seem perversely designed to encourage the continued action by palestinian militants*”

Certo, aggiunge e denuncia, ci sono anche i ‘maestri’ dei martiri, che agiscono a sangue freddo, che vivono spesso all’estero e per essi non c’è nessuna scusa. Ma Israele conduce bene la sua campagna contro il terrorismo.

#### L’ONU E IL SUO RUOLO NEL QUARTETTO

Ma anche “NOI come ONU siamo responsabili” e cita una dichiarazione di Kofi Annan nel 2003: siamo colpevoli nel Quartetto e non possiamo sfuggire alle nostre responsabilità con i nostri giochi di prestidigitazione verbale e con le nostre incertezze.

Egli si chiede quale ruolo ha e dovrebbe avere l’ONU nel Quartetto, quale ruolo il Segretario Generale (e quindi il suo inviato). Dovrebbe avere una posizione autonoma, essere in grado di parlare con tutti i rappresentanti dei paesi come un “insieme”, sostenere il diritto internazionale e le risoluzioni ONU, ma invece non è così.

Avere la libertà di dialogare con Hamas e con i leader siriani. Ma non ha mai avuto la possibilità di dialogare con questi. Una più ‘robusta’ posizione dell’ONU rispetto al dialogo coi leader di Hamas avrebbe significato un loro minor irrigidimento, e insieme un tentativo di mediazione con i servizi di sicurezza Fatah-Hamas.

Emergono le contraddizioni della politica ONU, la sua miopia politica, le debolezze. Gli unici che veramente hanno giocato un ruolo politicamente importante con Hamas sono stati Norvegia e Svizzera. Ma non erano paesi-membri del Quartetto.

*“Non abbiamo ruoli, noi dell’ONU nel processo di pace (MEPP), come non li hanno EU e Russia”.*

Egli non vede nessun miglioramento per ora delle politiche ONU in M.O. <sup>8</sup>

E allora consiglia di ‘ridimensionare’ il Segretario Generale a un ruolo di “osservatore”, che dà consigli e indicazioni ma che non possa essere associabile a posizioni già prese, né responsabile di esse. In ogni caso è meglio denunciare tutto ciò e dire che “il re è nudo”.

Si dimette nell’aprile 2007 per fine mandato ma anche per dissensi con il Segretario generale ONU Ban Ki-Moon che appoggia le pre-condizioni richieste dagli israeliani.

**James D. Wolfensohn** (da un’ intervista all’inviato di Ha’aretz il 21 luglio 2007)

In questa situazione lavora anche James D. Wolfensohn, australiano di nascita, ebreo-americano, con esperienze nel mondo della finanza internazionale che viene nominato alla presidenza della World Bank dal 1995 al 2005.

Dall’agosto del 2005 è inviato speciale del Quartetto per il ritiro da Gaza e per il coordinamento della ripresa economica palestinese.

In realtà Wolfensohn viene nominato su richiesta di Condoleeza Rice come inviato USA e con maggior ampiezza di mandato a scapito di altri. Il giudizio di de Soto sulla sua attività è molto buono ma Wolfensohn viene quasi subito bloccato da israeliani e USA (sono suoi i tentativi di far funzionare l’accordo AMA (Movimento e Accesso nei Territori e Gaza) del 15.11.08, fallito per le difficoltà di far funzionare gli accordi sul confine di Rafah . Egli descrive il ruolo debole della EU e gli arbitrii di Israele che impedisce ai controllori europei il passaggio per Rafah . In pratica l’accordo (AMA) fallisce soprattutto per opera dei consiglieri americani Abrams e Welch e il confine passa tutto sotto il controllo degli israeliani, nonostante l’incarico dato a forze di polizia internazionale (e carabinieri italiani). Riprendono le chiusure dei terminal commerciali, in modo da creare blocchi nell’esportazione ed importazione delle merci.

Nell’intervista racconta del suo impegno entusiasta nel ruolo di inviato del Quartetto.

Nei primi mesi dopo il ritiro riesce a raccogliere 9 miliardi di dollari (3 ogni anno per 3 anni) per rimettere in sesto l’economia palestinese. Descrive i primi mesi di forti speranze per l’agricoltura a Gaza con le serre rimesse a posto con gli aiuti dei donori (anch’egli fra questi). Ma enormi sono le

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<sup>8</sup> Vedi in queste settimane come il viaggio di Carter a Damasco (a parlare con Khaled Meshal) e altri paesi arabi, è stato giudicato con violenza o ridicolizzato da USA e Israele.

difficoltà di movimento per via dei blocchi nelle merci e così le serre vengono chiuse per l'impossibilità di esportare i prodotti in tempo.

Presto si accorge di non avere alcuna possibilità di gestire in modo autonomo il suo mandato, nell'inverno 2005 gli viene tolto il suo team di lavoro (18 persone) e resta solo.

*"The basic problem was that I didn't have the authority. The Quartet had the authority and within the Quartet it was the Americans who had the authority. It was not a Quartet decision to close the office".* E aggiunge: *"I would doubt that in the eyes of Elliot Abrams and the State Department team, I was ever anything but a nuisance"*<sup>9</sup>

Così decide di dimettersi a fine aprile 2006.

Altri diplomatici dell'ONU prendono la parola per denunciare le violazioni di Israele e l'impossibilità per l'ONU di poter agire in modo forte e autorevole.

### **John Dugard**

Fra questi John Dugard, sudafricano, inviato speciale ONU per i Diritti Umani nei territori palestinesi, ha compiuto missioni nei Territori palestinesi per sette anni. L'ultima nell'autunno 2007. Nel gennaio 2008 presenta la sua ultima relazione.

Da essa emerge che la situazione nella striscia di Gaza, ma anche nei Territori palestinesi occupati peggiora in modo ancor più netto: la condizione dei palestinesi è disperata, perché hanno perso anche la fiducia nel fatto che prima o poi si arriverà a una soluzione.

Dugard denuncia il fallimento totale della Road Map e quindi della soluzione di 2 Stati vicini e conviventi in giustizia e pace. Ma così non avviene. E denuncia anche l'impotenza dell'ONU, confermando con De Soto che il Quartetto è pesantemente influenzato dalla politica USA e di Israele.

Nella sezione VIII del rapporto sono descritte le numerose violazioni da parte di Israele, per prima quella indicata dalla Corte Internazionale di Giustizia sulla costruzione del Muro, con la richiesta di smantellamento approvata con parere consultivo dall'Assemblea Generale nel luglio 2004, anche se i singoli stati possono rifiutare di dare la loro approvazione. Egli afferma si sofferma nelle conclusioni su 2 punti:

- La Corte Internazionale di Giustizia è organo giudiziario delle Nazioni Unite. Quando l'Assemblea Generale dà il proprio parere consultivo con una maggioranza schiacciante, questo parere diventa parte della legge delle Nazioni Unite. Come tale il rappresentante delle Nazioni Unite nel Quartetto – il Segretario Generale o il suo rappresentante- è obbligato secondo la legge a far riferimento al parere consultivo e a sforzarsi di fare del suo meglio per garantire il compimento del parere.

-Se al segretario generale (o il suo rappresentante) fosse politicamente impedito di fare ciò avrebbe due scelte: o dimettersi dal Quartetto o spiegare agli altri componenti come "Noi popolo delle Nazioni Unite", per quali ragioni egli è nell'impossibilità di agire e come giustifica il rimanere nel Quartetto alla luce del rifiuto di questo a seguire la legge delle Nazioni Unite.

Dugard lascerà il suo posto per fine mandato nel prossimo mese di giugno 2008 a Richard Falk.

### **Richard Falk**

Richard Falk, professore emeritus di Diritto internazionale all'Università di Princeton e docente di studi internazionali e globali all'Università di California, Santa Barbara fino al 2001. Dal 2001 ha lavorato per la commissione d'inchiesta ONU sui Diritti Umani per i Territori occupati di Palestina. Ora fa parte del UN Human Rights Council.

Sulla situazione nei Territori palestinesi occupati Falk ha dato un giudizio durissimo nell'articolo *"Slouching toward the Palestinian Holocaust"* ("Il cammino strisciante verso

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<sup>9</sup> V. p.7

l'olocausto palestinese" pubblicato il 29 giugno 2007 nel sito del "Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Studies". Dopo aver ricordato l'etimologia delle parole olocausto (sacrificio) e Shoah (catastrofe) e la preferenza data dalle comunità ebraiche mondiali alla parola Shoah, Falk scrive:

*"Su questo sfondo è particolarmente penoso per me, come ebreo americano, sentirmi costretto a descrivere il continuo e accresciuto abuso del popolo palestinese, da parte di Israele, e affidarmi ad una metafora così incendiaria come quella di 'olocausto'".<sup>10</sup>*

E soggiunge:

*(...) E' forse un'affermazione esageratamente irresponsabile? (...) Non credo. I recenti sviluppo a Gaza turbano particolarmente poichè essi esprimono in modo così chiaro un'intenzione deliberata da parte di Israele e dei suoi alleati di sottoporre un'intera comunità umana a condizioni che mettono a rischio la vita e che sono di massima crudeltà. (...) Suggestire da parte mia che questo modello di comportamento sia un olocausto- nel-suo-farsi rappresenta piuttosto un disperato appello ai governi del mondo e all'opinione pubblica internazionale di agire urgentemente per impedire queste attuali tendenze genocidarie che possono finire in una tragedia collettiva.. C'è una norma di 'responsabilità a proteggere', adottata dal Consiglio di Sicurezza delle ONU come base dell' "intervento umanitario", che deve applicata, ma si dovrebbe agire ora per iniziare a proteggere la popolazione di Gaza da ulteriori dolori e sofferenze.*

*Ma sarebbe irrealistico aspettarsi che l'ONU faccia qualcosa di fronte alla crisi, dato il modello di sostegno USA per Israele e tenendo conto in quale misura i governi europei hanno dato il loro contributo ai recenti tentativi illegali di schiacciare Hamas come forza politica palestinese."<sup>11</sup> (...) Rispetto ai massacri in Bosnia e nel Darfur, [la situazione] a Gaza) è moralmente di gran lunga peggiore, benché non risultino ancora morti in massa [ma cosa dire del 3-4 marzo 2008 con l'uccisione di 120 persone di cui il 60% civili (17 bambini e 19 donne)?]. Dopo Annapolis i morti sono oltre 350.*

*E' di gran lunga peggiore poiché la comunità internazionale sta osservando l'orrendo spettacolo che ha di fronte mentre alcuni dei suoi più influenti membri incoraggiano attivamente e assistono Israele nel suo modo di affrontare [il problema] Gaza. Non soltanto gli Stati Uniti ma anche l'Unione europea è complice come lo sono i vicini come l'Egitto e la Giordania a quanto pare motivati dalle preoccupazioni che Hamas sia in qualche modo collegato con i loro problemi con la forza crescente dei Fratelli Musulmani nei loro confini"<sup>12</sup>.*

E ribadisce, a conferma del discorso di De Soto,

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<sup>10</sup> "Against this background, it is especially painful for me, as an American Jew, to feel compelled to portray the ongoing and intensifying abuse of the Palestinian people by Israel through a reliance on such an inflammatory metaphor as 'holocaust.'"

<sup>11</sup> "Is it an irresponsible overstatement to associate the treatment of Palestinians with this criminalized Nazi record of collective atrocity? I think not. The recent developments in Gaza are especially disturbing because they express so vividly a deliberate intention on the part of Israel and its allies to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty.

The suggestion that this pattern of conduct is a holocaust-in-the-making represents a rather desperate appeal to the governments of the world and to international public opinion to act urgently to prevent these current genocidal tendencies from culminating in a collective tragedy. If ever the ethos of 'a responsibility to protect,' recently adopted by the UN Security Council as the basis of 'humanitarian intervention' is applicable, it would be to act now to start protecting the people of Gaza from further pain and suffering. But it would be unrealistic to expect the UN to do anything in the face of this crisis, given the pattern of US support for Israel and taking into account the extent to which European governments have lent their weight to recent illicit efforts to crush Hamas as a Palestinian political force."

<sup>12</sup> "But Gaza is morally far worse, although mass death has not yet resulted. It is far worse because the international community is watching the ugly spectacle unfold while some of its most influential members actively encourage and assist Israel in its approach to Gaza. Not only the United States, but also the European Union, are complicit, as are such neighbours as Egypt and Jordan apparently motivated by their worries that Hamas is somehow connected with their own problems associated with the rising strength of the Muslim Brotherhood within their own borders."

*“ Per oltre quaranta anni dal 1967, Gaza è stata occupata da Israele (...) con più della metà degli abitanti che vivono in miserabili campi di rifugiati e sempre più dipendenti dagli aiuti umanitari per soddisfare i loro bisogni di base. Con grande fanfara, sotto il comando di Sharon, si suppose che Israele terminasse l'occupazione militare e smantellasse gli insediamenti nel 2005.*

*Il processo fu in larga parte una mistificazione poiché Israele mantenne il pieno controllo dei confini, dello spazio aereo, del mare, come pure, come ha dichiarato il controllo militare di Gaza, impegnandosi in violente incursioni, inviando missili su Gaza per missioni di assassinio che violavano la legge umanitaria internazionale e facendo in modo di uccidere più di 300 civili di Gaza dal momento del supposto ritiro.<sup>13</sup> Per questo voglio ammonire con dure parole perché non ci siano “mai più” catastrofi.”*

Si può aggiungere come a fine gennaio 2008 vi sia stata anche la denuncia al Consiglio dei Diritti Umani dell'ONU per le gravi violazioni commesse da Israele a Gaza, che portano a una catastrofe umanitaria, ai “limiti del genocidio”, con una risoluzione adottata con l'approvazione di 30 stati aderenti su 47 (15 astenuti, fra cui Francia, Germania, UK e 1 contrario, Canada) e il boicottaggio delle delegazioni di USA e Israele.

### **Matt Svensson**

Vorrei concludere con l'analisi di Matt Svensson, ex diplomatico svedese dello staff del SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), che, in un articolo del 15 aprile 2008, *“The Making of the Palestinian State. To create something from nothing”*<sup>14</sup>, descrive il forte disagio dei diplomatici ONU che lavorano per la creazione dello stato palestinese, che visitano la striscia di Gaza e quello che resta della Cisgiordania e vedono la situazione effettiva sul terreno.

*“Noi lavoriamo per sostenere il farsi di una nazione. Ogni diplomatico che ha rispetto di se stesso inizia il suo lavoro qui con lo stesso entusiasmo cieco. Un tipo di lavoro che costruisce con molta fiducia e qualche buon giudizio. Come disse un diplomatico nordico una volta “Devo crederci, è il mio lavoro”*<sup>15</sup>

*La comunità internazionale e i suoi funzionari lavorano per realizzare il sogno di sostenere la creazione di uno stato costruito di nulla, senza confini e un popolo stipato in una ambiente simile a un ghetto, senza il controllo palestinese, mentre pezzi di “territorio spariscono uno dopo l'altro e finiscono dalla parte sbagliata del muro”. Il muro viene costruito con gran furia mentre i diplomatici nuotano “insieme ai coloni di Ma'ale Adumim”. Questa colonia che non esisteva nella storia moderna è quasi completata. “La gente vive lì con accesso all'acqua, alle piscine, con alberi di olivo fuori dalle finestre, scuole, cliniche e forse ancora più importante un accesso a Gerusalemme e Tel Aviv in 60 minuti. Molti vivono a Ma'ale Adumim e lavorano a Tel Aviv. E' meno caro, perché la terra è libera”*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *“For over four decades, ever since 1967, Gaza has been occupied by Israel in a manner that turned this crowded area into a cauldron of pain and suffering for the entire population on a daily basis, with more than half of Gazans living in miserable refugees camps and even more dependent on humanitarian relief to satisfy basic human needs. With great fanfare, under Sharon's leadership, Israel supposedly ended its military occupation and dismantled its settlements in 2005. The process was largely a sham as Israel maintained full control over borders, air space, offshore seas, as well as asserted its military control of Gaza, engaging in violent incursions, sending missiles to Gaza at will on assassination missions that themselves violate international humanitarian law, and managing to kill more than 300 Gazan civilians since its supposed physical departure.”*

<sup>14</sup> su Counterpunch del 15 aprile 2008

<sup>15</sup> *“We work with and support nation building. Each diplomatic actor with self-respect begins work with the same blind enthusiasm. The kind of job that builds on very much belief and some good judgment. As a Nordic diplomat said a little while ago, “I have to believe this, it is my job”.*

<sup>16</sup> *While the international community with the most educated civil servants works to realise the dream of supporting the creation of a state built out of nothing, without borders and people crammed into ghetto-like environments without Palestinian de facto control, territory after territory disappears and ends up on the wrong side of the wall.*

*I swim together with settlers from Ma'ale Adumim.. When I return a few hours later, the wall has become somewhat*

Abu Dis, quella che dovrebbe essere la capitale dello stato palestinese, con una densa popolazione, sarà circondata dal Muro su tre parti. *“Ma’ale Adumim e il muro intorno a Abu Dis stanno stabilendo nuovi fatti sul terreno”*.<sup>17</sup>

Svensson soggiunge: *“Noi vediamo tutto ciò. L’intera collettività internazionale è orripilata. Ci domandiamo come questo sia possibile. Vecchi e giovani di diverse posizioni politiche e gruppi religiosi sentono la stessa cosa, percepiscono la stessa impotenza davanti a questi eventi storici.”*<sup>18</sup> Chiede alla comunità internazionale in quale modo le buone intenzioni della cooperazione internazionale allo sviluppo per la costruzione dello stato potranno mai aiutare la popolazione di Abu Dis.<sup>19</sup>

Non ci sono previsioni possibili per questa situazione. Se la comunità internazionale non interverrà in modo rigoroso, se l’opinione pubblica occidentale, disinformata dai media, rimarrà indifferente, se la società civile europea resta paralizzata da discussioni e distinzioni sui contenuti delle iniziative e attraversata da molte divisioni, se gli intellettuali sono chiusi in un mutismo cinico o ipocrita, in ogni caso complice, i Territori palestinesi occupati e la striscia di Gaza diverranno in modo permanente, una di quelle forme-campo, analizzate ancora di recente da Federico Rahola<sup>20</sup> e altri.

*“Zone definitivamente temporanee, luoghi dove sistemare l’umanità in eccesso”* (già analizzati da Arendt a fine anni ’40), umanità che vive in territori ambiti per le risorse e/o per posizione strategica del territorio; umanità che viene ‘sistemata’ con i *dispositivi* di internamento di origine coloniale, strutturatesi nel secolo breve sino alle loro forme più estreme, e ricomparsi nel tempo della società globale.<sup>21</sup>

Forme-campo in cui rinchiudere gli oppositori, i nemici, le non-persone, ridotti alla mera sopravvivenza, allo sfinimento e denutrizione, alla perdita di ogni dignità, un percorso verso la disumanizzazione e la morte. Come nel ‘laboratorio’ Palestina descritto su *“The Nation”* da Naomi Klein che di recente ha affermato<sup>22</sup>.

*“E’ diventata un’abitudine paragonare i ghetti militarizzati di Gaza e Cisgiordania, con i loro muri di cemento, il filo di ferro elettrificato e i checkpoint, al sistema di bantustan in Sudafrica (...). Le analogie sono inquietanti, ma ci sono anche delle differenze. I bantustan sudafricani erano essenzialmente campi di lavoro, un modo per tenere gli africani sotto stretta sorveglianza e controllo, così che lavorassero con pochi soldi nelle miniere. Ciò che Israele ha costruito ora è un sistema progettato per fare l’opposto: impedire alla gente di lavorare, una rete di stalle per milioni di persone etichettate come umanità in sovrappiù”*

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*longer. Ma’ale Adumim, which previously did not exist in our modern history, is soon completed. People live there with access to water, swimming pools, olive groves outside the window, schools, clinics and perhaps most importantly--access to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv just 60 minutes away. Many live in Ma’ale Adumim and work in Tel Aviv. It is cheaper that way, because the land is free.*

<sup>17</sup> *The wall will surround Abu Dis on three sides. Ma’ale Adumim and the wall around Abu Dis are establishing new facts on the ground*

<sup>18</sup> *We know it all. We have seen it all. The whole international collective is horrified. We wonder how it is possible. Young and old from different political alignments and religious groupings experience the same thing, feel the same powerlessness before the historical course of events.*

<sup>19</sup> *A humble question to the international community is in what way the good intention of international development cooperation’s concentration on nation-building will help the people in Abu Dis?*

<sup>20</sup> V. F. Rahola, nel numero 4 della rivista *“Conflitti globali”* 2007

<sup>21</sup> Sul controllo dei corpi cfr. tutta l’opera di M. Foucault e G. Agamben, *Stato di oppressione*, Bollati Boringheri, 2006

<sup>22</sup> nel suo libro *“Shock Economy”*, 2007

Forme-campo su cui il sociologo e antropologo Alessandro Dal Lago è ritornato recentemente sulle pagine de "il Manifesto":

*“Non ci sarà mai uno stato palestinese indipendente, ma due territori-campi, Gaza e Cisgiordania, circondati dal muro, esposti ad ogni attacco da terra e dal cielo. Il Libano come semi-campo. L'Iraq sarà in guerra per anni, mentre occidentali e mercenari si sollazzano nella zona verde. Kabul come campo trincerato. Accampamenti, stati-campo, flussi di guerra e internamenti a macchia. (...) Sulla superficie del globo, gli spazi di internamento si allargano a macchia d'olio”.*<sup>23</sup>

Cap 4-Nota 32

### **Exchange of letters between PM Sharon and President Bush**

14 Apr 2004

During their meeting in Washington, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and US President George Bush exchanged letters aimed at achieving a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians in the context of the Roadmap and the prime minister's Disengagement Plan.

### **Letter from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to US President George W. Bush**

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

The vision that you articulated in your 24 June 2002 address constitutes one of the most significant contributions toward ensuring a bright future for the Middle East. Accordingly, the State of Israel has accepted the Roadmap, as adopted by our government. For the first time, a practical and just formula was presented for the achievement of peace, opening a genuine window of opportunity for progress toward a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, involving two states living side-by-side in peace and security.

This formula sets forth the correct sequence and principles for the attainment of peace. Its full implementation represents the sole means to make genuine progress. As you have stated, a Palestinian state will never be created by terror, and Palestinians must engage in a sustained fight against the terrorists and dismantle their infrastructure. Moreover, there must be serious efforts to institute true reform and real democracy and liberty, including new leaders not compromised by terror. We are committed to this formula as the only avenue through which an agreement can be reached. We believe that this formula is the only viable one.

The Palestinian Authority under its current leadership has taken no action to meet its responsibilities under the Roadmap. Terror has not ceased, reform of the Palestinian security services has not been undertaken, and real institutional reforms have not taken place. The State of Israel continues to pay the heavy cost of constant terror. Israel must preserve its capability to protect itself and deter its enemies, and we thus retain our right to defend ourselves against terrorism and to take actions against terrorist organizations.

Having reached the conclusion that, for the time being, there exists no Palestinian partner with whom to advance peacefully toward a settlement and since the current impasse is unhelpful to the achievement of our shared goals, I have decided to initiate a process of gradual disengagement with the hope of reducing friction between Israelis and Palestinians. The Disengagement Plan is designed to improve security for Israel and stabilize our political and economic situation. It will

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<sup>23</sup> A. Dal Lago, art. del 29 marzo 2008, il Manifesto

enable us to deploy our forces more effectively until such time that conditions in the Palestinian Authority allow for the full implementation of the Roadmap to resume.

I attach, for your review, the main principles of the Disengagement Plan. This initiative, which we are not undertaking under the roadmap, represents an independent Israeli plan, yet is not inconsistent with the roadmap. According to this plan, the State of Israel intends to relocate military installations and all Israeli villages and towns in the Gaza Strip, as well as other military installations and a small number of villages in Samaria.

In this context, we also plan to accelerate construction of the Security Fence, whose completion is essential in order to ensure the security of the citizens of Israel. The fence is a security rather than political barrier, temporary rather than permanent, and therefore will not prejudice any final status issues including final borders. The route of the Fence, as approved by our Government's decisions, will take into account, consistent with security needs, its impact on Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities.

Upon my return from Washington, I expect to submit this Plan for the approval of the Cabinet and the Knesset, and I firmly believe that it will win such approval.

The Disengagement Plan will create a new and better reality for the State of Israel, enhance its security and economy, and strengthen the fortitude of its people. In this context, I believe it is important to bring new opportunities to the Negev and the Galilee. Additionally, the Plan will entail a series of measures with the inherent potential to improve the lot of the Palestinian Authority, providing that it demonstrates the wisdom to take advantage of this opportunity. The execution of the Disengagement Plan holds the prospect of stimulating positive changes within the Palestinian Authority that might create the necessary conditions for the resumption of direct negotiations.

We view the achievement of a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians as our central focus and are committed to realizing this objective. Progress toward this goal must be anchored exclusively in the Roadmap and we will oppose any other plan.

In this regard, we are fully aware of the responsibilities facing the State of Israel. These include limitations on the growth of settlements; removal of unauthorized outposts; and steps to increase, to the extent permitted by security needs, freedom of movement for Palestinians not engaged in terrorism. Under separate cover we are sending to you a full description of the steps the State of Israel is taking to meet all its responsibilities.

The government of Israel supports the United States efforts to reform the Palestinian security services to meet their roadmap obligations to fight terror. Israel also supports the American's efforts, working with the International Community, to promote the reform process, build institutions and improve the economy of the Palestinian Authority and to enhance the welfare of its people, in the hope that a new Palestinian leadership will prove able to fulfill its obligations under the roadmap.

I want to again express my appreciation for your courageous leadership in the war against global terror, your important initiative to revitalize the Middle East as a more fitting home for its people and, primarily, your personal friendship and profound support for the State of Israel.

Sincerely,

Ariel Sharon

**Letter from US President George W. Bush to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon**

His Excellency

Ariel Sharon

Prime Minister of Israel

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter setting out your disengagement plan.



The United States remains hopeful and determined to find a way forward toward a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. I remain committed to my June 24, 2002 vision of two states living side by side in peace and security as the key to peace, and to the roadmap as the route to get there.

We welcome the disengagement plan you have prepared, under which Israel would withdraw certain military installations and all settlements from Gaza, and withdraw certain military installations and settlements in the West Bank. These steps described in the plan will mark real progress toward realizing my June 24, 2002 vision, and make a real contribution towards peace. We also understand that, in this context, Israel believes it is important to bring new opportunities to the Negev and the Galilee. We are hopeful that steps pursuant to this plan, consistent with my vision, will remind all states and parties of their own obligations under the roadmap.

The United States appreciates the risks such an undertaking represents. I therefore want to reassure you on several points.

First, the United States remains committed to my vision and to its implementation as described in the roadmap. The United States will do its utmost to prevent any attempt by anyone to impose any other plan. Under the roadmap, Palestinians must undertake an immediate cessation of armed activity and all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere, and all official Palestinian institutions must end incitement against Israel. The Palestinian leadership must act decisively against terror, including sustained, targeted, and effective operations to stop terrorism and dismantle terrorist capabilities and infrastructure. Palestinians must undertake a comprehensive and fundamental political reform that includes a strong parliamentary democracy and an empowered prime minister.

Second, there will be no security for Israelis or Palestinians until they and all states, in the region and beyond, join together to fight terrorism and dismantle terrorist organizations. The United States reiterates its steadfast commitment to Israel's security, including secure, defensible borders, and to preserve and strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or possible combination of threats.

Third, Israel will retain its right to defend itself against terrorism, including to take actions against terrorist organizations. The United States will lead efforts, working together with Jordan, Egypt, and others in the international community, to build the capacity and will of Palestinian institutions to fight terrorism, dismantle terrorist organizations, and prevent the areas from which Israel has withdrawn from posing a threat that would have to be addressed by any other means. The United States understands that after Israel withdraws from Gaza and/or parts of the West Bank, and pending agreements on other arrangements, existing arrangements regarding control of airspace, territorial waters, and land passages of the West Bank and Gaza will continue.

The United States is strongly committed to Israel's security and well-being as a Jewish state. It seems clear that an agreed, just, fair and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue as part of any final status agreement will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel.

As part of a final peace settlement, Israel must have secure and recognized borders, which should emerge from negotiations between the parties in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338. In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli populations centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949, and all previous efforts to negotiate a two-state solution have reached the same conclusion. It is realistic to expect that any final status agreement will only be achieved on the basis of mutually agreed changes that reflect these realities.

I know that, as you state in your letter, you are aware that certain responsibilities face the State of Israel. Among these, your government has stated that the barrier being erected by Israel should be a security rather than political barrier, should be temporary rather than permanent, and therefore not prejudice any final status issues including final borders, and its route should take into account, consistent with security needs, its impact on Palestinians not engaged in terrorist activities.

As you know, the United States supports the establishment of a Palestinian state that is viable, contiguous, sovereign, and independent, so that the Palestinian people can build their own future in accordance with my vision set forth in June 2002 and with the path set forth in the roadmap. The United States will join with others in the international community to foster the development of democratic political institutions and new leadership committed to those institutions, the reconstruction of civic institutions, the growth of a free and prosperous economy, and the building of capable security institutions dedicated to maintaining law and order and dismantling terrorist organizations.

A peace settlement negotiated between Israelis and Palestinians would be a great boon not only to those peoples but to the peoples of the entire region. Accordingly, the United States believes that all states in the region have special responsibilities: to support the building of the institutions of a Palestinian state; to fight terrorism, and cut off all forms of assistance to individuals and groups engaged in terrorism; and to begin now to move toward more normal relations with the State of Israel. These actions would be true contributions to building peace in the region.

Mr. Prime Minister, you have described a bold and historic initiative that can make an important contribution to peace. I commend your efforts and your courageous decision which I support. As a close friend and ally, the United States intends to work closely with you to help make it a success.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Cap 4-Nota 33

**U.S. turns up heat on Israel over settlements by Barak Ravid, Haaretz Correspondent, Haaretz, 08.03.2009**

Israel is under increased pressure from the United States over settlement construction. In the past month, since Barack Obama was sworn in as U.S. president, Israel has received four official complaints from members of the new administration regarding various issues linked to West Bank settlements.

A senior government official in Jerusalem told Haaretz that the complaints represent a gradual increase in American pressure vis-a-vis settlement activity. "This is going to be one of the main issues that the Obama administration will be dealing with in the coming weeks and months," the official said. "It is not going to be easy to argue with them."

The American complaints were relayed to Jerusalem via senior officials in the State Department as well as the National Security Council, which seek clarifications and explanations from Israel.

The four separate complaints relate to the demolition of Palestinian-owned homes in East Jerusalem, reports of Israeli plans to construct additional housing in the E1 area, between Maaleh Adumim and Jerusalem, the relocation of the illegal outpost at Migron to a new, as-yet unbuilt neighborhood of the Adam settlement and to plans to build thousands of new residential units in the settlement of Efrat.

"Thus far," the Israeli official said, "the issue has been raised by senior officials, but it is going to go higher up the hierarchy. It is a safe bet that special envoy George Mitchell will raise the matter when he makes his next visit to the Middle East in a few weeks, after the Netanyahu government is sworn in."

There was an additional embarrassing incident between Jerusalem and Washington over the weekend, against the backdrop of comments by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton against the demolition of Arab homes in East Jerusalem. Clinton said during her visit to Ramallah that house demolitions "do not help the peace process" and violate the spirit of the road map.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat responded by briefing foreign correspondents. According to the Washington Post, Barkat described Clinton's comments as "a lot of air" and claimed that Clinton had been misled by the Palestinians. "I totally reject the criticism," Barkat said. "It is a lot of air. There is no substance. Maybe it is because there is a new administration in the States. I am not willing to say the houses will remain houses. It is the wrong signal to send to people who break the law," he added.

In response to Barkat's criticism, the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv and sources close to Clinton were quick to relay strongly-worded protests to the Prime Minister's Office; they described Barkat's comments as "an insult" to the Secretary of State. On Friday afternoon, in a highly unusual step, the PMO issued a clarification in which Barkat claimed that his comments were taken out of context and that the articles in the U.S. press were "inaccurate and incorrect."

According to the Prime Minister's Office, Barkat even claimed that his comments were not directed at Clinton but rather at the false Palestinian arguments. "We regret any implication that Secretary of State Clinton was in any way being criticized," read the statement. Clinton met briefly with Barkat during her visit to Israel last week, despite her aides' concerns that meeting with him could land her in hot water because of the disputed status of Jerusalem.

Cap 4-Nota 33

**Report: EU accuses Israel of `pursuing illegal annexation` of East Jerusalem, By Haaretz Service, 7 marzo, 2009**

The Guardian: Confidential document says Israel's actions weakening support for peace talks. A confidential EU report accuses Israel of "actively pursuing the illegal annexation" of East Jerusalem, the British newspaper the Guardian reported early Saturday.

The Guardian reported that the EU document accuses Israel of using settlement expansion, the security barrier in the West Bank, Palestinian house demolitions and discriminatory housing policies to gain control over East Jerusalem.

The report, obtained by the Guardian, is dated December 15, 2008. It acknowledges Israel's legitimate security concerns in Jerusalem, but says: "Many of its current illegal actions in and around the city have limited security justifications."

The report goes on to say that Israel has accelerated its plans for East Jerusalem, and is undermining the Palestinian Authority's credibility and weakening support for peace talks. "Israel's actions in and around Jerusalem constitute one of the most acute challenges to Israeli-Palestinian peace-making," says the document, EU Heads of Mission Report on East Jerusalem.

The Guardian reports that the EU is particularly concerned about the Old City, where there were plans to build 35 new housing units in the Muslim quarter, as well as expansion plans for Silwan, just outside the Old City walls.

Israel demolished two Palestinian homes on Monday just before the arrival of U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton. Eighty-eight more houses are scheduled for demolition, all for lack of permits.

Clinton described the demolitions as "unhelpful," noting that they violated Israel's obligations under the U.S. "road map" for peace.

The EU report goes further, saying the demolitions "illegal under international law, serve no obvious purpose, have severe humanitarian effects, and fuel bitterness and extremism."

Cap 4-Nota 33

**Confidential European Union report, published by British paper, claims settlement expansion, house demolitions indicate active, illegal takeover of east Jerusalem, Ynet News, 03.07.09**

According to the European Union, Israel is trying to take over east Jerusalem. A confidential EU report, described Saturday morning by the British paper the Guardian, declares that the Israeli government is "actively pursuing the illegal annexation" of the eastern part of the city.

**Planned Demolitions**

Palestinians protest Israeli demolition orders / Associated Press

Shops, schools remain closed in West Bank, east Jerusalem after municipality orders demolition of 88 illegally built homes in Silwan neighborhood

Full Story

The Guardian quotes the report as saying that "Israeli 'facts on the ground' - including new settlements, construction of the barrier, discriminatory housing policies, house demolitions, restrictive permit regime and continued closure of Palestinian institutions - increase Jewish Israeli presence in East Jerusalem, weaken the Palestinian community in the city, impede Palestinian urban development and separate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank."

The document, the EU Heads of Mission Report of East Jerusalem, also states that "Israel's actions in and around Jerusalem constitute one of the most acute challenges to Israeli-Palestinian peace-making," the Guardian noted.

Despite noting that some government actions, such as the construction of the barrier, have been undertaken to increase Israeli security, the EU document claims that "many of its current illegal actions in and around the city have limited security justifications."

For example, the EU report says that the recent demolition of two Palestinian homes and plans for the demolition of dozens more (all on the grounds that they lack building permits) are "illegal under international law, serve no obvious purpose, have severe humanitarian effects, and fuel bitterness and extremism."

The document notes that although Palestinians in the east represent 34% of the city's residents, only 5%-10% of the municipal budget is spent in their areas and only 12% of east Jerusalem is available for Palestinian residential use. As a result, the majority of homes are built without Israeli permits, in areas with poor services and infrastructure, the Guardian reported.

According to the British paper, the EU expressed particular concern about settlements inside the Old City, where there were plans to build a Jewish settlement of 35 housing units in the Muslim quarter, as well as expansion plans for Silwan, just outside the Old City walls.

The Guardian quoted Jerusalem city officials as calling the reports of the city's housing policy as "a disinformation campaign."

"Mayor Nir Barkat continues to promote investments in infrastructure, construction and education in East Jerusalem, while at the same time upholding the law throughout West and East Jerusalem equally without bias," the mayor's office was reported as saying.

Cap 4-Nota 34

**The Sinking Ship of U.S. Imperial Designs By Gilbert Achcar, August 07, 2006**

"The defeat of Hezbollah would be a huge loss for Iran, both psychologically and strategically. Iran would lose its foothold in Lebanon. It would lose its major means to destabilize and inject itself into the heart of the Middle East. It would be shown to have vastly overreached in trying to establish itself as the regional superpower. The United States has gone far out on a limb to allow Israel to win and for all this to happen. It has counted on Israel's ability to do the job. It has been disappointed.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has provided unsteady and uncertain leadership.... His search for victory on the cheap has jeopardized not just the Lebanon operation but America's confidence in Israel as well."

Charles Krauthammer, Washington Post, August 4, 2006

"But the administration now has to admit what anyone -- including myself -- who believed in the importance of getting Iraq right has to admit: Whether for Bush reasons or Arab reasons, it is not happening, and we can't throw more good lives after good lives.... But second best is leaving Iraq. Because the worst option -- the one Iran loves -- is for us to stay in Iraq, bleeding, and in easy range to be hit by Iran if we strike its nukes.... We need to deal with Iran and Syria, but from a position of strength -- and that requires a broad coalition. The longer we maintain a unilateral failing strategy in Iraq, the harder it will be to build such a coalition, and the stronger the enemies of freedom will become."

Thomas Friedman, New York Times, August 4, 2006

Everyday that passes shows more of those who enthusiastically supported the Bush administration's imperial drive in the Middle East leaving its sinking ship. There can be no doubt any longer that what many had forecast long ago is proving absolutely true: the Bush administration will definitely go down in history as the clumsiest crew that ever stood at the helm of the American Empire.

Bush and his cronies have already secured their position in the collective memory as the grave-diggers of U.S. post-Cold War imperial ambitions: they have accomplished the incomparable feat of squandering the exceptionally favorable conditions that U.S. imperialism faced since the other world colossus started crumbling from 1989 on. They have wasted the unique window of opportunity that the same Krauthammer quoted above had called in 1990 the "unipolar moment." But they have wasted it because they were inspired by precisely the same imperial hubris that has distinguished the likes of Krauthammer and Friedman.

The lead-article in a recent issue of Time magazine, published before the start of Israel's new Lebanon war, heralded "the end of cowboy diplomacy" -- it took note of the obvious fact that "the Bush Doctrine foundered in the principal place the U.S. tried to apply it":

"Though no one in the White House openly questions Bush's decision to go to war in Iraq, some aides now acknowledge that it has come at a steep cost in military resources, public support and credibility abroad. The Administration is paying the bill every day as it tries to cope with other crises. Pursuing the forward-leaning foreign policy envisioned in the Bush Doctrine is nearly impossible at a time when the U.S. is trying to figure out how to extricate itself from Iraq. Around the world, both the U.S.'s friends and its adversaries are taking note -- and in many cases, taking advantage -- of the strains on the superpower. If the toppling of Saddam Hussein marked the high-water mark of U.S. hegemony, the past three years have witnessed a steady erosion in Washington's ability to bend the world to its will." [1]

The authors' most serious grievance was stated as follows:

"As it turns out, Iraq may prove to be not only the first but also the last laboratory for preventive war. Instead of deterring the rulers in Tehran and Pyongyang, the travails of the U.S. occupation may have emboldened those regimes in their quest to obtain nuclear weapons while constraining the U.S. military's ability to deter them."

This very bitter assessment was accompanied in the Time article by the same hope that was shared by the large chorus of U.S. allies, protégés and clients: for all of them, with the outstanding exception of the Israeli government, the fact that the most prominent neocons of the Bush administration have been pushed aside nurtured the hope that a new salutary course of the administration's foreign policy was in gestation. The reshuffle that went along with George W. Bush's second term, despite the exit of realist-in-chief Colin Powell who, anyway, had quite limited influence on the administration, seemed indeed to confirm the "twilight of the neocons" that some Clintonites had announced two years ago. [2]

However, what the Time authors announced as marking the end of "cowboy diplomacy" -- "a strategic makeover is evident in the ascendancy of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice" --

proved to be no more than wishful thinking almost as soon as it was printed, in light of the events that unfolded subsequently as Israel launched its most brutal aggression. Cowboy diplomacy, it turned out, had just been replaced with cowgirl diplomacy -- essentially the same.

True, Condoleezza Rice did her best to put some make-up on the face of the Bush administration's foreign policy, but there was no significant shift in substance. A pillar of this administration since its inception, she shares the same delusions of grandeur and folly of overreaching designs that characterize the rest of the team. Put in charge of the State department for Bush's second term, Rice's mission consisted primarily in sealing off the many leaks in the administration's foreign policy ship: it was indeed a mission impossible. The ship is sinking inexorably in the dark waters of the Iraqi oil slick.

The U.S. "hyperpower" that is able to knock down any other regular army on earth -- the hyperpower whose military expenditure exceeds that of the 200+ states that constitute the rest of the world, and whose military budget alone exceeds the GDP of all other countries but for 14 of them -- proved one more time in contemporary history that it is unable to control rebellious populations. For that, all the sophisticated killing gadgetry that the Pentagon possesses is of very limited help. Controlling populations involves troops: it is a kind of industry where labor-force can hardly be replaced with hardware. That is why, incidentally, dictatorships are relatively more at ease in this business, as they can mobilize at will from their populations and don't fear paying a high price in soldiers' lives.

The U.S. proved unable to control Vietnam with a much higher rate of occupation troops to inhabitants than is the case in Iraq. And yet, U.S. military power is today much greater than at the time of Vietnam in all respects except the one that is most crucial for occupation endeavors: troops. The number of U.S. troops has been radically cut since Vietnam and the end of the Cold War. Inspired by a spirit typical of the capitalism of the automation age, the Pentagon believed that it could make up for the unreliability of human resources by depending heavily on sophisticated weaponry -- the so-called "revolution in military affairs." It thus entered in the age of "post-heroic" wars as they were aptly called by a maverick analyst of military affairs. [3] And, it did not take much trouble indeed for the U.S. to defeat "post-heroically" the Iraqi army of Saddam Hussein. Controlling the Iraqi population "post-heroically," however, proved an altogether different challenge.

The U.S. has been steadily losing control over Iraq ever since the occupation settled down in 2003. It was confronted, on the one hand, by the unfolding of an armed insurgency in the country's Arab Sunni areas that proved impossible to quench with the limited number of U.S. occupation troops available. For, if an invading army is not capable of exerting control over every single acre of inhabited territory as local armed forces usually do, there is only one secure way to get rid of an armed insurgency moving within its popular constituency "like a fish in water" as Mao Zedong once put it: drain the pool. This means either to commit genocide, as the Russian army has started to do in Chechnya, or to displace the population into concentration camps, or a combination of the two as the U.S. tentatively practiced in Vietnam, but could not carry to conclusion because the American population wouldn't have tolerated it.

In Iraq, Washington was faced, on the other hand, by a much graver problem, one that became clear by the beginning of 2004: the Bush administration had been induced -- by its own foolishness and the sales patter of some of the Pentagon's Iraqi friends or the stupid delusions of others -- into believing that it could win the sympathy of a major chunk of Iraq's majority community, the Arab Shiites. This proved a total disaster as the clout of Iran-friendly Shiite fundamentalist organizations completely dwarfed whatever constituency Washington's henchmen could buy among Iraq's Shiites. The Bush administration was left with no alternative for its imperial design but the classical recipe of "divide and rule," trying to foster antagonism between the three main components of the Iraqi population, countering the Shiites with Arab Sunni forces in alliance with the Kurds. It ended up fueling Iraq's slide toward a civil war, thus aggravating the overall spectacle of its failure in controlling the country. [4]

There is no doubt that the way in which the American Gulliver got tied down by the Iraqi Lilliputians has considerably emboldened Iran, the other Middle Eastern pillar of what George W. Bush labeled the "axis of evil" at the onset of his post-9/11 war drive. The utterly defiant, nay provocative, attitude of Iran against the U.S. colossus was made possible only because the latter proved in Iraq to stand on feet of clay. And Tehran countered successfully the attempt by Washington's Arab clients to expand the sectarian feud from Iraq to the rest of the Arab region so as to isolate the Iranian regime as Shiite -- a ploy that was used with some measure of success after the Iranian revolution of 1979. Tehran countered it by outbidding all the Arab regimes in hostility to Israel, thus building up its image as a champion of the pan-Islamic cause.

A key to Tehran's success is the alliance that it weaved with Hamas, the most popular embodiment of Sunni Islamic fundamentalism. This alliance was enhanced when the largest section of the Muslim Brotherhood (of which Hamas is the Palestinian branch), the Egyptian section, came out openly in support of Iranian President Ahmadinejad's provocative anti-Israel statements. Hamas's accession to power through the January 2006 Palestinian election dealt a further blow to Washington's regional strategy. Tehran jubilated, outbidding again all its Arab rivals in supporting the new Palestinian government. It is at this point that Israel stepped in, seen from Washington as the likely savior of what otherwise is looking more and more like an imperial Titanic.

One more time in four decades of strategic alliance between the U.S. sponsor and the Israeli champion, Washington, still believing in the Israelis' old reputation of infallible know-how in dealing with their Arab foes, unleashed its favorite proxy against those that it deemed to be Iran's proxies, namely Hamas and Hezbollah. What the Bush administration has overlooked, however, is that Israel's reputation had already been very much eroded by its blatant failure in controlling the 1967-occupied Palestinian territories, and even more so by its Saigon-like withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, after 18 years of occupation. Israel has already met its own Vietnam in Lebanon.

And like the Pentagon after Vietnam, Israel's war planners have shifted since Lebanon to a "post-heroic military policy," relying much more on their very much superior hardware than on their ground troops' fighting capability. When it invaded Lebanon in 1982, Israel was chiefly fighting the PLO guerillas: in Lebanon, these were anything but "fish in water" as they had managed to alienate the Lebanese population through arrogant and clumsy behavior. The Lebanese resistance that gathered momentum from 1982 onward, and in which Hezbollah came to play the major role, was a completely different story: this was the Israeli army's first encounter with a truly popular armed resistance with lines of supplies on a terrain adequate for guerilla warfare. Israel faced the same dilemma described above with regard to Iraq and, like the U.S. in Vietnam, it was compelled to swallow the bitter cup of a withdrawal that was tantamount to defeat.

Israel's belief in the invincibility of its superior weaponry -- with a hubris that was enhanced by the amateurship in military affairs of Olmert and Peretz, the present captains of its crew -- led the Israelis to believe that they could force the Hezbollah into capitulation, or push the Lebanese to the brink of a new civil war, by taking the whole of Lebanon hostage, destroying the country's civilian infrastructure and pouring on its Shiite-populated areas a deluge of bombs. Israel deliberately flattened whole neighborhoods and villages on a pattern that resembles some of the bombings of WW2 -- or a Fallujah on a much larger scale, and accordingly much more visible. Israel's new war on Lebanon displayed the murderous fury of an act of revenge against the only population that managed to oblige it to withdraw unconditionally from an occupied territory.

The criminal behavior of the Israeli armed forces in Lebanon, with regard to the international conventions defining what constitute war crimes, went beyond those that the U.S. perpetrated on a mass scale in its post-Vietnam military endeavors, whether in Iraq or in former Yugoslavia. In this, Israel's onslaught on Lebanon amounted to a peculiar instance of the so-called "extraordinary rendition" policy. It is well-known how Washington has handed over individuals it wants "interrogated" well beyond the limitation imposed by U.S. legislative constraints to those among its clients who face no hindrance in the dirty business of torture. Now Washington has entrusted to Israel the task of defeating Hezbollah, seen as a major piece in a regional counter-

offensive against Iran, in the hope that Israel could do the dirty work and accomplish the task without incurring much trouble.

Shamelessly exploiting one more time the horrible memory of the Nazi judeocide -- an exploitation which reached new peaks in indecency on the occasion of the ongoing war -- Israel's leaders believed that they would thus be able to deflect any criticism from the Western powers a.k.a. "the international community." And although the resources for this exploitation are unmistakably depleting with every new threshold in brutality that Israel crosses, it is still effective indeed: any other state in the world that would have attacked a neighboring country, deliberately committing war crimes concentrated in time in the way Israel is doing in Lebanon would have brought upon itself an outcry of a magnitude that bears no relation to the faint or timid reproaches made to Israel on the theme that it is overdoing it.

But for all that, Israel's brutal aggression was not able to succeed. On the contrary, it has already proved to be what Ze'ev Sternhell described somewhat euphemistically as Israel's "most unsuccessful war" [5] concluding with this bitter statement:

"It is frightening to think that those who decided to embark on the present war did not even dream of its outcome and its destructive consequences in almost every possible realm, of the political and psychological damage, the serious blow to the government's credibility, and yes -- the killing of children in vain. The cynicism being demonstrated by government spokesmen, official and otherwise, including several military correspondents, in the face of the disaster suffered by the Lebanese, amazes even someone who has long since lost many of his youthful illusions."

Far from inducing civil war between the Lebanese, Israel's brutal aggression only succeeded so far in uniting them in a common resentment against its murderous brutality. Far from forcing Hezbollah into surrender, it turned the Shiite fundamentalist organization into the most prestigious foe Israel ever had since it defeated Egypt in 1967, transforming Hezbollah's chief Nasrallah into the most popular Arab hero since Nasser. Far from facilitating the efforts by Washington and its Arab clients to drive the wedge further between Sunnis and Shiites, it led many prominent mainstream Sunni preachers to proclaim open support to Hezbollah, including preachers from within the Saudi kingdom -- the ultimate humiliation for the Saudi ruling family. The Iraqis unanimously denounced the Israeli aggression, while Washington's most formidable Iraqi foe and Tehran's ally, Moqtada al-Sadr, seized the opportunity to organize another huge demonstration matching the one he organized against the occupation on April 9, 2005.

At the time of writing, Washington is still striving to buy Israel some more time by imposing unacceptable conditions for a UN Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire. And Israeli generals, faced with the total failure of their "post-heroic" bombing campaign, are engaged in a race against the clock in order to grasp, through an utterly destructive "post-heroic" ground offensive, as much as possible of southern Lebanese territory at the lowest possible cost in Israeli soldiers' lives.

But the most they can realistically expect now is to hand back this territory to an international force that would be accepted by Hezbollah. French President Jacques Chirac himself, though he's been Washington's close collaborator on the issue of Lebanon since 2004, has emphasized that Hezbollah's concurrence is a condition that must be met. No country on earth, to be sure, is willing to try to accomplish in Lebanon the mission that Israel itself is unable to fulfill. And the Shiite organization has already stated that it won't accept any force with a mandate going substantially beyond that of the already existing UNIFIL that Israel considers as a nuisance.

Whatever the final outcome of the ongoing war on Lebanon, one thing is already clear: instead of helping in raising the sinking ship of the U.S. Empire, the Israeli rescue boat has actually aggravated the shipwreck, and is currently being dragged down with it.

August 6, 2006

#### Notes

1. Mike Allen and Romesh Ratnesar, "The End of Cowboy Diplomacy," Time, dated July 17, 2006.
2. Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, "Twilight of the Neocons," Washington Monthly, March 2004.



3. Edward Luttwak, "A Post-Heroic Military Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, n° 4, July/August 1996.
4. I have described this process in *Perilous Power* (see bio line below). An excerpt on Iraq 2006 will soon be posted on the Internet.
5. Ze'ev Sternhell, "The Most Unsuccessful War," *Haaretz*, August 2, 2006.

Gilbert Achcar grew up in Lebanon and teaches political science at the University of Paris-VIII. His best-selling book *The Clash of Barbarisms* just came out in a second expanded edition and a book of his dialogues with Noam Chomsky on the Middle East, *Perilous Power*, is forthcoming, both from Paradigm Publishers. Stephen R. Shalom, the editor of *Perilous Power*, has kindly edited this article.

Cap 5-Nota 16

### **Johann Hari: How we fuel Africa's bloodiest war**

What is rarely mentioned is the great global heist of Congo's resources  
Thursday, 30 October 2008

The deadliest war since Adolf Hitler marched across Europe is starting again – and you are almost certainly carrying a blood-soaked chunk of the slaughter in your pocket. When we glance at the holocaust in Congo, with 5.4 million dead, the clichés of Africa reporting tumble out: this is a "tribal conflict" in "the Heart of Darkness". It isn't. The United Nations investigation found it was a war led by "armies of business" to seize the metals that make our 21st-century society zing and bling. The war in Congo is a war about you.

Every day I think about the people I met in the war zones of eastern Congo when I reported from there. The wards were filled with women who had been gang-raped by the militias and shot in the vagina. The battalions of child soldiers – drugged, dazed 13-year-olds who had been made to kill members of their own families so they couldn't try to escape and go home. But oddly, as I watch the war starting again on CNN, I find myself thinking about a woman I met who had, by Congolese standards, not suffered in extremis.

I was driving back to Goma from a diamond mine one day when my car got a puncture. As I waited for it to be fixed, I stood by the roadside and watched the great trails of women who stagger along every road in eastern Congo, carrying all their belongings on their backs in mighty crippling heaps. I stopped a 27-year-old woman called Marie-Jean Bisimwa, who had four little children toddling along beside her. She told me she was lucky. Yes, her village had been burned out. Yes, she had lost her husband somewhere in the chaos. Yes, her sister had been raped and gone insane. But she and her kids were alive.

I gave her a lift, and it was only after a few hours of chat along on cratered roads that I noticed there was something strange about Marie-Jean's children. They were slumped forward, their gazes fixed in front of them. They didn't look around, or speak, or smile. "I haven't ever been able to feed them," she said. "Because of the war."

Their brains hadn't developed; they never would now. "Will they get better?" she asked. I left her in a village on the outskirts of Goma, and her kids stumbled after her, expressionless.

There are two stories about how this war began – the official story, and the true story. The official story is that after the Rwandan genocide, the Hutu mass murderers fled across the border into Congo. The Rwandan government chased after them. But it's a lie. How do we know? The Rwandan government didn't go to where the Hutu genocidaires were, at least not at first. They went to where Congo's natural resources were – and began to pillage them. They even told their troops to work with any Hutus they came across. Congo is the richest country in the world for gold, diamonds, coltan, cassiterite, and more. Everybody wanted a slice – so six other countries invaded.

These resources were not being stolen to for use in Africa. They were seized so they could be sold on to us. The more we bought, the more the invaders stole – and slaughtered. The rise of mobile phones caused a surge in deaths, because the coltan they contain is found primarily in Congo. The UN named the international corporations it believed were involved: Anglo-America, Standard Chartered Bank, De Beers and more than 100 others. (They all deny the charges.) But instead of stopping these corporations, our governments demanded that the UN stop criticising them.

There were times when the fighting flagged. In 2003, a peace deal was finally brokered by the UN and the international armies withdrew. Many continued to work via proxy militias – but the carnage waned somewhat. Until now. As with the first war, there is a cover-story, and the truth. A Congolese militia leader called Laurent Nkunda – backed by Rwanda – claims he needs to protect the local Tutsi population from the same Hutu genocidaires who have been hiding out in the jungles of eastern Congo since 1994. That's why he is seizing Congolese military bases and is poised to march on Goma.

It is a lie. François Grignon, Africa Director of the International Crisis Group, tells me the truth: "Nkunda is being funded by Rwandan businessmen so they can retain control of the mines in North Kivu. This is the absolute core of the conflict. What we are seeing now is beneficiaries of the illegal war economy fighting to maintain their right to exploit."

At the moment, Rwandan business interests make a fortune from the mines they illegally seized during the war. The global coltan price has collapsed, so now they focus hungrily on cassiterite, which is used to make tin cans and other consumer disposables. As the war began to wane, they faced losing their control to the elected Congolese government – so they have given it another bloody kick-start.

Yet the debate about Congo in the West – when it exists at all – focuses on our inability to provide a decent bandage, without mentioning that we are causing the wound. It's true the 17,000 UN forces in the country are abysmally failing to protect the civilian population, and urgently need to be super-charged. But it is even more important to stop fuelling the war in the first place by buying blood-soaked natural resources. Nkunda only has enough guns and grenades to take on the Congolese army and the UN because we buy his loot. We need to prosecute the corporations buying them for abetting crimes against humanity, and introduce a global coltan-tax to pay for a substantial peacekeeping force. To get there, we need to build an international system that values the lives of black people more than it values profit.

Somewhere out there – lost in the great global heist of Congo's resources – are Marie-Jean and her children, limping along the road once more, carrying everything they own on their backs. They will probably never use a coltan-filled mobile phone, a cassiterite-smelted can of beans, or a gold necklace – but they may yet die for one.

j.hari@independent.co.uk