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**CHANGING DISCOURSES AND MEDIATION IN THE
ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: TOWARDS THE
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES 1993**

KAREN ABI-EZZI

THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

LONDON CENTRE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY

ABSTRACT

Changing Discourses and Mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Towards the Declaration of Principles 1993

This thesis focuses on the role of mediators in the process of discursively constructing the dominant narrative erecting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In seeking to concentrate on specific mediation processes in the conflict, culminating in the Declaration of Principles, research reveals the highly interactive nature of changing discourses, underpinned by a complex, political process of textual interweaving and overlap that defines the conflict.

Much of the literature addressing mediation theory builds on a positivist epistemology which separates fact from value and unquestioningly proceeds from the premise that words mirror the world they describe. Within such a context, mediators remain external to the conflict either arbitrating or facilitating negotiations between the protagonists, but never becoming part of it, contributing to its construction. The application of discourse analysis to the study of mediation challenges this core premise, arguing that any intervention necessarily involves a process of reinterpretation or re-definition of the conflict, engendered by the mediator him or herself. Underpinned by a process of change, the conflict is impinged upon by a plethora of external as well as internal parties to the conflict. These interventions generate a new discourse which interacts with other narratives within the same discursive realm or domain. In this thesis, the term 'discourses' refers to those narrative structures in place which enable or constrain political movement in a particular direction at a particular moment in time. Identifying a highly interactive discursive process removes the spotlight away from a narrow and exclusionist conceptualisation of mediation as pertaining to the immediate forum in which negotiations between protagonists and a third party unfold, towards a broader, more inclusive understanding of what the process entails.

In loving memory of my father, Roland Elias Abi-Ezzi

*to my mother, grandfather
and uncle
for their unfailing love
and support*

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INTRODUCTION

‘Peacemaking is a gradual revolution that moves from hostility to a desired conciliation, a collection of moments in which a new trend is set in motion.’¹

My interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and wide reading around the subject revealed an interesting phenomenon. Tracing the conflict back in time in an attempt to find the roots of the dispute was not unlike chiselling away through layers of cement, each obscuring that which chronologically preceded it. In a sense, there existed not one ‘Israeli-Palestinian conflict’, but many, each version being overtaken by the unfolding of more recent events and their textual representation in the dominant discourse. The original dispute, an inter-communal confrontation between Jews and Palestinians in mandate Palestine in the period before 1948 became an Israeli-Arab conflict after the creation of the state of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. The Palestinian component of the original conflict was overshadowed or overtaken by more recent events as they unfolded. This perpetual re-interpretation or re-construction of the conflict occurred *discursively* and was mediated by a plethora of agencies, including third parties. The title of this thesis, ‘Changing Discourses and Mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Towards the Declaration of Principles 1993’, focuses on the role of mediators in the process of discursively constructing the dominant narrative erecting the conflict. Organised chronologically, this thesis begins in 1897 with the convention of the first Zionist Congress in Basle, and culminates in 1993 with the signing of the Declaration of Principles document. In seeking to concentrate on mediation processes in the conflict, research reveals the highly interactive nature of changing discourses, underpinned by a complex, political process of textual interweaving and overlap that defines the conflict.

¹ Savir U., *The Process*, (New York, Random House, 1998), introduction, p. 1. Uri Savir was director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry in May 1993 when he was asked by the Israeli Foreign Minister at the time, Shimon Peres, to go to Oslo and partake in a secret dialogue which had been in progress since December 1992, between two Israeli academics and three members of the PLO.

Much of the literature addressing mediation theory builds on a positivist epistemology which separates fact from value and unquestioningly proceeds from the premise that words mirror the world they describe. Within such a context, mediators remain external to the conflict either arbitrating or facilitating negotiations between the protagonists, but never becoming part of it, contributing to its construction. The application of discourse analysis to the study of mediation challenges this core premise, arguing that any intervention necessarily involves a process of interpretation or re-definition of the conflict, engendered by the mediator him or herself. Underpinned by a process of change, the conflict is impinged upon by a plethora of external as well as internal parties to the conflict. These interventions generate a new discourse which interacts with other narratives within the same discursive realm or domain. In this thesis, the term 'discourses' refers to those narrative structures in place which enable or constrain political movement in a particular direction at a particular moment in time. Identifying a highly interactive discursive process removes the spotlight away from a narrow and exclusionist conceptualisation of mediation as pertaining to the immediate forum in which negotiations between protagonists and a third party unfold, towards a broader, more inclusive understanding of what the process entails. Assessed through the lens of changing discourses, mediation is located within and is contingent upon certain discourses which enable or constrain the peacemaking process. Within this context, conflict resolution is a highly political, incremental process which feeds on a variety of discourses. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the peacemaking process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and illustrate the utility of situating mediation within a discourse analytic framework.

As the title suggests, this research project is primarily concerned with shifting the focus of investigation within the field of mediation, away from a conceptualisation of mediation as an act which is limited to a defined forum of negotiations between the protagonists and a third party, to a broader conceptualisation of mediation as a *political, interactive, discursive process*, which may involve a number of disparate actors who may not all necessarily be identified as 'mediators'. The perspective adopted in this thesis seeks to emphasise a hitherto largely marginalised area in relation to the process of mediation, that is *the constructive role of discourses*. Its analytical focus throughout is the interactive and

constitutive process between the text and the peacemaker. The original contribution of this study to the body of existing knowledge lies in its argument that mediation is a discursive process which draws upon a pre-existing set of discourses around the issues and parties in the conflict and in turn generates a renewed interpretation of the conflict through its very intervention. The implication of this is that the way in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is depicted both constitutes the conflict and determines responses to it.

Epistemology: Challenging the Empirical Paradigm

This thesis challenges a large section of the mediation literature which does not pay adequate attention to the textual construction of a conflict. In much of the conventional mediation literature, 'mediation' has developed into a generic term used to refer to a triadic model consisting of representatives of two warring parties and a third party or mediator. A large proportion of the existing literature on mediation, as we see in chapter one, focuses predominantly on the role of the third party in curtailing violence through *changing the relationship between the protagonists*. The research contained within this thesis illustrates the way in which a third party may not necessarily alter the relationship between the protagonists in a direct and immediate way, but contributes to the creation of a new discourse defining the conflict. The application of discourse analysis as an investigative tool in the study of mediation, reveals a highly complex, interactive, political process characterised by multiple interweaving discourses. This process acknowledges the role of mediators, both internal and external to the conflict, but recognises them as only one component of a highly complex process of political interaction. Situated within an epistemological framework which ascribes *constitutive as opposed to reflective powers to discourses*, the mediation process incorporates a plethora of interpretations emerging from multiple agencies. A multi-tiered construct emerges in which discourses attain meaning through their symbolic association with pre-existing discursive formations. The aim of this thesis is to illustrate the way in which peacemaking consists of changing discourses. This new conceptualisation of mediation differs significantly from analyses of mediation rooted in, and informed by an empirical understanding of the political domain.

The application of discourse analysis to the study of mediation proposed by this thesis, is an attempt to illustrate the need for a re-appraisal of that which the term 'mediation' has been generically used to signify. At its core, this study offers an alternative conceptualisation of the conflict resolution process. Within a discourse analytic framework, an altered relationship between the protagonists is the result of a gradual, multi-textual process which reconstructs the conflict. This project emphasises and analyses the *constitutive role of discourses in this transformative process*. Like water being poured into a glass bottle and assuming the shape of that bottle, the fluid mediation process takes on the shape of the bottle into which it is poured, the shape of the environment influenced by the structures of enablement and constraint. However, as we shall see in the chapters which follow, discursive formations generated by the mediation process itself may in turn alter the shape of the structures in place, much in the same way as the freezing of the water in the bottle would expand and shatter the structure into which it had initially been poured. At which junctures is discursive change discernible? How can these changes be explained and what does this reveal about the mechanics which underpin changing discourses?

Methodology: the Constitutive Role of Changing Discourses in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

In order to enable a coherent and ordered analysis of changing discourses in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, five themes are used to focus research. These five themes jointly define the core components of the conflict as it is represented in the literature I have consulted. Although the categories are themselves inter-linked, I have separated them as a means of devising a methodology for this project. The five themes are:

1. The multi-layered construction of the conflict, a powerful discursive 'layer' being the 'Arab-Israeli' construction. This has meant that inter-state conflicts in the Middle East have been dealt with at the expense of the core conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. It has had an impact on the definition of issues dealt with in peacemaking attempts; the variable salience of these; which parties are seen as core to the conflict, and so on.

2. The conflict as zero-sum, an ‘all or nothing’ construction whereby one party’s gain would be the other’s loss. There was no middle ground, or a narrative which supported a sharing of the cake.

3. The conflict as a discourse on Israeli/Jewish security. Israeli security was linked to survival (a non-Arab state amidst a ‘sea of Arabs’), extending and building upon the narrative of the Jewish holocaust. Security itself has been defined in terms of military and geo-strategic terms.

4. The conflict as a discourse on identity, whereby the survival of a Jewish identity was discursively portrayed as being contingent upon the negation of a Palestinian identity. A core component of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the Palestinian battle for international and importantly, official Israeli acknowledgement of a Palestinian identity, distinct from, yet part of, a wider Arab whole. As long as there were no ‘Palestinians’, there could be no counter-discourse to threaten the legitimacy of the Jewish presence in mandated Palestine.

5. The conflict as a discourse on Palestinian autonomy as opposed to self-determination. The discourse of autonomy was put forth as a just solution to the conflict, notably in the Camp David Accords. ‘Palestinian Arabs’, successive Israeli governments argued, did not need another sovereign state, since they already had Jordan, whose population was approximately sixty per cent Palestinian. Autonomy, advocated in the main by the Israeli right, would solve the Palestinian problem by giving ‘Palestinian Arabs’ in the West Bank powers for limited self-governance whilst ensuring that Greater Israel or Eretz Israel would remain a whole.

How did mediation initiatives challenge or reinforce what I am referring to as discursive tramlines, around each of the five themes identified above? This thesis situates the conflict resolution process within a theoretical framework which asserts that agents, disputants and mediators alike, are situated within discursive structures. Whilst their actions will inevitably be constrained by the wider whole, they may, through their words and actions, create new discourses to challenge the social and political continuities in which they

are embedded or they may serve to reinforce these structures, and in so doing prolong the conflict. The boundaries which have so far circumscribed the study of mediation, removing it from its context, are in this thesis dissolved, so that mediation perceived through this new 'lens' highlights the situated, political and interactive discursive process which is mediation. The aim of this thesis is to illustrate, with reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the importance of shifting the focus of attention within the study of mediation or the peacemaking process, onto the so far marginalised area of changing discourses, highlighting the *constitutive role of discourses* therein.

This thesis proposes a more inclusive study of the complex, highly political and interactive process of mediation. Chapter one, the theory chapter, presents an overview of the mediation literature, focusing on the main strands which exist. I then go on to critique them in favour of a discourse analytic approach. Chapter two introduces the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the chosen case-study which is used in this thesis to illustrate the importance of applying changing discourses to the study of mediation. The practical need for a framework to structure research necessitates the "distillation" of the conflict into what I argue, are its main components. I acknowledge that this is in itself an imposition of a discursive structure on to the conflict, but it was unavoidable. Assessment of key moments in the evolution of this protracted conflict reveals the centrality of five core component themes. These were alluded to briefly in the introduction. Chapters three, four, five and six culminating with the Declaration of Principles document, are structured chronologically so as to highlight the points at which discourses changed or remained constant around each of these five key themes. The primary focus throughout is on the role of external third parties. However, from the outset, in chapter three, we see how changing discourses are underpinned by *a complex interaction of both internal and external parties*. Chapter seven offers a conclusion which summarises the thesis, highlighting what the research carried out has revealed and the questions which have arisen.

CHAPTER ONE

Competing Paradigms and the Study of Mediation

Introduction

What is mediation? The literature on mediation theory is scattered with a plethora of prescriptions which attempt to define the role of the mediator in his/her relationship with the negotiators, or adversaries. There is a divergence of views amongst scholars as to the exact definition of the activity or activities the act of mediation should involve. James Laue and James Wall lie on opposite ends of the spectrum; Laue identifying five roles whilst Wall lists as many as fifty.¹ A very broad definition of mediation is offered by Young who defines the function of a third party as 'any action taken by an actor that is not a direct party to the crisis, that is designed to reduce or remove one or more of the problems of the bargaining relationship and, therefore, to facilitate the termination of the crisis itself.'² The term mediation is used generically to imply the intervention of an external third party to a conflict situation in order to halt violence and re-establish peaceful relations between the protagonists. In essence therefore, the aim of the mediator is to achieve change. An assessment of prominent theoretical strands within the mediation literature reveals a common denominator, that mediation is assessed predominantly through the lens of a realist paradigm. It is important to emphasise that the location of conflict and mediation within a realist paradigm is often neither acknowledged nor critiqued by its proponents. The silence which surrounds the epistemological foundations upon which these theories are developed privileges the realist paradigm over other paradigms.³

¹ See Laue J., 'The Functions of the Intermediary in Third Party Processes' (Fairfax, Centre for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, 1991, Mimeographed). See also Wall J., 'Mediation: An Analysis, Review and Proposed Research', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (Vol. 25, No. 1, March 1981) pp. 157-180

² Young O.R, *The Intermediaries*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 34

³ The realist paradigm builds on a positivist epistemology which separates fact from value and unquestioningly proceeds from the premise that words mirror the world they describe. This however is but one way of viewing or understanding 'the world'. Michael Banks makes this point in 'The Inter-Paradigm

Conventional mediation remains in large part focused on the immediate or 'focal conflict' and the triadic relationship which constitutes the mediation forum or mediated negotiated system.⁴ This thesis invites the reader to situate the focal conflict and the mediation process at the centre of gradually expanding circles. This representation aims to highlight the interconnections which necessarily exist between what is going on in the centre and that which is going on around the conflict and the mediation forum. Both impinge on one another. This thesis adopts a fundamentally different understanding of the mediation process. The focus of conflict resolution becomes the way in which various narratives or discourses interact in order to prolong the conflict whilst others result in a change of attitudes and behaviour. This chapter highlights the shortcomings of important theoretical strands within the conventional mediation literature and introduces and promotes discourse analysis as an alternative approach to the study of mediation.

Track One and Conflict Settlement

Track one or official diplomacy developed from a conception of the world whose main components are states and where power rests with governments.⁵ The aim of mediation and the role of the mediator are determined by the application of a power-political framework to international relations - relations between *states*. Within this realist paradigm, conflict is over an objective difference of interest which it is the task of the mediator to settle through a mediated power bargaining process. The triadic model of two rational negotiators and a powerful external third party is characterised by the negotiators appealing to the mediator. As Bercovitch asserts, 'parties become merely petitioners or supplicants attempting to persuade a third party to give a favourable decision' with very

Debate', an article published in Light M. and Groom A.J.R (eds.), *International Relations - A Handbook of Current Theory*, (London, Pinter, 1985), p. 9

⁴ Kriesberg L., *Social Conflicts*, (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1982) pp. 114, 147, 225 and 303. James Wall uses the term 'mediated negotiated system' to refer to the triadic relationship consisting of the mediator and the two protagonists. Wall J., 'Mediation: An Analysis, Review, and Proposed Research', op. cit. pp. 158-9 where Wall defines his terminology and also depicts the concepts contained therein, in diagrammatic form. See 'Figure 1: The Mediation Paradigm' on p.159

⁵ Although the practice of traditional diplomacy can be traced back to Thucydides, the practice was reinforced in 1648 with the legitimisation of the state system through the Peace of Westphalia. See Keohane R. (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics*, (New York, Columbia Press, 1986), p. 8

little interaction between the adversaries themselves.⁶ The application of manipulative tactics by the third party marginalises the requirements of the negotiators and focuses on the re-establishment of order within the international system. The third party appeals to rational agents and attempts to influence decision-making through the use of carrot and stick tactics. The settlement reached is framed in zero-sum terms, where the gains of one party are directly related to the losses of the other, reflecting the relative bargaining power of the adversaries and the power asymmetry which exists between them. In order to arrive at a negotiated settlement and a return to order within the international system, leveraged mediation requires the mediator to have resources at his/her disposal, relating mediator role to social context. Touval asserts that:

‘The mediator’s ability to induce the parties to make concessions and accept compromise proposals did not derive from his impartiality, but from the material resources at his disposal.’⁷

Conflict settlement resists change within the international system, preferring to maintain the status quo ante. However, advocates of ‘conflict resolution’ such as John Burton argue that conflict settlement fails to address the underlying grievances of the protagonists. Proponents of conflict resolution propose an alternative approach to mediation, which rejects the state-centric, billiard ball model of international relations in favour of a world society view or a ‘cob-web’ model to depict interlaced social interactions across the globe. A state-centric approach is substituted with a multi-centric understanding of the international system which is a more inclusive approach, drawing other agents such as international organisations, institutions and groups into consideration. As John Burton states:

‘We would begin to get nearer to such a concept of world society if we were to map it without reference to political boundaries, and indeed, without reference to any physical boundaries. We are not particularly concerned with boundaries, except

⁶ Bercovitch J., *Social Conflicts and Third Parties*, (Colorado, Westview Press, 1984), p. 2

⁷ Touval S., *The Peace Brokers*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 326

insofar as they affect behaviour by reducing transactions and communications among people. We are concerned with behaviour - boundaries or no boundaries.’⁸

Track Two and Conflict Resolution

Advocates of track two processes of conflict resolution assert that since conflict settlement arrives at a cessation of hostilities through coercion, or the forced acceptance of an outcome which is unacceptable to the adversaries, conflict will inevitably resume.⁹ A new kind of diplomacy emerged in reaction to the perceived failures of traditional diplomacy, which eroded the barriers present in traditional diplomacy between the international and the domestic.¹⁰ During the 1960’s, John Burton developed a non-directive, non-official third party activity whose aim was to get the adversaries to go beyond the expressed issues which led to conflict and arrive at the underpinning grievances related to fundamental human needs such as identity and security. As Burton notes,

“‘conflict resolution’ refers to the facilitated analysis of the underlying sources of conflict situations by the parties in conflict. The term also encapsulates the process

⁸ Burton J.W, ‘World Study World Society?’, *World Society*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 42. Michael Banks distinguishes between the various paradigms in ‘The Inter-Paradigm Debate’, op. cit.

⁹ Groom A.J.R, ‘Paradigms in Conflict: the Strategist, the Conflict Researcher and the Peace Researcher’. Burton J. & Dukes F. (eds.), *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution*, (London, Macmillan, 1990), p. 89

¹⁰ There remains great uncertainty amongst some writers in the field as to whether research conducted and results gained in the field of social psychology, counselling situations, or positive lessons learnt from labour-management disputes can be imported wholesale into a field which deals with large group inter-ethnic or international conflicts. Bercovitch is one such critic. In *Social Conflicts and Third Parties*, op. cit., pp. 136-8, he highlights what he believes are the dangers of applying techniques which were designed for individuals in the field of social-psychology, to an environment which is characterised by complex, intertwined and ever-changing social relationships of different leaderships, interacting in an environment of intra-party rivalries and shifting allegiances. Bercovitch isolates several reasons why, in his view, such a transferral of technique is misguided;

a. There is a difference between the individual as an actor and a collective body with regards to coherence and adaptability, and the effect that has on decision-making and information-processing. The structural and dynamic environment in which the individual functions and the group functions is different.

b. The framework in which an individual is located is more malleable compared to that of a group. Collective groupings are rarely homogeneous. Their cognitive, emotional, and subjective elements are much more stable and enduring than that of an individual.

c. The psychological environment of an individual is more malleable because it is likely to be less hostile than that at the collective level. The psychological universe at the collective level is one embedded in perceptual fixedness and ‘habitually ingrained ways of looking at things and responding to them’.

whereby institutional and policy options are discovered that meet the needs of the parties, thus establishing the basis for a resolution of the conflict.’¹¹

The concept of human needs is central to the problem-solving approach developed and advocated by John Burton. Unlike the realist approach to mediation, which sought to change the behaviour of the disputants without necessarily addressing their relationship, Burton’s controlled communication, links the problem-solving analytical process whereby disputant relationship is reconfigured, to the outcome, conflict resolution. Human needs are central to the track two approach, for it is those intangible feelings, such as identity, security and recognition which give rise to conflict. They are often concealed beneath disputant demands for material things, however, for Burton, the identification of human needs is essential if a conflict is to be resolved. Human needs as defined by Burton are those needs which are common to all individuals. They are different to cultural values instilled in human-beings through the process of socialisation, for they are ‘more basic and fundamental human drives, common to all humans.’¹²

There are several terms used to describe the same process, problem-solving, controlled communication, workshop approach, back channel or track two diplomacy and facilitation.¹³ The process is confidential and non-judgmental where participants are treated equally.¹⁴ In a problem-solving workshop, the third party encourages a non-directive, but interactive approach where a self-sustaining resolution to the conflict is achieved by both parties feeling they have ‘won’.¹⁵ The aim of controlled communication is therefore fundamentally different to conflict settlement’s zero-sum outcome, as is the setting.

¹¹ Burton J., chapter two, ‘The Language of Conflict Resolution’, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook*, (New York, University Press of America, 1987), p. 7. See also A.J.R Groom, ‘Problem Solving in International Relations’, Azar E. & Burton J. (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution*, (Sussex, Wheatsheaf, 1986), p. 86

¹² Burton J., chapter three, ‘Institutional Values and Human Needs’, *Deviance, Terrorism and War the Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems*, (Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1979), p. 58

¹³ A.J.R Groom, ‘Problem Solving in International Relations’, op. cit., p. 85

¹⁴ Referring to the success of the ‘Oslo Channel’, Hanan Ashrawi, a spokeswoman for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and a leading figure involved in the official Madrid and Washington rounds of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, writes that, ‘it was precisely because of the inconspicuous low-key nature of this contact [the Oslo Channel] that it had gone unnoticed and succeeded where other high-level channels had come to naught.’ Ashrawi H., *This Side of Peace*, (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1995) p. 260

¹⁵ Burton J., chapter five, ‘The Settlement of Disputes’, *Deviance, Terrorism and War*, op. cit., p. 112

Problem-solving workshops take place in a relaxed atmosphere where there is no fixed agenda for negotiations. Through a process of joint exploration, analysis and learning, advocates of problem-solving believe stereo-types can be broken down and psychological obstacles to resolution removed, to allow the conflicting parties to arrive at a mutually desirable outcome. Burton asserts,

‘In the final analysis, the parties to a dispute are the real experts. The dispute is theirs and they must determine its nature by their own analysis of it. The data, facts and interpretations must come from the perceptions and experiences of the opposing parties, not from the panel.’¹⁶

The emphasis is therefore on the social psychology of conflict, focusing on the way in which the parties to a conflict perceive the conflict and the adversary. Although every conflict has elements which are unique to it, facilitators can perform a useful task by situating a conflict within a broader context and highlighting shared elements between all conflicts, offering examples where people have reacted and behaved differently in different situations.¹⁷ Through this process, the adversaries are encouraged to perceive their own conflict differently. Unlike conflict settlement which aims at changing the adversaries’ behaviour through coercion and manipulation, controlled communication workshops provide a facilitative, guiding function with the aim of encouraging open and honest dialogue between the participants. Jay Rothman has developed the problem-solving approach by introducing the ‘process of reflexivity’. This he believes, may usefully be adopted to move parties from ‘oppositional and adversarial frames about each other and the conflict situation, into shared and integrative frames.’¹⁸ The process involves the disputants being encouraged by the facilitators to publicly assess themselves by thinking about their needs, their deepest traumas, motivations, hopes and fears with regard to the conflict situation, and how in the past, perceived threats to their needs may have led them to resort to aggressive behaviour. This process, Rothman argues, ‘unfreez[es] analytic empathy’ as

¹⁶ Burton J., chapter ten, ‘The Third Party’, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook*, op. cit., p. 44

¹⁷ Burton J., chapter five, ‘The Settlement of Disputes’, *Deviance, Terrorism and War*, op. cit., p. 118. See also Groom, ‘Problem Solving in International Relations’, op. cit., p. 90

both parties realise, listening to each other, that they share certain hopes and fears. In this way, Rothman believes, 'us-them' barriers erected by projection are broken down as a more complex, multi-dimensional image of the other is developed.¹⁹

By observing the world through a different 'lens', that of world society or the pluralist paradigm, the causes of conflict are no longer related to objective, material interests as they are for realists, but are now rooted in subjectively perceived human needs.²⁰ To address conflict is therefore to engage in a process wherein the parties to conflict are aided in an impartial way by a panel of skilled scholar-practitioners, in a joint journey of communication and exploration of the conflict and each party's perceived needs.²¹ However, Thomas Princen disputes such a view of what he calls a 'neutral' mediator and argues that a third party always exercises some kind of influence on the disputants. The difference between track one and track two is that in the former, influence is exerted by conventional means such as military power or economic strength, whereas in a problem-solving workshop influence is exerted through 'more subtle means', such as changes in disputant norms of interaction and perceptions.²² Vivienne Jabri points out two additional criticisms which can be made of the track two approach. The first relates to

¹⁸ Rothman J., chapter three, 'Toward a Broader Approach for International Peacemaking: The Middle East Example', *From Confrontation to Co-operation*, (London, Sage, 1992), p. 58

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 60-4

²⁰ The lens metaphor is used by Buzan B., Jones C. & Little R. (eds.), *The Logic of Anarchy*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 230-1. Burton anchors the differences between conflict settlement and conflict resolution in two fundamentally different perceptions of international relations and 'different notions on the nature of behaviour.' See Burton, chapter eleven, 'The Philosophical Basis of Settlement', and chapter twelve, 'The Philosophical Basis of Resolution', *Conflict and Communication*, (London, Macmillan, 1969), p. 180 and p. 200 respectively.

²¹ Tarja Vayrynen in her PhD. thesis entitled, 'Sharing Reality: An Insight From Phenomenology to John Burton: Problem-Solving Conflict Resolution Theory', (University of Kent, 1995) focuses on the aim and procedures of problem solving workshops. She identifies one aim as finding a 'shared reality' between the parties in conflict. By using the phenomenological strand of sociology as an entry point into an investigation of the social constructionist element as a valuable component in a problem solving workshop, Vayrynen demonstrates convincingly the need to change relevance systems and typifications in order to create a new interpretation of reality. Typifications and relevance systems are understood by phenomenology to be rooted in stocks of knowledge which are socially derived and reinforced. Expanding on this idea, to what extent does the structure of a language provide limitations within which typifications and relevance structures take form? If this were the case, the problem of language in workshops, in instances where the common language of exchange is not the mother tongue of either negotiating party becomes relevant. Potentially the need for a role of interpreter as opposed to direct translator arises for the third party. See p. 124 of the thesis, where the importance of language as a container of typifications is addressed.

power. By removing power from the equation and treating equally, parties to a conflict who are very often in an asymmetrical structural relationship that is to say, 'where the protagonists are differentially situated in relation to structures of signification, legitimation, and domination, where discourse and institutions favour one at the expense of the other', a myth is created which may, in the long term, hinder rather than help chances of conflict resolution. Secondly, facilitators involved in a conflict resolution process claim to be extraneous, uninvolved observers. Their task is to guide, not to make substantive suggestions to the participants or offer their interpretation of the conflict. However, viewed through the lens of critical social theory, Jabri claims such a process by virtue of its very existence will have an impact on the interpretative process and is therefore implicated in changing discourses, be it directly or indirectly.²³

In summary, the differences between the two approaches relate to the identity of the participants, the role of the third party, the forum for negotiations, the aim of the exercise and the process itself. Whereas track one seeks conflict settlement, track two adopts a more investigative approach to conflict resolution, striving to break a problem down into manageable components and uncover underlying causes of conflict. If a conflict is to be resolved, it is the adversaries themselves who must be the primary actors in negotiating their own joint outcome to the problems which they have identified. Facilitators are present only to guide and encourage. However, does the practice of mediation exhibit these precise distinctions? Are the dynamics of the problem-solving workshop as benign as they are portrayed to be by its advocates? Is the interested reader consulting the literature on this topic, to believe that, in problem-solving workshops, generals and hardened political leaders will be willing to renounce their violent activities through a facilitative, inter-active process alone? Is there a potentially more complex web of interactions at play? Before we turn to a theoretical analysis of discourses which overcome the problems with conventional approaches to mediation, we will first continue an assessment of other areas of conventional mediation literature which seek to develop Burton's dichotomy of track one and track two.

²² Princen T., *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992), chapter two, p. 31 and the conclusion p. 214

²³ Jabri V., 'Agency, Structure, and the Question of Power in Conflict Resolution', *Paradigms, the Kent Journal of International Relations*, (Vol. 9, No. 2, Winter 1995), pp. 65-7.

The Time Factor in Third Party Intervention

There exists a divergence of views amongst scholars writing about the most appropriate moment for a third party to intervene in a conflict, if indeed there is one. Rubin for example asserts that '*third party intervention can, in principle at least, occur at any point along the way*'²⁴, (presented in italics by Rubin), whereas Zartman advances a different argument in which he promotes the theory that in conflict there exists a 'ripe moment', or 'window of opportunity' which is a moment in the life cycle of a conflict most propitious for a fruitful intervention by a third party.²⁵ This view is based on a particular understanding of conflict which escalates in sequenced stages beginning with a latent stage and progressing to a confrontational stage.

Zartman's 'ripe moment' aims to locate third party intervention in a conflict at a moment within the conflict life cycle when the protagonists are assumed to be at the lowest point of confidence and therefore are likely to be more responsive to external intervention in what has so far been *their* conflict. This moment, according to Zartman is identifiable. It may be identified by events that occur during the conflict. A ripe moment is one that immediately precedes or immediately follows a catastrophe. As Mitchell puts it, it is the moment when 'the adversaries come to face an impasse or both approach some imminent mutual catastrophe and become willing to consider resolution opportunities.'²⁶ The notion of a ripe moment is tested and challenged by Stephen John Stedman.²⁷ Through investigating mediation in Zimbabwe, Stedman suggests four amendments to Zartman's

²⁴ Bercovitch J. & Rubin J.Z, (eds.), *Mediation In International Relations*, (London, Macmillan, 1992), p. 253. Thomas Princen concurs stating, 'rarely does a conflict present the mediator with stark either-or decisions like enter now or enter later. When the mediating party has an ongoing relationship, reconfiguring the bargain is an ongoing affair.' Chapter six, 'Camp David: Jimmy Carter Mediates Between Israel and Egypt 1977-79', *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, op. cit., p. 105

²⁵ Zartman I.W, 'Ripening Conflict, Ripe Moment, Formula, and Mediation', in (eds.) Bendahmane D.B & McDonald J.W Jr., *Perspectives on Negotiation*, (Washington D.C, Centre for the study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, U.S Dept. of State, 1986), pp. 205-227

²⁶ Mitchell C.R, 'Problem-Solving Exercises and Theories of Conflict Resolution', in Sandole J.D and Van der Merwe H. (eds.), *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 87

²⁷ Stedman S.J, *Peacemaking in Civil War; International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980*, (Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 1991), p. 235

theory. Firstly, that a hurting stalemate does not necessarily have to be perceived by *both* adversaries, one may be sufficient. Secondly, the perception of a mutually hurting stalemate may be felt by a patron state with the same outcome, providing the patron state is powerful enough and has close enough links with one of the protagonists directly involved in the conflict. Fourth, it is important that both military wings should perceive a ripe moment. However, according to Stedman, this alone is still not sufficient to bring about a ripe moment.²⁸ The notion of a ripe moment is overcome by Fisher and Keashly who believe that a conflict exhibits different symptoms at different moments in its evolution and that a particular form of third party intervention is appropriate at different stages of the conflict.

An article published in 1991 by Fisher and Keashly draws further the link between the practice of a particular form of mediation being contingent on the salient features of the conflict situation at the moment of intervention.²⁹ In 'The Potential Complementarity of Mediation and Consultation within a Contingency Model of Third Party Intervention', Fisher and Keashly advance an argument to support the matching and sequencing of various forms of third party initiatives.³⁰ Conflict is represented as progressing in four stages. Against each stage, a specific form of third party intervention is deemed most appropriate.³¹ The term 'consultation' is used to refer to problem-solving exercises, whilst 'mediation' is

²⁸ *ibid.* pp. 235-242

²⁹ Fisher R.J and Keashly L., 'The Potential Complementarity of Mediation and Consultation within a Contingency Model of Third Party Intervention', *Journal of Peace Research*, (Vol. 28, No. 1, 1991), pp. 29-42

³⁰ Fisher and Keashly acknowledge that the model proposed is built on the research and findings of four scholars, Sheppard, Prein, Glasl and Kriesberg mainly carried out during the 1980's. Sheppard's research is concerned with correlating the stages of conflict to the role of the third party and the point of entry. Prein basis his research on the analysis of 69 cases of organisational conflict and the matching of specific forms of third conflict behaviour to particular symptoms which become manifest at various stages in the escalation of tensions. Prein's findings identify mediation as more effective when substantive issues predominate whereas consultation is more effective when mistrust and misperception are high. Glasl's contribution lies in his construction of a model which seeks to match specific forms of third party intervention to specific stages of conflict escalation. Kriesberg's research which points to de-escalation of a conflict occurring in four stages further informs the project. The model offered by Fisher and Keashly is eclectic. By drawing on the findings of different scholars, they seek to combine the findings. A potential problem with this is that the scholars mentioned are approaching the study of conflict from different angles. Glasl for example draws on work in social and organisational psychology. The danger of then transferring and applying such findings to conflicts within the international arena is emphasised by Bercovitch. His fears, exposed in the above section, are based on research in the field of psychology which finds differences in the make-up and behaviour of groups at various levels.

³¹ The stages of conflict and the forms of third party intervention to which they best correspond are produced in a diagram entitled 'Intervention Sequence'. Fisher and Keashly, *op. cit.*, p. 37

used to refer to more traditional forms of third party intervention associated with conflict settlement.³² This implies that track one and track two forms of mediation, practised consecutively, may offer a higher probability of success than the exercise of either alone, since conflict is a dynamic, evolving process which comprises a mixture of objective as well as subjective elements.³³

Fisher and Keashly's model can be criticised on several levels. The first relates to the notion of stages of conflict escalation and de-escalation. Is it accurate to present all conflicts as passing through four stages? This implies an order and rationality in war that is questionable. Who or what force is responsible for such a pre-determined evolution of conflict? If the leadership is a potential candidate for imposing such order, what happens if the leadership changes? Parties or groups in war are very rarely ordered, homogeneous bodies. More often than not, they are characterised by internal power struggles and rivalries. The multi-level hierarchy of a party suggests that violent outbreaks may have been ordered by generals or commanders or even conducted by undisciplined elements within the party. The control of violence, within such a framework is less centralised. The stage of a conflict, determined by the level of violence is problematic to identify. Who identifies the stage the conflict is at? Is it the third party and if so which third party, or is it the negotiators? To the problem of who identifies the stage of conflict is added the problem of the stages of conflict themselves. The period prior to the convening of negotiations is very often characterised by an increase in open hostilities designed to secure a stronger bargaining position at the outset of negotiations. Does this outbreak of violence constitute a stage in the evolution of conflict or is it ignored on the basis that it is contrived for specific political ends? These questions highlight the risks involved in interpreting what are likely to be mixed and confused signals and the virtual impossibility of ever being sure of accurately gauging the stage a conflict is at.

³² *ibid.*, pp. 30-33

³³ *ibid.*, p.34. Thomas Princen concurs with this view in *Intermediaries in International Conflict* published just one year later, in 1992. In chapter two he writes, 'the policy choice between principal and neutral mediators is not an either-or proposition. Rather, what the principal-neutral framework suggests is that, for complex disputes that evolve over time, a combination of intermediaries carefully sequenced will be most effective.' Princen T., *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, *op. cit.*, p. 31

A further problem with the matching and sequencing approach prescribed by Fisher and Keashly relates to the practical problems involved in implementing such a controlled, sequencing of a range of third party interventions in any one conflict. Fisher and Keashly acknowledge the 'relative anarchy of the international system' and yet do not project the limitations such a system would have on the implementation stage of their prescriptions.³⁴ As of yet, there is no central body which controls the intervention of third parties in conflict. As a result, it would be extremely difficult, not to say impossible, to successfully implement an ordered succession of third parties, each adopting a specific role. Chris Mitchell identifies this problem when he observes,

'You've got this odd situation where you've got what we usually call third parties, but they're usually 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th parties.'³⁵

This problem highlights the gap which exists between theoretical formulations and the viability of their practical implementation on the ground. Another criticism relates to the notion of conflict escalation. Might it be true to suggest that there may be 'conflicts within conflicts', especially in the case of protracted conflicts which may have passed through a period of relative calm. Would a time lapse (and if so what is the duration of this lapse), of non-violence followed by a new outbreak of violence result in the stages beginning again from the start? In other words, what is the maximum time interval which is allowed to elapse before the conflict is 'new' once again? Added to the problem of sequencing is the problem of matching. The Fisher and Keashly model seeks to match one particular form of third party intervention to a particular stage in the conflict escalation. This is based on the principle that the salient features of a conflict, depending on the stage it has reached, are either subjective, based on elements such as mistrust and misperception, or they are objective, and as such relate to more substantive issues of interest. This dichotomy implies an 'either-or' formula.³⁶ Only one form of third party intervention is proposed at any one stage. Is it accurate to conclude the absence of a dimension of a conflict on the

³⁴ Fisher and Keashly. *op. cit.*, p. 33

³⁵ Interview with Dr. Chris Mitchell, 19 May 1997, Maryland, Virginia, USA

basis that specific features which signal its existence may be overtaken or eclipsed by other features of a conflict? Might a more inclusive set of prescriptions for modes of third party intervention in conflict lead to increased chances of successful interventions? In his investigation of third party international intervention in internal conflict in Africa, Makumi Mwangiri proposes a simultaneous application of modes of third party intervention which aim at conflict settlement and conflict resolution.³⁷ Such an approach, he argues would go further towards addressing the range of discontents which extend from those relating to objective factors, towards a range whose characteristics are more subjectively determined. The term he gives to such an approach is 'dual diplomacy'. He writes, '[i]n dual diplomacy, the two tracks are not mutually exclusive, but act as valuable components of the same conflict management process.'³⁸

In spite of the weaknesses of the contingency model for third party intervention in conflict offered by Fisher and Keashly which have been discussed above, the model offers two valuable elements. Firstly, it acknowledges that various forms of third party roles and various third parties may be used effectively in conflict management. Secondly, the model also supports matching certain elements of a conflict situation with a third party role which may be better suited to performing a role of conflict management. The development of these elements, as presented by Fisher and Keashly has been criticised, however the nuclei of both prescriptions are valid and may be developed in order to generate further insights into effective ways forward for third party interventions in conflict. We now turn to Chris Mitchell's model for mediation which, published two years after the Fisher and Keashly model, develops certain aspects of their model and arrives at an interesting conception of mediation as a *process*.

³⁶ Webb, Koutrakou and Walters offer a critique of the Fisher and Keashly model with specific application to the Yugoslavian conflict. Webb K., Koutrakou V. & Walters M., 'The Contingency Model of Mediation in the Yugoslavian Conflict', (University of Kent Paper, 1995).

³⁷ Makumi Mwangiri's PhD. thesis entitled, 'The International Management of Internal Conflict in Africa: The Uganda Mediation, 1985' (University of Kent. 1994)

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 38

The framing of mediation as a process put forward by Chris Mitchell in an article published in 1993, builds on the contingency model for third party intervention in conflict.³⁹ Its main proposition is a relatively simple one. Departing from an assessment of mediation activities within the context of protracted conflicts, Mitchell stresses the need for a conceptualisation and practice of mediation which no longer sticks to the commonly, and he states, inaccurate representation of mediation as a single activity undertaken by a single entity. '[A] more accurate reflection of reality' he states would be to begin looking more closely at mediation as a 'process concept'.⁴⁰

'When I wrote that paper, I found it helpful to think about them [third parties] fulfilling roles and having particular effects or particular functions. And clearly there were some roles which are open to particular parties and not to others. There are some roles that some bigger organisations can play. There are some roles they do play, but there are some roles they can't play.'⁴¹

So far, there appears to be similarity with the prescriptions put forth by the Fisher and Keashly model. However, Mitchell goes further in his recommendations concerning third party interventions. Not only does he promote the use of various third parties performing a whole spectrum of roles, Mitchell supplements this by stating that these functions may be performed consecutively or simultaneously. It is this element which differentiates Mitchell's approach from the Fisher and Keashly model.

Unlike the Fisher and Keashly contingency model, Mitchell's prescriptions omit a rigid ordering of specific modes of third party responses to particular stages of a conflict. Indeed, the theoretical formulation of conflict and its progression in pre-determined stages is left absent. Rather, what is suggested is a list of *13 roles* which may usefully be

³⁹ Mitchell is reluctant to call his thoughts on 'mediation as a process', a 'model' stating that 'it's simply a list of jobs.' Interview with Dr. Chris Mitchell, 19 May 1997, Maryland, Virginia, USA

⁴⁰ Mitchell C., 'The Process and Stages of Mediation', Smock D.R (ed.), *Making War and Waging Peace*, (Washington, US Institute of Peace Press, 1993), p. 140

⁴¹ Interview with Dr. Chris Mitchell, 19 May 1997, Maryland, Virginia, USA

performed by *various* third parties.⁴² Jointly, the enactment of the various roles and the implementation of certain functions by the third parties, constitute a process. It is interesting to note that Mitchell's identification of thirteen roles may be usefully enacted by *an indefinite number of third parties performing any one or combination of roles at any time*. Mitchell's list of roles and his demonstration of what these roles should consist of, points to a broad conceptualisation of mediation which encompasses the range of functions to be performed from the conception of the 'idea stage' for the launching of a mediation process, through to the implementation stage. The 13 roles which he identifies are but 'some of the roles' which may successfully contribute to conflict resolution, and may therefore be incomplete.⁴³ However, Mitchell limits the enactment of these roles to external third parties. It is also significant to note that *not all* of the 13 roles have to be performed necessarily. It may be sufficient or indeed possible to perform some with a successful outcome. Mitchell's 'mediation-as-process' acknowledges the importance of role, but significantly *omits* any attempt to match mediator status with role enactment and also removes the time frame within which such roles are to be enacted. This results in a much broader conceptualisation of what is involved in a mediation process which allows for the inclusion of a wider range of variables which may impinge on the mediation process.

Two main elements of the model may be criticised. The first relates to the problematic area of third party role-playing and the second to the exclusion of internal parties who may conceivably perform these roles. The centrality assigned to the concept of 'role' in the Mitchell model brings with it a number of questions which are left unaddressed. What precludes an internal party from performing these roles? Role-playing is based on normative assumptions which elicit certain behavioural patterns to reflect a preconceived notion of the particular role to be performed. Who decides which role is to be enacted by a third party and when is this choice made? Is an external third party a rigid actor who has

⁴² The 13 roles identified by Mitchell are the following; explorer, convenor, decoupler, unifier, ensembler, envisioner, guarantor, facilitator, legitimizer, enhancer, monitor, enforcer and reconciler. It is interesting to note that the gamut of roles for various third parties as envisaged by Mitchell specifies roles which embrace the pre-negotiation period characterised by preparation, invitation and setting up the process, the negotiation process and the post-negotiation period of implementation. For an elaboration of the definitions of the above roles as fixed by Mitchell, see Mitchell, 'The Process and Stages of Mediation', in Smock D.R (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 142-147

⁴³ Mitchell C., *ibid.*, p. 146

his/her own role to perform regardless of the context in which he/she is situated or is a third party constantly reacting to a surrounding social context?

The conceptualisation of mediation-as-process introduced by Mitchell suggests a broader, more inclusive approach to the study and practice of mediation. However, exclusive focus on third party role playing, conceived as standing apart from his/her situation in a wider structure distorts this view. A second criticism of the Mitchell model is that it also isolates mediator role from his/her relationship with the negotiators, when a mediator's role may be influenced by the negotiators' perceptions of him/her. Oliver Richmond addresses this latter point and states,

'The disputants' views of mediation have been accorded little or no attention in the debates surrounding mediation, which have tended to examine the process from an external point of view. Yet, the disputants' views are an integral part of the dynamism of the process and, as such, may provide important insights for the analyst.'⁴⁴

The application of a discourse analytic framework to the study of the conflict resolution process overcomes the problem of normative projections contained within the concept of 'roles' and focuses analysis on changing interpretations characterised by a highly political interactive discursive process. By relocating the focus of attention onto the way in which various interventions impinge on discourses which construct the conflict, the spotlight is shone on the dynamics behind the discursive construction of conflict. Situated within this conceptual framework, the focus is relocated away from the behaviour or 'role' of the third party, onto the impact of his /her intervention on the hegemonic discourse.

⁴⁴ Richmond O., chapter two. 'Being Mediated Upon: The Disputants' View A Theoretical Framework'. Ph.D. thesis *Being Mediated Upon*, (University of Kent at Canterbury, 1997), p. 37

Developing the Idea of Combining Track One and Track Two

The rigidity of the parameters suggested in track one and track two has been challenged by a number of scholars amongst which are Thomas Princen and Vivienne Jabri. In his investigation into the influence exercised on disputants by various third parties, Thomas Princen concludes that the act of intervention involves an element of uncertainty and surprise for the third party and for the disputants as ‘an intermediary’s role is negotiated and it is evolutionary.’⁴⁵ An intervention conceived as a fact finding mission for example, may end up becoming a formal mediation process. The reason for this is that the direction or evolution of negotiations is contingent on some factors which cannot be foreseen by the third party. Princen also finds that the distinction between what he terms ‘principal mediator’, a mediator with muscle, and a ‘neutral mediator’, one who acts as a neutral catalyst in negotiations, is not mirrored in such clear terms by the practice of mediation. Instead, he suggests that it may be more useful to conceive of the roles performed by third parties fitting along a ‘continuum’ extending from the coercive to the facilitative. However Princen believes that a third party’s role as either neutral or principal mediator is determined by the way in which the third party is perceived by the adversaries, or according to Princen by the mediator’s structural position or socio-political context. For example, although President Carter may have wanted to play a facilitative role during the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations, disputant expectations of his role, derived from his position as President of the United States, made such a facilitative role untenable and less effective.⁴⁶

Jabri develops the notion of a spectrum and reinforces the idea that a mediator’s social context constrains the role performed. She uses the term ‘spectrum’ to evoke a schematic representation of the roles of mediators plotted across a horizontal axis extending from the bargaining to the facilitative. This range allows for a diversity of mediator roles but omits relating mediator status to specific role enactment, allowing a third party to move

⁴⁵ Princen T., *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, op. cit., p. 220

⁴⁶ Princen, chapter four, ‘The Intermediary’s Decision Problems: Entry and Exit’, and chapter 6 ‘Camp David: Jimmy Carter Mediator Between Israel and Egypt 1977-79’, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, op. cit., pp. 59 and 104 respectively

along the spectrum to adopt a coercive or facilitative role depending on the conflict itself and the third party's evaluative criteria.⁴⁷ The idea of a spectrum situates the mediator relative to the negotiators and the structure. In so doing, Jabri allows for evolution and change in the social context or structure and in the negotiator's perceptions of possible choices open to them, the two being mutually constitutive. In allowing the mediator to react to and be influenced by the structure and the negotiators as situated agents therein, Jabri in effect views the conflict resolution process as an interactive process situated within the wider political context.

Situating Discourse Analysis Within a Theoretical Context

Discourse analysis relates narrative to an enabling or constraining context or environment. Within this environment, specific mediating elements extend certain discursive strands and suppress others. Certain discursive formations serve to make the boundaries of that framework more elastic and receptive to further discursive changes whilst others strengthen and extend the existing hegemonic discourse. A dual action is produced by mediating elements which as we shall see, necessarily function within the context of past discursive formations. The use of the term 'hegemonic discourse' implies the prior existence of a multitude of discursive strands and the domination of one 'hegemonic discourse' within this discursive realm. It is important for the purposes of this study, to note that there is the potential for an infinite number of discursive strands to exist within this 'symbolic order', but only one 'hegemonic discourse' can exist at any one time. The battle for discursive hegemony is an ongoing one, where the potential for replacement of the hegemonic discourse by another is ever present. The underpinning conditions necessary for the emergence and sustenance of a hegemonic discourse relate to *authority* or author-ity, which embraces notions of legitimacy and social dominance, in other words the political. Discourse analysis focuses on structures of continuity which perpetuate a given discourse, a hegemonic discourse, whilst counter-discourses which challenge the hegemonic discourse are excluded as dissident discourses. Jabri notes that

⁴⁷ Jabri V., *Mediating Conflict*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 24-29

‘agents can always make a difference in that they may reproduce structures of domination or contribute to their transformation through the display and enactment of counter-strategies and counter-discourses, through non-conformity, through the assertion of difference, and through voicing counter-hegemonic affiliations. Conflict may be seen as that instance of resistance against the constraints or limitations on the realm of possibilities for individuals and collectivities.’⁴⁸

The structures in place which act as parameters of inclusion/exclusion remain in place so long as they are left unchallenged. A hegemonic discourse is one which depends on the propagation of a certain exclusionist discourse which is itself sustained by notions of the illegitimate challenging the legitimate. A pre-condition for the sustenance of a hegemonic discourse becomes the extension of ‘a discourse which politically legitimates and reproduces a categorisation based on those who are defined as legitimately within against all external others, who are variously targets of direct violence and/or institutionalised discrimination.’⁴⁹

The emphasis placed by this study on the *political process constituting mediation* was formulated as such because of the connotations of power and manipulation implied by the term ‘political’. Since mediation addresses war, understanding the dynamics of the discursive process in motion used to construct war may provide indications for effectively transforming a violent confrontation into peaceful coexistence. Recourse to what David Campbell refers to as the ‘discourse of moral certitude’ is an important element in the social construction of war which is designed to de-humanise and demonize the opponent in order to give rise to ‘a social and political drama enacted so as to enable both the players and the audience to make the transition from peace to war.’⁵⁰ This transition from war to peace is impinged upon and indeed constructed by changing discourses. Campbell focuses on the socio-political dimension of conflict which constructs war through the erection of ‘black-

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Jabri, *Discourses on Violence*, op. cit., p. 138

⁵⁰ Campbell D., *Politics Without Principle*, (London, Lynne Rienner, 1993), p. 2. The quote is taken from p. 17

white' dichotomies.⁵¹ The scope for debate and re-interpretation is removed through the constraints imposed by certain *interpretations* of the conflict and the protagonists. Within this framework, narrative structures create war and it is through them that violence is diffused. The necessary conditions for war become those of representing the other in exclusionist discourse. The peacemaking process acknowledges the constructive role of discourses and attempts to reintroduce a range of *alternative representations or interpretations*. Situated within such an epistemology, the spotlight is removed away from the notion of 'role' or 'roles' played by various third parties, onto a conceptualisation of mediation as a highly political, discursively interactive process in which the process of mediation is linked to and impinged upon by other present and emerging discursive strands. Discourse analysis as the section above has sought to illustrate, assumes an agency/structure interplay. As such, it is useful at this point to allude briefly to the theory of structuration as it informs the epistemology used in this study.⁵²

As has already been suggested, conflict is constructed through certain narratives which define the conflict. The agency-structure debate has highlighted two contending approaches regarding this process. Is it primarily the situated agent or the social discursive and institutional context in which he/she is located which determines meaning? By acknowledging that both agency and structure, through a complex interactive process, impinge and partake in the process of production of meaning, Jabri seeks to overcome this dualism in proposing a mutually constitutive process.

'This form of analysis is critical in orientation in its recognition that the specific instance of conflict is always a manifestation of deeply-embedded social processes which situate conflict within a complex network of symbolic orders, interpretative schemes, and normative expectations reinforced through differential access to resources. The analysis also recognises that conflictual interaction is not merely subject to the influences of long term social forces, but is itself recursively implicated

⁵¹ Campbell D., chapter two, 'Black and White', *Politics Without Principle*, *ibid.*, p. 22

⁵² It would be beyond the remit of this thesis to enter into a detailed theoretical analysis of the agency-structure debate and the theory of structuration. It is however important to acknowledge the existence of such analyses.

in their reproduction. Similarly, conflict resolution as a response to conflict is influenced by and reproduces the social continuities which constitute social and political systems.⁵³

The application of the theory of structuration to conflict resolution constitutes a fundamental change in epistemology and methodology. In sharp contrast to conventional approaches to mediation which assess the roles of protagonists and the third party as a contained decision-making process, the acknowledgement that conflict is a situated social manifestation which is defined by broader socio-political structures and is itself implicated in the continuity of these narratives, redefines the causes of conflict and the processes for their resolution. Attention is drawn to the complex socio-political interactions which surround and impinge upon a conflict. Within this conceptual framework, the task of the mediator is no longer solely focused on influencing the protagonists, but now also impinges and is impinged upon by the wider institutional and discursive continuities in which the conflict is embedded. There are now two-way arrows which link mediator activity to the protagonists and also to the structures which surrounds them.⁵⁴

The application of discourse analysis to the study of mediation highlights the centrality of the role of 'interpretation' to the mediation process. Before assessing the differing theories presented by Said and Ricoeur with regards to the constitutive interplay between symbol, context and meaning, we shall first turn briefly to the work of Laclau and Mouffe which accounts for the production of meaning, its partial fixation and the role of discourses within this discursive framework.

The Socio-Political Interplay Involved in the Production of Meaning

For the purposes of this study which is concerned with the interaction between changing discourses and the process of mediation, the theory developed by Laclau and Mouffe is particularly useful. In seeking to account for changes within the international political arena, they quote Benveniste who writes:

⁵³ Jabri V., 'Agency, Structure, and the Question of Power in Conflict Resolution', *Paradigms*, op. cit., p. 53

‘Whoever says system says arrangement or conformity of parts in a structure which transcends and explains its elements. Everything is so *necessary* in it that modifications of the whole and of the details reciprocally condition one another. The relativity of values is the best proof that they depend closely upon one another in the synchrony of a system which is always being threatened, always being restored. The point is that all values are values of opposition and are defined only by their difference---.’ (italics in original)⁵⁵

This suggests that meaning can never be fixed permanently, but is always threatened with change or reinterpretation. This is because the arena is defined by its open, indeterminate, structure which is constituted by a series of relatively stable, but not permanent discursive formations defined by a system of differences. Within such a theoretical framework, meaning is established when elements, or ‘floating signifiers’, become fixed or engaged through an articulatory practice which redefines their identities as a result of this practice. ‘Discourse’ is the term used by Laclau and Mouffe to refer to ‘the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice.’ Each differential position within a discourse is called a ‘moment’.⁵⁶ Within such a framework, narratives are generated through a system of differentiation which is situated in a socio-political space. The condition of openness of this social space determines its temporary, character.⁵⁷ It is important to highlight that discourses as they are defined by Laclau and Mouffe and as they are used in this study, refer to textual images or narratives. The interplay between these various discourses determine fixation or dislocation within this system of differentiation. As Laclau and Mouffe assert,

‘the practice of articulation as fixation/dislocation of a system of differences, cannot consist of purely linguistic phenomena; but must instead pierce the entire material

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 62

⁵⁵ Benveniste E., *Problems in General Linguistics*, (Miami, 1971), pp. 47-8, quoted in Laclau E. & Mouffe C., chapter three, ‘Beyond the Positivity of the Social: Antagonisms and Hegemony’, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (Norfolk, Thetford Press, 1985), p. 106

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 105

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 140-1

density of the multifarious institutions, rituals and practices through which a discursive formation is structured.’⁵⁸

Two additional features of this theoretical construct are also significant for the purposes of studying changing discourses. Firstly, the impossibility of the non-discursive, that is to say that all meaning is acquired through a particular discursive condition of emergence which involves an ‘articulatory practice’.⁵⁹ Secondly, that this discursive environment is dominated by a centrifugal force or hegemonic discourse. The practice of articulation fixes meaning which is constantly threatened by redefinition. These moments of fixed, temporary meaning are referred to as ‘nodal points’ by Laclau and Mouffe.⁶⁰ Within this framework, there exists a force for domination by emergent discourses.

‘Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre.’⁶¹

When this occurs, a hegemonic discourse is constituted and occupies a space in which a specific ‘conception of the social’ dominates and temporarily fixes meaning within the discursive realm.⁶² However, the very condition of openness of the social ensures the possibility for change or redefinition. The theory developed by Laclau and Mouffe, highlighted above, informs the theoretical underpinnings of changing discourses as they are used in this study. The inter-dependent, differentiated relationship which defines identity, the openness of the discursive realm which enables change and the conditions of emergence of a hegemonic discourse, jointly define an epistemology which will inform and guide this research project. In the next section, the predominant divergence in views amongst certain scholars relates to the degree to which the text is anchored in a fixed world of meaning. Two scholars, Ricoeur and Foucault may be plotted on different ends of a spectrum which represents the two poles of this argument.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 109

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 107

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 113

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 112

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 93

Pre-empted with the proviso that the distinction which he makes is done so in order to facilitate analytic clarification, Paul Ricoeur sets up an opposition in relation to meaning between the oral and the written. Ricoeur believes that whereas speech is given an amplified exact meaning which is rendered by virtue of '*the situation of discourse*', in contrast, the text is deprived of a similar physical 'circumstantial' and 'perceptual' backdrop which serves to anchor meaning and is, as a result, suspended in a galaxy of potential meanings.⁶³ The reference in the case of the written word is not absent. It is rather provided by the reader at the moment of reading. What this suggests is similar to the emphasis provided by certain post-modern writings on the limitlessness of interpretations. The potential for a hierarchy of meaning is removed since all readings are necessarily mis-readings due to the absence of a fixed reference. The text within this framework is without a world.

Edward Said challenges this theory on two levels; first, he refutes the argument that the text is not endowed with its own unique 'worldliness', and second that in both the written and the oral, a conflict of forces exists.⁶⁴ Said supports these counter-claims by drawing on examples in the literary text. In so doing, he effectively illustrates a diametrically opposed theory of discourses to that presented by Ricoeur. He states that, 'texts have ways of existing that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place and society - in short, they are in the world and hence worldly.'⁶⁵ Said believes Ricoeur's theory is based on 'simplified idealisation' which does not take into account the asymmetrical relationship which exists between hearer and speaker in discursive relations.⁶⁶ It is at this juncture that the significance of such a theoretical excursion into the domain of literary criticism, to the study of discourses in relation to the peacemaking process becomes clearer. If as Said argues, neither the spoken nor the written word is as redundant and arbitrary as is implied in the exegesis provided by Ricoeur, then the counter-argument that texts are instilled with a sometimes subtle, yet always present level of *political* meaning, which is used here in its broadest sense to relate to notions of power, becomes particularly relevant to the study of the peacemaking process. There exists an

⁶³ Ricoeur P., 'What is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation', in Rasmussen D., *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology: A Constructive Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Ricoeur* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1971), p. 138

⁶⁴ Said E., *The World, The Text and the Critic*, (London, Vintage, 1983), p. 34.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 35

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 48

interactive process between the text and the world in which it is produced, that is to say the text and its context. This implies that there are boundaries which circumscribe the field of meanings which can be extrapolated from the text. In this way, 'texts impose constraints on their interpretation'.⁶⁷ Before elaborating on Said's thoughts with regards to the situation of the critic and the critical essay produced, to the text and the application of such inquiries into the domain of mediation, it would be useful to elaborate further on the notion of power as it is used by authors of texts. Michel Foucault is at the forefront of this school of thought and it is to him that we now turn. The production of texts is, according to Foucault itself constrained by forces, invisible forces at play which seek to control the nature of the text. Extending what has been developed above, this leads back to the dialectic relationship between the world and the text. Foucault develops archaeological analyses of systems of discourse. He posits that,

'in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and dangers'.⁶⁸

Discourse here is used to refer to that which is written and spoken. The power play of inclusion/exclusion is linked to shifting notions of legitimacy/illegitimacy. Foucault elaborates;

'In a society such as our own we all know the rules of *exclusion*. The most obvious and familiar of these concerns what is *prohibited*. We know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything. We have three types of prohibition, covering objects, ritual with its surrounding circumstances, and the privileged or exclusive right to speak of a particular subject; these prohibitions interrelate, reinforce and complement each other, forming a complex web, continually subject to modification. I will note simply the areas where this web is most tightly woven today, where the danger spots are most numerous, are those dealing with politics and sexuality ... In appearance, speech may well be of little account, but the prohibitions surrounding it soon reveal its links with desire and power ... Speech is

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 39

⁶⁸ Foucault M., 'The Discourse on Language', *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M Sheridan Smith (New York, Pantheon, 1972), p. 216

no mere verbalisation of conflicts and systems of domination ... it is the very object of man's conflicts.'⁶⁹

With reference to the quote above, 'prohibitions' are put into place by 'tightly woven webs' in order to ensure certain 'systems of domination'. The realm of 'politics' is identified by Foucault as being amongst the top two most sensitive issue areas in his view (along with sexuality), and as such necessitates the reinforcement of the webs of domination, control and suppression spun around it. Also interestingly for the purposes of this study, speech is given a central position due to its importance as a tool of expression. According to Foucault's reading of the political dynamics in motion, it is the prime force which has the power to dictate change of the structures in place and as such is described by Foucault as 'the very object of man's conflict.'⁷⁰ This informs and supports the representation of the mediation process in this study as a broad, multi-textual discursive realm. In a comparable way to that in which a critic addresses a text and produces a critical essay about it, so too the third party intervening in a violent conflict situation addresses the conflict and produces discourses or texts. The importance of extending this metaphor relates to what Said proposes is the nature of this triadic relationship between text, critic and essay.

The essay according to Said may reflect the author in three main ways. The place of the essay, Said suggests 'involves relations, affiliations, the critics fashion with the texts and audiences they address; it also involves the dynamic taking place of a critic's own text as it is produced.'⁷¹ The area circumscribed by Said in this quote is reminiscent of James Wall's focus on the 'mediated negotiated system' which underscores the importance of constituency and other social elements to the peacemaking process.⁷² Wall does not use the methodology of discourse analysis, however it is useful to allude to his formulations through the lens of discursive change. The constraints imposed on the negotiators by constituency considerations are highlighted by Wall. In effect Wall identifies a link between negotiator and constituency where the latter may indirectly or directly impinge on the

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, *op. cit.*, p. 50

formulations or constructions of the former. A linkage is highlighted by Wall's formulations analogous to the dynamics of discursive interplay. The first of the ways in which an essay is influenced by its author, relates to the relationship of the essay to the text in question. 'How does it come to the text of its choice? How does it enter that text? What is the concluding definition of its relation to the text and the occasion it has dealt with?'⁷³ Applying these prescriptions to a peacemaking forum, the emphasis is placed on determining the initial circumstances of the relationship between third party and conflict addressed and a similar assessment at the conclusion of that particular intervention. This is a practical tool which may be applied during research in order to ascertain or gauge shifts in discourses around the conflict at particular moments in its life cycle.

The second mode relates to the essay's intention in approaching the text. 'Is the critical essay an attempt to identify, or identify with, the text of its choice? Does it stand between the text and the reader or to one side of one of them?'⁷⁴ These are central questions which apply to the relationship between third party and the protagonists to the conflict as a means of uncovering third party partiality or bias. The third mode of relation takes into account the role history is allowed to play in the production of the essay. 'Is the essay a text, an intervention between texts, an intensification of the notion of textuality, or a dispersion of language away from a contingent page to occasions, tendencies, currents, or movements in and for history?'⁷⁵ The role of the critic within the framework of reference erected by Said, is a central and powerful one. For it is he/she who 'is responsible to a degree for articulating those voices dominated, displaced, or silenced by the textuality of texts. Texts are a system of forces institutionalised by the reigning culture at some human cost to its various components.'⁷⁶ This situates Said firmly within the Foucaultian school. The systems of dominance in place, the struggle between asymmetrical units within that frame strapped into place by the invisible threads of webs spun by forces at play designed to secure the status quo, are similar in the models erected by both Foucault and Said.

⁷² Wall J., 'Mediation: An Analysis, Review, and Proposed Research', op. cit., pp. 157-180. Wall's conception of mediation is assessed earlier in this chapter.

⁷³ Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, op. cit., p. 50

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 51

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 53

Said and Foucault's work investigates the nature of the relationship which exists between emerging narratives and the hegemonic discourse. According to Laclau and Mouffe, a hegemonic discourse is sustained by disguising or concealing its arbitrary base and by marginalising resistant forces to it.⁷⁷ The latter point is informed by Campbell who assesses what he calls the 'discourse of moral certitude'; the purposeful interpretations generated by parties in order to legitimate war.⁷⁸ The area of nuance or debate is removed so that only 'blocks' remain and differentiation or 'shades of grey' are concealed. Does this suggest that one of the roles of a third party is to re-introduce this middle ground and to re-generate debate about the other? The underlying thread would appear to be the focus on the importance of the text and discursive constructs. If indeed structures of domination and suppression are mediated by the text so that one textual representation, speech, according to Foucault is 'no mere verbalisation of conflicts and systems of domination --- it is the very object of man's conflicts', interpretations contained in discursive formations relate to other elements within the same discursive arena.⁷⁹ Locating these elements on a grid or web-like structure and providing some explanation for their emergence and their political implications, would serve to uncover the dynamics of this mutually constitutive relationship (political framework/text) and inform the field of mediation.

Conclusion

The application of discourse analysis to the mediation process implies a preoccupation with the genesis of meaning and its symbolic representation. This approach differs fundamentally from conventional analyses of the mediation process which adopt an epistemological position based on the idea that language mirrors nature. A discourse analytic framework suggests that language *constructs* the world.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Laclau and Mouffe, *op. cit.*, p. 77

⁷⁸ Campbell, *Politics Without Principle*, *op. cit.*, p. 2

⁷⁹ Foucault M., 'The Discourse on Language', *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, *op. cit.*, p. 216

⁸⁰ Shapiro M.J., 'Textualising Global Politics', Der Derian J. & Shapiro M.J (eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations*, (New York, Lexington Books, 1989), p. 14

This chapter has sought to illustrate why a discourse analytic approach to mediation, drawing on discourse analytic premises, is a better epistemological approach to the study of mediation than the universalist, structuralist approach, adopted by much of the conventional literature on mediation. Firstly, conventional approaches to mediation, particularly track one, regard mediation as a narrow, circumscribed act and not as an interactive process incorporating agency and structure. *Conventional mediation literature has not paid enough attention to the ways in which discursive representations of a conflict impact upon the mediation process.* Secondly, the need to understand through simplification has removed important elements which are crucial to the mediation process, elements such as the environment or structure in which the process of mediation occurs.⁸¹ Thirdly, conventional approaches to mediation focus on the triadic relationship between the third party and the negotiators. Little, if any consideration is given to the way in which the third party and the negotiators are influenced by the structure in which they are situated; how this influences their decision-making process and the narratives they produce. Similarly, there appears to be a lack of analysis concerned with how discourses generated through the mediation process, impinge upon structural continuities.

The application of a discourse analytic framework to the study of the mediation process proposed in this thesis, is an attempt to push out the parameters which delineate that which constitutes mediation. In an effort to enhance our understanding of the mediation process, this thesis offers an inclusive, complex analysis of mediation as a highly interactive, political process, constituted not only by the triadic relationship between a third party and two negotiators, but is also a situated process impinged upon by relational as well as structural factors.

⁸¹ Webb K. notes, 'It is the function of theories and models to simplify as an aid to understanding. However, it may be the case that in this field [international relations], the theorising has over-simplified.' 'Third Party Intervention and the Ending of Wars', *Paradigms, the Kent Journal of International Relations*, (Vol. 9, No. 2, Winter 1995), pp. 31-2

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Overview: The Emergence of Five Core Themes in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Introduction

This chapter serves as the historical reference section of the thesis designed to introduce the chosen case study, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by providing a historical backdrop to this protracted dispute. It does not set out to provide a blow by blow account of the conflict. Instead, chapter two presents an overview, with focus on moments in the conflict's history which have, with hindsight, constituted key turning points in its evolution. Within this period, significant phases in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are the Arab-Israeli wars and the response of the international community encapsulated in United Nations resolutions, particularly United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. It was conflict in 1991 and the Gulf War, which once again underlined the centrality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to stability in the region. Once the Allies, led by the United States had won the war, President Bush convened an international peace conference at which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be discussed. The conference opened in Madrid and then moved to Washington. The Madrid and Washington rounds as they were referred to, unfolded first over a period of months and then years. The secret Oslo channel began whilst these official negotiations were underway and so there was an overlap between both sets of negotiations. The secret channel which was at first conceived as a secondary channel of communication, overtook the official negotiations in Washington and culminated with the signing of the Declaration of Principles document between Israel and the PLO in September 1993.

Utilising a broadly chronological approach, salient features of the conflict emerge which may be distilled into five core themes. Each of these themes, at particular moments in time, were erected and fixed by a set of narratives or discourses which, I suggest, are analogous to

'tramlines', fixing the direction of future discourses. The term 'discursive tramlines' is used to communicate the idea that salient discourses construct the conflict around a fixed set of reference points. The history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveals five powerful themes which constituted the conflict as;

1. multi-layered or "Arab-Israeli"
2. zero-sum or a win-lose situation
3. the negation of a Palestinian identity
4. a discourse on Israeli security
5. a discourse on autonomy as opposed to self-determination for the Palestinians

The History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

'The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.[-]therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.'¹

Much has been written about the Arab-Israeli conflict over the years by political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and economists amongst others, who have sought to offer various insights and commentaries pertaining to a specific aspect of the conflict. The wealth of literature connected to this topic reveals the complex nature of the problem which incorporates a number of strands. What is apparently a political quest by the conflicting parties is influenced or even potentially generated by other variables.² The image of concentric, outwardly expanding circles is a useful metaphor which depicts two characteristics of this particular struggle. Firstly, the way in which one act can have wider repercussions which gradually gain momentum and expand outwards, and secondly that an apparently isolated manifestation can be contained within and related to other

¹ Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, quoted in Said E. *Orientalism* (London, Penguin, 1978,1985)

² Rubinstein A., 'Transformation: External Determinants' in Rubinstein, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York, Harper Collins, 1991) p. 59. where he lists 7 identifiable external variables, which the protagonists 'seek to exploit

manifestations. Edward Said's reflections on what he labels 'orientalism' illustrate the way in which a representation, is never neutral, but is always coloured by 'an infinity of traces' which do not necessarily have an identifiable author and which may not be easily recognisable.

'[T]he question of our national liberation is entwined with our cultural quest, which is manacled to everything that could deprive it of the ability to freely address questions regarding the fate of the world around us, the environment, or any of the questions of the 21st. century as long as we are tied to a golden age of colonialism in its most conventional form.'³

In 1978 Edward Said published *Orientalism* in which he argues convincingly, through sustained reference to literary and historical sources, that the Orient as it is perceived by the Occident is an inaccurate and stilted representation of a region and its peoples.⁴ Underlying this mode of reasoning, lies a deeper philosophical reflection on the epistemology of knowledge and truth. The importance of his writings with regards to the task at hand lies in the complex and relative nature of the perception of the 'other'.⁵ The relevance of Said's hypothesis to this section is twofold. It applies simultaneously to the protagonists' views of one another as it does to the West's perception of the Arabs of the Middle East. As the analogy of the outwardly expanding concentric circles alluded to earlier demonstrates, the one feeds into the other. The vast network of inter-relations between states and other groups draws on certain perceptions and seeks to propagate them if they serve its own interests. During the Cold War, Middle East states acted as satellites of the Superpowers, fighting their war by proxy. With the collapse of Communism in the former Soviet bloc and Eastern Europe, many patterns of power relations between states

but cannot control'. These are; technology, US-Soviet rivalry in the region, intra-Arab rivalries, the UN, oil, anti-Semitism and international terrorism.

³ Darwish M., 'Elegy of a Peace Yet to be Born', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, (24-30 April 1997)

⁴ The terms 'Occident' and 'Orient' suggest two monolithic, homogeneous blocs. As such these symbols serve to condense complex socio-political discourses into uni-dimensional entities, removing multiple levels of differentiation between and within both groups. This offers one illustration of the powerful constitutive role of discourses.

⁵ Goitein S.D writes in *Jews and Arabs - Their Contact Through the Ages*, (New York, Schocker Books, 1955) p. 11, that 'it is not so much practical considerations as emotional factors which determine the present attitude of the Arab peoples to the Jewish state.'

were disrupted and other configurations arose out of the vacuum that was created. However, one constant has arguably remained and that is, the image of the Arab and Middle East states.

Said claims that a carefully developed image of the Orient was nurtured and circulated in the West. The eighteenth century novel by authors such as Gustave Flaubert served as one vehicle for this. It was the asymmetrical power relations of the Orient and the Occident that served to create the conditions that led to the propagation of a largely romanticised image of the Orient.⁶ Vladimir Jabotinsky, the leader of the Zionist Revisionist Party was to capitalise on the image of the Orient held by the West in order to justify the need for the establishment of a Jewish state which he contended would contain Arab extremism.⁷ Discursive structures which set the Jews and Palestinians on a collision course, were erected through a gradual, interactive, highly political, inter-textual process. Discursive formations emerging from agencies located in distant lands were to impinge upon and circumscribe discourses articulated in the Holy Land. The following section attempts to illustrate this.

Early History of Jews and Arabs

At the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a relatively small area of land in the Middle East which stretches from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea to the West Bank of the river Jordan. Measuring 21,501 km within pre-1967 borders, and including all of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, this stretch of land has been the scene of carnage and bloodshed over the centuries.⁸ The zeal this land inspires is not determined by a sense of greed for natural mineral or petroleum wealth which it does not possess, but is inspired by a

⁶ Said E., *Orientalism*, op. cit., p. 204

⁷ Harkabi Y., *Israel's Fateful Decisions*, (London, Tauris, 1988), p. 346 where he writes that 'Israel regards itself and likes to be regarded as an outpost of the West in a more backward and undeveloped region of the Orient. This on the whole is still a view that the West accepts.' The author is the former head of Israeli military intelligence.

⁸ Figures quoted are those released in April 1991. Quoted in Beilin Y., *Israel, a Concise Political History*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1992), p. 1

spiritual drive which generates a passionate and sustained attachment to the land.⁹ Of primordial importance to the three monotheistic faiths, Jerusalem contains the Dome of the Rock, the third holiest site in the Islamic faith after Mecca and Medina, from where prophet Mohammad is believed to have departed to heaven. The church of the Holy Sepulchre, revered by Christians is also in Jerusalem as is the Wailing Wall, one of the most important religious monuments in the Jewish faith. The spiritual importance of the “Holy Land”, itself a discursive construct, has had historic ramifications and explains the highly emotive nature of this protracted conflict. The overriding characteristic of The Holy Land is its passage from one ruler to the next, from one empire to the next. Such is the history recounted in the bible that the current Arab-Israeli conflict, from a relative perspective appears to continue a long established tradition of strife and bloodshed rather than constituting a new phenomenon. What is at first striking is not the differences and bifurcations one would instinctively associate with the parties to a conflict, it is rather the similarities between them.

A Semitic people, Jews and Arabs are descendants of Abraham. The bible describes how the followers of Jacob (son of Isaac and grandson of Abraham) were defeated and held captive by the Pharaoh of Egypt before being led to freedom by Moses. There is great dispute amongst scholars as to the accuracy of the chronological accounts related, pre-1000 BC. However, significantly less polemic exists with regard to events post 1000 BC which saw the unity of Israel under King David.¹⁰ By the eighth century BC, whilst under the rule of David's son Solomon, the kingdom was conquered by the Assyrian Empire. In 588 BC the Babylonian Empire succeeded in defeating Assyrian forces and occupied Jerusalem. Repeated destruction of Jerusalem became a common feature as various rulers strove to occupy the strategic region on the shores of the Mediterranean. By the end of the sixth century BC, Jerusalem became part of the Persian Empire. Alexander the Great attacked and defeated the Persians in 323 BC. His rule was succeeded by that of the Egyptians, followed by Syrian rule before Jewish independence was once again restored after a

⁹ Giardina A., Liverani M. & Amoretti B., *La Palestine-Histoire d'une Terre* (Paris, Editions l'Harmattan, 1990) p. 11 in which they discuss the disparity between the complex nature of the historico-cultural factors and the weak, fragmented geographic area they pertain to.

¹⁰ Bethell N., *The Palestine Triangle*, (Great Britain, Ebenezer Baylis, 1979) pp. 11-12. See also Ovcendale R., *The Origins of the Arab-Israeli Wars*, (London, Longman, 1992) and Ferguson P., *The Palestine Problem*, (London, Martin Brian & O'Keeffe, 1973)

successful revolt during the second century BC. In 63 BC however, Jerusalem was once again destroyed and captured by Pompeii of Rome and the reign of the Roman Empire began. In 70 AD Jerusalem was burned to the ground, this time by Roman forces under Titus, whilst quelling a Jewish rebellion. Jerusalem flourished under the rule of Constantine who was converted to Christianity during the fourth century AD. He was responsible for the construction of many great buildings during his rule. However the Roman Empire was beginning to weaken and by the early seventh century, was unable to withstand the force of the Persian armies.¹¹

The seventh century is a landmark in the history of the Holy Lands as it saw the propagation of Islam and with it, the birth of a different kind of zeal in warfare required as part of a Muslim's religious duties. Less than fifteen years after the Prophet Mohammed's flight from Mecca to Medina in 622, the first wars waged by Muslim armies were fought in Ajnadain in 634 and in Yarmuk in 636, defeating Byzantine armies and instating a religious figure as political leader. The all encompassing nature of the Islamic faith dissolved distinctions between the religious and the political. The political mode of organisation in areas under Islamic rule was an extension of religious rules of governance.¹² This point becomes central at the time of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the import of a Westphalian mode of political organisation, with the allocation of parts of the fractured Ottoman Empire to the Great Powers. The marriage of the religious with the political was not an exclusive feature of the Islamic faith. The Crusades which began in the eleventh century attest to the inextricability of the political and the religious in Jerusalem's history. It was as defenders of the Christian faith that the Crusaders fought the Turks of the Ottoman Empire. In 1099, Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders who established a unified area under one ruler, similar in shape and size to the subsequent area of Mandate Palestine. The victories of the Crusaders secured nearly one century of Christian rule in Jerusalem before it was again attacked. An Egyptian invasion of Jerusalem was followed by a Mongolian attack under Hulagu Khan. Conquered by the Ottoman Turks once again in 1517, Jerusalem, for the next 400 years, remained free of foreign invasions and enjoyed one of the longest periods of continuous stability. Inhabited by Muslims, Christians and Jews, Jerusalem under

¹¹ Bethell, *ibid.*, p. 13

Ottoman rule, revealed the potential for harmonious co-existence of adherents of the three faiths which has yet to be recaptured since being upset by Great Power intervention in the region in the wake of the First World War. Turkey's entry on the side of Germany and Austro-Hungary in 1914 lead to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and with it, the evaporation of the regional stability that was once enjoyed.

Narratives articulated in distant lands at the end of the nineteenth century created conditions which were to lead to great unrest in the Middle East several decades later. The persecution of the Jews on the basis of their race and religion began gaining momentum in Russia and Eastern Europe during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Pogroms were widespread and bloody. With no national home to call their own in which they would be protected, the Jews of Eastern Europe were at the mercy of gentile rulers. In 1894, an incident in France was to prove a turning point in the history of Zionism and would have far reaching repercussions for the Palestinians in the Middle East. What soon became known as the Dreyfuss Affair was another case of Jewish persecution, but of a different kind to that of the pogroms. Overt acts of Jewish slaughter were in this instance replaced by the accusation and imprisonment of a French Jewish officer for espionage. The slow and much publicised trial revealed the extent of Anti-Semitic feeling within French society. A young Austro-Hungarian journalist who was reporting the trial concluded that the only way of protecting Jews was for Jews to protect themselves. Two years later in 1896 Theodore Herzl wrote *Der Judenstaat* in which he articulated the need for a Jewish state. Zionism, which broadly defined, is the ideal of returning the Jewish people to the biblical land of Jewish origin, began to gain currency.¹³ Herzl organised the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland in 1897. The Congress created the Zionist Organisation and drafted a programme that stated that, '[t]he aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law.'¹⁴ What began as an idea developed in reaction to European Anti-Semitism, was swiftly translated into a political manifesto. Meanwhile, Jewish immigration to the Holy Land had already begun.

¹² Garfinkle A.M, 'Genesis', in Rubinstein, op. cit., p. 5

¹³ For a detailed historical investigation of the origins and development of the various strands of Zionism, see Hertzberg A. (ed.), *The Zionist Idea* (New York, Temple Book, 1959)

¹⁴ Quoted in Ziring L., *The Middle East: A Political Dictionary* (California, ABC-Clio, 1992), p. 254

Changing Demographics: Inter-Communal Clashes and the Struggle for Statehood

Jewish settlements in Palestine are divided into phases called *aliyah* (ascension to Zion) and the first recorded is between 1882-1903 during which time 25,000 Jews entered Palestine. The settlers of the second *aliyah*, between 1905-1914 numbered 40,000 and are claimed to be the most important in establishing the pattern of relationships, the institutional structure, and the ideological basis for the Jewish state.¹⁵ Chronologically, history reveals that immigration ran parallel to persecutions in Europe and to political efforts to secure a Jewish state.¹⁶ Although there was some debate pertaining to the location of the Jewish state (there were suggestions for a state in Argentina and Cyprus), the overwhelming feeling of members of the Zionist Organisation focused on Palestine for historico-religious reasons.¹⁷ Jewish immigration to Palestine continued steadily, especially after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the positive political overtures of the British government vis-à-vis the status of the Jewish community in Palestine, crystallised in the Balfour Declaration of November 1917.¹⁸ The Balfour Declaration was formulated to appease Palestinians and Jews alike. However, its ambivalent formulations served to exacerbate an already tense situation.¹⁹ The revolts that followed and the findings of various Commissions expressed the friction between the two camps. The Peel Commission of Inquiry, reported in 1937 that research carried out suggested co-habitation of Jews and Arabs within the same territory would prove untenable. Linguistic, cultural and traditional differences rendered any possibility for peaceful co-existence and eventual integration highly improbable. Consequently, a two-state alternative was put forward, weighted heavily in favour of the

¹⁵ Ziring, *ibid.* For a closer study of Jews in Palestine during the nineteenth century. See Parfitt T., *The Jews in Palestine 1800-1882*, (Great Britain, Boydell Press, 1987)

¹⁶ Carr E.H., *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939*, (London, Macmillan, 1939, 1991), p. 61. Carr identifies a direct correlation between periods of economic stress and the growth of anti-Semitism in Europe.

¹⁷ Owendale R., *The Origins of The Arab-Israeli War* (London & New York, Longman, 1984), p. 8

¹⁸ For an account of the transformation of the Palestinian-Zionist confrontation from a 'socio-cultural strife' to a political and national one, see Ma'oz M., 'The Jewish-Zionist & Arab-Palestinian National Communities: The Transposing Effect of a Century of Confrontation', in Spagnolo J.P (ed.) *Problems of The Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective* (Reading, Ithaca Press, 1992) p. 152. For an interesting historical investigation of Jewish nationalist agencies in Palestine, see Burstein M., *Self-Government of the Jews in Palestine Since 1900*, (Tel Aviv, Co-operative Printing, 1934)

Arabs geographically. This was the first time a partition proposal was advocated. As such it constitutes an important discursive watershed, for a Palestinian nation is implicitly acknowledged by Great Britain. However, the proposal was rejected by both Jews and Arabs, the Arabs arguing that the territories jointly called Palestine under the British Mandate were Arab territories and were to remain undivided. The Arabs perceived any division as unjust and illegal. The Jews who were to be allocated less than half of the land under a British mandate were equally convinced of the injustice of such a proposal to themselves. Riots by both communities expressed the deadlock reached.

The outbreak of the Second World War and the extermination of over six million Jews in concentration camps all over Europe was to have a profound effect on a small region in the Middle East. The end of a long and painful war revealed the atrocities that were committed by man against man. Photographs in newspapers and newsreels exposed the horrors of the concentration camps to a stunned world audience. What had previously been whispered and repeatedly denied or underplayed by world leaders was now confirmed in graphic detail. The guilt and sorrow experienced by a shocked public, prepared public opinion for the imminent creation of a Jewish state. The discourse which emerged at the Basle conference at the end of the 19th. century calling for a Jewish state in Palestine, was legitimised incrementally, first through articulation of the project by Great Britain in the Balfour Declaration and then in the partition plan proposed by the Peel Commission. The Holocaust generated further momentum for a Jewish state and created a discursive environment in which counter-discourses which challenged this project were effectively delegitimised. That a correlation exists between Nazi concentration camps and the creation of Israel seems self evident given the unfolding of events in the Middle East in the aftermath of the Second World War. The overwhelming Arab reaction to the creation of a Jewish state in former Palestine was one of a perceived injustice to the Palestinian people. They saw themselves paying for horrific acts that were committed in lands that were not there own and by a regime they had nothing to do with.

¹⁹ Bailey S.D, *Four Arab-Israeli Wars & The Peace Process* (London, Macmillan, 1990) p. 1. For a historical analysis of the origins of Great Britain's involvement in the Middle East, see Fromkin D., *A Peace to End All Peace, Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922*, (London, Penguin, 1989)

The Arab-Israeli Wars: Political Stalemate in the Middle East

The wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982 involved a confrontation between an Arab state(s) and Israel and each war was either an expression of Arab rejection of an Israeli state in mandate Palestine or it was related to the Palestine problem, both issues being intertwined. The Arab-Israeli wars all ended in conflict settlements which failed to address the core grievance which had led to war in the first instance. Instead, armistice agreements served to suspend hostilities but they failed to resolve the central point of contention which for the Palestinians and Arabs related to Palestinian claims to national self-determination in Mandate Palestine. Armistice agreements signed between Israel and Arab states indirectly provided Israel with at least a de-facto Arab recognition of its existence as a state in the region, highlighting the various, often implicit ways in which texts are constructed.²⁰ That a war was fought on average once every decade bears testimony to the unsatisfactory nature of those agreements. As such, the Arab-Israeli wars may be seen as episodes or chapters of the same conflict.

Successive Commissions and White papers failed to find a solution acceptable to both Jews and Arabs. The failure to sustain peace in Palestine may be attributed to a central flaw in British foreign policy of the day. In attempting to appease both Jews and Arabs simultaneously, they succeeded in satisfying neither. The ambivalent policy formulations contained in the Balfour Declaration issued in November 1917 signal the beginning of a discursive trend in that direction. Britain at the close of its Mandate in 1947, handed over the problem to the United Nations. In November 1947 the United Nations issued its partition plan which allocated 55% of Palestine to the Jews, who at that time, constituted less than one third of the entire population and owned less than 10% of the land.²¹ In order to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Mandate Palestine, forces of the Arab Legion attacked the fledgling state of Israel hours after its declared independence. As Ben-

²⁰ Kamhawi L.W, PhD. thesis entitled *Palestinian-Arab Relations: A Study of the Political Attitudes and Activities of the Palestinians in the Arab Host States: 1949-1967* (University of Kent, 1977) pp. 7-8. See also Yapp M.E, *The Near East Since the First World War*, (London, Longman, 1991) and Bailey S.D. *Four Arab-Israeli Wars & the Peace Process*, (London, Macmillan, 1990)

²¹ Ovendale, op. cit. p. 119

Gurion had foreseen, the survival of Israel lay in the strength of the Israeli Defence Forces.²² On 29 February 1949, armistice agreements were signed between the belligerents. Israel secured 21% more land than it had been allocated under the 1947 partition plan. By the end of the first Arab-Israeli war, Israel covered close to 80% of Mandate Palestine.²³ The first wave of Palestinian refugees displaced by war, dates from the war of 1947. According to the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry set up at the end of the Second World War, there were almost 1 million legally certified Palestinian refugees in 1949. In April 1946 according to the same source, there were 226,000 Jewish refugees in Europe of which 100,000 were in concentration camps.²⁴ The first Arab-Israeli war was a landmark, for it effectively laid down powerful discursive tramlines around the issues of Palestinian identity and Palestinian territory and governance. The discursive representation of the 1948 war as an *Arab-Israeli* confrontation 'vindicated Ben-Gurion's policy of not recognising the Palestinians as a national entity' and ensured that 'for a number of years after the war, most Israelis shared the perception that the Palestinian people had ceased to exist; in their view, only the humanitarian problem of refugees remained.'²⁵

Continuing a chronological analysis of successive Arab-Israeli wars, the Suez-Sinai War which began at the end of October 1956 was fought by Israel, France and Britain in order to secure aims that would ensure their national interests.²⁶ As such it did not directly address the Palestinian issue, but was an extension of the colonial discourse in the Middle East. The intersection of regional domestic politics with wider colonialist aspirations by France and Britain maintained the region as the arena in which power politics were fought

²² *ibid.*

²³ Gainsborough J.R, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (Gower, 1986), p. 44. As a result of the 1948 war, Israel secured substantially more territory than it had been allocated under the UN Partition Plan of 1947, 'territory which had been originally allocated by General Assembly Resolution 181 to the Palestine Arabs.'

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 123

²⁵ Flapan S., 'Conclusion', *The Birth of Israel, Myths and Realities*, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1987), p. 237

²⁶ Ferguson's analysis of the Suez Crisis depicts the confrontation as a classic Third World struggle between a developing state, Egypt and its Western financiers. Egypt was attempting to free itself of foreign domination whilst at the same time, it needed foreign aid in order to modernise its economy. Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 65. For a study of the Suez Crisis which focuses on France's involvement in the affair, see Luethy H. & Rodnick D., *French Motivations in The Suez Crisis* (Institute for International Research, 1956). For an analysis of Britain's involvement in the Suez Crisis, see Carlton D., *Britain and The Suez Crisis* (London, Blackwell, 1988)

out and secured.²⁷ New power configurations had begun forming within the Arab states in the region in the aftermath of the humiliating defeat of 1949. Arab nationalism espoused by a younger generation eager to find a way of reversing the frustration of defeat had led to the election of Gamal Abd-El-Nasser by an alleged 99% of the Egyptian electorate.²⁸ Nasser's actions were conceived and implemented in order to serve his wider Philosophy of Revolution which aimed to secure an Islamic renaissance and Arab unity which was to include North Africa.²⁹ This aim directly threatened British interests in the Middle East and in Africa and its wider implications jeopardised British relations with the Muslim world. For the French, Nasser's political championing of the Algerian rebels' cause, made more dangerous by providing rebels with weapons, was unacceptable.

These various discursive threads were drawn together when plans to nationalise the Suez Canal emerged. The threat presented to Western European states lay in the fact that two-thirds of oil supplies destined to Western Europe passed through the canal. Britain had already decided that were diplomatic efforts to secure a reversal of Egyptian policy to fail, force would be used. The West sought to replace Nasser and the threat he posed, by a regime less hostile to Western interests.³⁰ Economic and political interests converged. The Arab states' perception of Western insertion and cultivation of an alien Zionist state in the region was untenable with a simultaneous Arab foreign and domestic policy orientation conceived to secure Western interests. Rebellion by an Arab leader was to prove confrontational. The Suez War was fought by Israel in order to curtail border attacks by the fedayeen (self-sacrificers). The fedayeen were established in April 1955 and were supported and financed by Egypt. In September 1956, Egypt blockaded the Straits of Tiran which had the dual effect of halting the movement of ships from the Red Sea to Eilat and flights of the Israeli airline El Al to South Africa. Inflammatory remarks broadcast on

²⁷ Ferguson engages in an interesting discussion in which she depicts the Suez affair as a classic Third World struggle between a developing state and its Western financiers. Egypt was attempting to free itself from foreign domination whilst at the same time, it needed foreign aid in order to modernise its economy. Ferguson, *The Palestine Problem*, op. cit., p. 65

²⁸ Ovendale, op. cit. p. 149

²⁹ In *Philosophy of Revolution* which Gamal Abdel Nasser wrote in 1954, two years after the overthrow of the Egyptian regime in the coup d'état of July 1952, he exposes his political doctrine which is founded upon Pan-Arabism and on the importance of supporting movements of national liberation.

³⁰ The economic and strategic importance of the Middle East region made Superpower intervention inevitable. See discussion in Chomsky N., *The Fateful Triangle* (London, Pluto Press, 1983) pp. 17-23

Egyptian radio on 29 September 1956 stating that an Israeli defeat was imminent heightened tensions in the region and secured Israeli resolve.³¹ Israeli foreign policy under the premiership of Ben-Gurion had foreseen the necessity for aggression vis-à-vis its Arab neighbours in order to secure Arab acceptance of the Israeli state. Nasser's plans to nationalise the Suez Canal brought Israeli, British and French discourses together in a joint narrative of violence.

For Britain and France, their short term interest was to secure the Suez Canal Zone, whilst broader, long term interests dictated a removal of a wilful Egyptian leader. The interests of Israel and the European powers coincided. Dayan, the Israeli Defence Minister later remarked that had it not been for Western participation in the attack, Israel would have most probably been unable to secure a victory alone.³² For Israel, its predominant military objective was not the Suez Canal, but the more strategically placed Straits of Tiran. The Israeli Defence Forces proved themselves once again, when only a few days after the invasion on 3 November 1956, they had already occupied nearly all of the Sinai desert except Sharm el Sheikh. The UN demanded a cease-fire. On November 14, the Knesset agreed to a withdrawal from the Sinai on condition that a satisfactory arrangement could be reached with the United Nations Emergency Force. Israel secured its main objective in going to war; free passage through the Straits of Tiran, whilst administration of the Gaza Strip returned to the Egyptians.

The Suez War was fought over issues that were left unresolved at the end of the 1948-49 war. As such it was a direct continuation of a conflict begun eight years earlier. A conflict settlement which had proved so unsatisfactory at the end of the first Arab-Israeli war was now used to end the Second Arab-Israeli war. The Suez War also highlighted the extent of the interplay between American domestic and foreign policy. President Eisenhower's initial reluctance to intervene militarily in the region in order to practice a policy of neutrality, was eventually deemed untenable with domestic considerations for re-election. The strength of the Jewish community in the United States meant that to ignore the wishes of such a powerful sector of the electorate would be tantamount to political

³¹ Ovendale, *op. cit.* p. 144

suicide.³³ The Suez War did not alter territorial acquisitions secured by Israel, but it did transfer administrative rule in Gaza from Israel to Egypt. The next Arab-Israeli war was fought in June 1967 and it is to that important discursive watershed that we now turn.

The cause of the 1967 war can be found in the unsatisfactory nature of the 1957 settlements. The period immediately preceding the outbreak of war, was one of mounting tension coupled with a certain reticence to engage in war. For Israel, any war fought with an army numerically superior to its own could prove disastrous. Consequently, it had developed a military doctrine between 1956 and 1966 which increased its military strength as well as developing the necessary training for reservists. Israel had prepared its entire population of 2.5 million to face an Arab enemy which could number 100 million. Victory could only be possible if the war was fought on the opponent's territory and that could only be secured by a pre-emptive offensive military strike. For Egypt, the defeat of the 1956-57 war made another possible military entanglement with Israel undesirable. However Nasser's broader visions of a united Arab world with himself as its leader precipitated his threatening actions towards Israel in May 1967. Clashes between Syrian and Israeli forces along their common border in April, in which six Syrian planes were shot down, coupled with signals that an Israeli attack on Syria was imminent, led to Nasser sending Egyptian troops into the Sinai which had up to that point been patrolled by UNEF forces.³⁴ Once again, as in the 1956 war, the closure of an international waterway by Egypt, this time the Gulf of Aqaba, led to the outbreak of the third Arab-Israeli war despite a flurry of diplomatic activity to deter war.³⁵ On 5 June 1967, an Israeli aerial attack destroyed the Egyptian air force. Within the next three days, Israel had managed to control the area from Gaza through to Sharm el Sheikh. By June 7, Jordanian forces were overwhelmed giving Israel control of

³² *ibid.*, p. 154

³³ For further analysis of the origins and evolution of the US-Israeli 'special relationship', see Schoenbaum D., *The United States and The State of Israel*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 183 and p. 330 in particular. The influence exercised by the Jewish lobby in the United States on the U.S government is as powerful in the closing decade of the twentieth century as it was in the 1950's. Smith notes that 'American politicians' commitment to Israel and their belief that it serves their geopolitical interests may waver, but they recognise the domestic political benefits of the alliance and use pro-Israeli groups to back their goals elsewhere.' Chapter ten, 'The "New World Order" and its Implications for the Middle East, 1984-91', Smith C.D, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 291

³⁴ Bailey, *op. cit.*, p. 222

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 223

the strategic areas of Jerusalem, Nablus, Jericho and the rest of the West Bank. On a third front, Israeli forces pushed back Syrian troops along Israel's northern border with Syria to occupy the Syrian Golan Heights on June 10. Within a matter of days Israel had secured its greatest victory. Israeli losses numbered 1000, whilst Arab casualties were estimated at 18,000.³⁶

Arab losses incurred during the 1967 war were to constitute the main issue of contention between the adversaries in future negotiations and significantly served to transform the discursive features of the conflict from one of a Palestinian-Arab claim to the whole of Mandate Palestine to one of Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied during the 1967 war, encapsulated in the formula of UN Security Council resolution 242 'land for peace'. Ismael notes the watershed signalled by the 1967 war which transformed the dynamics underpinning the Palestinian issue from the occupation of Arab lands to the demarcation of Israel's boundaries.³⁷ The 1967 war consolidated and affirmed Israel's existence in the international arena as Israel's existence was no longer the central focus for debate, but was now overtaken by Israel's occupation of Arab territories. Territorial acquisition by Israel of large areas of land previously populated by Palestinians led to the displacement and emigration of thousands more Palestinians. Similarly, the occupation of Jerusalem previously administered by Jordan was not only an Arab territorial loss but a devastating psychological blow. The symbolism associated with the Holy City now occupied by Israeli forces, underlined a Zionist presence in the symbolic heart of the Middle East. The humiliation felt by the Arab world would seek redress just six years later.

Remembered for the striking speed with which the Israeli Defence Forces pushed back Arab attacks on three borders simultaneously, the Six Day War had very significant repercussions. Territorial gains now placed the whole of mandate Palestine under Israel's control.³⁸ This allowed Israel to secure its borders from future hostile attacks whilst on a more abstract level, the astounding victory of the Israeli Forces also served to modify Israeli

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Ismael T. *The Arab Left*, (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1976), p. 40

and Arab thinking. The seed of a certain feeling of Israeli invincibility was sown with the realisation of the extent of territorial acquisitions. Conversely however, the devastating losses both territorial and psychological for the Arab states involved, were to set the scene for future wars fought for territorial recovery whilst also embedding further still, the feeling of injustice and confusion vented through growing Arab nationalism.³⁹ This episode arguably marked the end of Pan-Arabism as the unity of Arab action was shown to have failed. Guerrilla warfare by the armed wing of Fateh was to be used as an alternative strategy signalling the emergence of a distinct Palestinian voice, part of, yet distinct from the wider Arab whole. The 1967 war was therefore instrumental in the ascendance of Fateh to a dominant position within the PLO and with it, the ascendance of Palestinian nationalism which reached a turning point in its evolution.⁴⁰

The conspicuous exclusion of any reference to ‘Palestinians’ or the ‘Palestinian people’, mentioning only ‘refugees’ in UN Resolution 242 of November 1967, is particularly pertinent when considered in relation to the stated objectives of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the struggle for national *self-determination*. This objective is challenged and discursively negated by the use of the term ‘refugees’ to describe Palestinians. Secondly, the ambiguous formulation ‘withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict’ and not ‘the territories’, through omission of one word ‘the’ provided the protagonists with two opposing interpretations of this clause. Palestinians and Arabs believed the UN Resolution to call for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories whilst Israelis understood withdrawal to be contingent upon Israel’s security, an interpretation drawn from clause 1 part 2 which states,

‘Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of

³⁸ Herzog C., *The Arab-Israeli Wars*, (London, Arms & Armour Press, 1984). See also Muslih M., ‘Towards Coexistence: An Analysis of the Resolutions of the Palestine National Council’, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 19, No. 4, Summer 1990), p. 10

³⁹ Rabinovitch I., ‘Seven Wars and One Peace Treaty’, in Rubinstein, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, op. cit., pp. 43-44

⁴⁰ Muslih, op. cit., pp. 12-13

every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats of force;'⁴¹

The above clause enables the following interpretation,

'But actually, it [UN resolution 242] could very well just as easily mean no new borders should be drawn, taking into account Israel's experiences. Perhaps giving Israel control over parts of the West Bank to make it secure, living behind secure boundaries. Israelis have a very credible case to present to the world by saying 'Living on the down slope of the West Bank mountains makes us insecure. Twice in our history it has been used as launching pads for attacks against us. These borders should be redrawn to give us the mountains.' 242 certainly supports this.'⁴²

The Palestinians persistently claimed that *all* territories occupied by Israeli forces during the Six Day War were intended, whereas the Israeli government, notably under Shamir, was equally adamant that withdrawal from the Sinai (which resulted through the Camp David Accords and the subsequent Peace Agreement between Israel and Egypt) was proof of Israel's adherence to and implementation of Resolution 242.⁴³ The Palestinians in turn were not seen by the Israelis to have implemented what was required of them by the resolution. According to a further clause of Resolution 242, the protagonists should show

'respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force'.⁴⁴

⁴¹ 'UN Security Council Resolution 242 Concerning Principles for a Just and Lasting Peace in the Middle East, 22 November, 1967', Lukacs Y. (ed.), *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, a Documentary Record 1967-1990*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992) p. 1

⁴² Interview with James Colbert, Director of Information for JINSA, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs. 16 May 1997, Washington DC

⁴³ Wallach J. & Wallach J., *Arafat - In the Eyes of the Beholder*, (London, Heinemann, 1991) p. 184. Shamir is quoted as saying, 'In 242 it was said that Israel would have to withdraw from territories. not from 'the' territories. I say that by our withdrawal from the Sinai, we have completed it.'

⁴⁴ UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, Lukacs, op. cit., pp. 1 and 13 respectively.

Contained in the Palestine National Charter (PLO document) was a clear statement of the contrary. Article 19 stipulated that '[t]he partitioning of Palestine in 1947 and the establishment of Israel is fundamentally null and void, whatever time has elapsed'.⁴⁵ This illustrates the interplay between various discursive strands. The fourth Arab-Israeli war attested once again to the failure of previous settlements, as the same issues leading to war were pushed to the fore of Middle Eastern politics. Territorial acquisition, domestic politics and foreign policy formulations of world powers with interests in the region, represented converging discourses which resulted in the outbreak of the Yom Kippur war or the War of Attrition.⁴⁶ The immediate reason for Egypt and Syria waging war against Israel stem from the failure of previous Arab-Israeli conflict settlements, whilst situated within a broader context, discontents can be traced back to 1948 and the international role played in the creation of Israel. That Israel was inextricably linked to US designs for it in the region was made clear through Nixon's support of Israel. The United States sent large quantities of arms to support Israel's war effort against Arab armies and secured its survival in what had threatened to be an initial Arab victory. Sadat, who had replaced Nasser as Egypt's leader after Nasser's death in 1970, realised what his predecessor had been slow or reluctant to acknowledge, that any political adjustments required from Israel would have to be secured via the US channel rather than by a head on collision. This realisation would in part lead to the Camp David accords signed just a few years later.

The unacceptability of the status quo in the aftermath of the 1967 war was based on two predominant issues. The failure of the international community to address the Palestinian problem and the question of Jerusalem. The passage of UN Resolution 242 on 22 November 1967, had focused on the inadmissibility of territorial acquisition through aggression, calling for an Israeli withdrawal 'from territories occupied in the recent conflict' and for 'just and lasting peace' for all states in the region, including Israel, within 'secure and recognised boundaries'. By 1973, these resolutions had yet to be implemented. Sadat calculated that another war might re-focus attention on the Arab plight.⁴⁷ Despite a planned

⁴⁵ Palestinian National Covenant, Article 19, 1968, Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 294

⁴⁶ Just as the 1948 War is called the War of Independence by Zionists or Zionist sympathisers, so too the 1973 war is constructed differently depending on which 'lens' is used to focus or the perspective adopted.

⁴⁷ Bailey *op. cit.*, p. 288

joint attack on two of Israel's borders by Syria and Egypt, initial Arab victories were soon overridden by Great Power intervention which ensured neither side won. US political backing of Israel served to emphasise once again that ultimate power in the Middle East lay with the US. Sadat acknowledged this and re-directed the orientation of future Arab political manoeuvres in the region. Within a matter of weeks, the war had served its purpose. Launched on 6 October 1973, a cease-fire brokered by the Superpowers was in place by October 22. Resolution 338 called for the implementation of Resolution 242 to be supplemented by efforts to secure a just and lasting peace in the region.

The importance of the Yom Kippur war to this chapter lies in the mediation initiatives which it led to in the region. After four successive Arab-Israeli wars, Sadat's design in launching the 1973 war, that the Superpowers re-direct their attention to the region, was fulfilled. The threat of Superpower confrontation in the region had to be curtailed. The oil crisis of October 1973 once again underlined the overlap of the regional and the international, as oil embargoes threatened world markets.⁴⁸ The outbreak of war followed by two UN resolutions, served to re-interpret the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, constructing within the international arena an interpretation which was closer to Israeli articulations of the salient issues to the conflict, than they were to Palestinian-Arab interpretations. United States' Secretary of State Kissinger's 'shuttle diplomacy' initiatives in the Middle East paved the way for further peace initiatives in the form of the Camp David Accords.⁴⁹

Egypt Recognises Israel: The Camp David Accords

The Camp David Accords marked an important watershed in the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Egypt, one of the largest and most powerful Arab states offered Israel *Arab* legitimisation by signing a peace treaty with it. Arab failure in the 1973 war

⁴⁸ Ovendale, *op. cit.*, p. 194

⁴⁹ Quandt W.B, *Camp David: Peacemaking & Politics*, (Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1986). Quandt links Kissinger's diplomatic successes in securing disengagement treaties between Israel and two of its Arab enemies, Egypt and Syria in 1974-75, with President Carter's later successful intervention as mediator between Israel and Egypt. Quandt writes, 'along the way, the United States had acquired both a reputation as the only party that could bring the Arabs and Israelis together and a bundle of commitments to the two sides of the conflict.' p. 33

confirmed to the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, that American economic, financial and political support of Israel would consistently undermine Arab efforts to destroy Israel. The only alternative was to make peace with Israel. The peace initiative began in November 1977 when Sadat visited Jerusalem and addressed the Knesset leading to Arab charges that he had betrayed the Palestinian cause.⁵⁰ A peace treaty with a bordering state and one of the most powerful in the region, signed in September 1978, less than one year after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, was a major breakthrough for Israel whose main objective since its inception was to gain official recognition by the Arab world. As Benvenisti notes,

‘Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem symbolised the recognition of Israel as a legitimate actor and the Israeli public as an autonomous and independent constituency.’⁵¹

Sadat sought to combine resolution of the Palestinian problem with an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. President Carter of the United States mediated difficult negotiations between Begin and Sadat. The language of the Camp David accords reflects the struggle between Begin's refusal to allow the PLO any role in the autonomy negotiations, whilst Sadat attempted to arrive at a joint document which would recognise the rights of the Palestinian people. Although Begin had accepted the inclusion of ‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people’, he felt that this would prove meaningless given that continued Israeli occupation of the occupied territories was secured in the Camp David accords.⁵² Israel's rejection of the PLO was based at that time on two principal objections. Firstly, the inadmissibility of terror which the PLO was using at the time, as a weapon to achieve political ends and secondly, the PLO's Charter which called for the dissolution of Israel.⁵³ The ambiguity of the first part of the Camp David accords which addressed the Palestinian problem, enabled both Sadat and Begin to sign it. Three categories in particular separated the Egyptian and Israeli leaders; the position and interpretation of ‘Palestinian autonomy’

⁵⁰ Tessler M., ‘The Camp David Accords and the Palestinian Problem’, Mosely Lesch A. & Tessler M., *Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians, From Camp David to Intifada* (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1989), p. 3

⁵¹ Benvenisti M., ‘Peace Process and International Strife’, in Kipper J. & Saunders H., (eds.), *The Middle East in Global Perspective*, (Colorado, Westview, 1991), p. 44

⁵² Smith C.D, chapter nine, ‘Lebanon, the West Bank and the Camp David Accords 1977-84: The Palestinian Equation in the Arab-Israeli Conflict’, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, op. cit., p. 255

⁵³ Tessler, ‘The Camp David Accords and the Palestinian Problem’, op. cit., p. 18

and 'self-determination', the desirability and legality of Israeli efforts to establish settlements in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the question of who would represent the Palestinians in the peace process.⁵⁴

The gap in interpretation around the issue of Palestinian autonomy/self-determination arose out of differing interpretations ascribed to 'Palestinian people' in the phrase 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people' in the Camp David accords.⁵⁵ Whereas Sadat and Carter believed this to imply an Israeli acknowledgement of a Palestinian nation, an interpretation which would not theoretically rule out the PLO, Begin later informed Carter that by 'people' he meant the inhabitants of the occupied territories.⁵⁶ The gap between these interpretations is the difference between autonomy in the occupied territories and an Israeli acknowledgement of a Palestinian people entitled to self-determination. The creation of further Israeli settlements in the occupied territories was another point of contention between Israel and Egypt and the United States. Carter wanted a freeze on settlements during the period required to negotiate the autonomy of the West Bank and Gaza. Although Carter and his officials believed Begin to have given them oral confirmation of such a freeze, Begin later informed Carter in writing that he had only agreed to a three month halt in settlement activity, the time span envisaged for the successful completion, not of the autonomy talks, but of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.⁵⁷ Significantly, Smith points out 'the gap in interpretation [regarding settlements] arose on the final day. Carter decided to leave the matter open to conclude the talks successfully.'⁵⁸

The Palestinians of the occupied territories were to be granted autonomy, something that never materialised under the Camp David accords.⁵⁹ Negotiations over the format of autonomy for the West Bank began in May 1979 and dragged on for over a year with no agreement. The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty however, was signed in March 1979 and

⁵⁴ Tessler M., chapter seven, 'Israeli Politics and the Palestinian Problem after Camp David', *Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians*, op. cit., p. 140

⁵⁵ 'A Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David, 17 September 1978', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 158

⁵⁶ Smith C.D, 'Lebanon, the West Bank and the Camp David Accords', op. cit., p. 255

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 255-6

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 256

despite Sadat's efforts to connect the two, remained separate from linkage to the autonomy agreement. However, that an Israeli government signed an agreement designating the West Bank and Gaza Strip as autonomous Palestinian territories shows that an agreement reached in 1993 between the Israelis and Palestinians had its roots in an agreement signed fourteen years earlier. It also reveals that the Israeli government had accepted that resolution of the Palestinian problem was an integral part of any peace treaty with an Arab state. As the Camp David accords illustrate, for a peace treaty to materialise between an Arab state and Israel, several discursive strands have to overlap; Superpower support, right regional political configurations and individual leaders courageous enough to tread the potentially explosive path to peace.⁶⁰ As Rashid Khalidi notes, 'while diplomacy is always necessary and sometimes vital, it cannot by itself change an unfavourable balance of forces.'⁶¹

Comparison between the Camp David accords and the Declaration of Principles of 1993 reveals many discursive continuities. In both instances the occupied territories were demarcated as the geographic homeland of the Palestinian people and in both instances 'transitionalism' or a gradualist approach to the implementation of change was chosen as the most appropriate strategy to follow. Camp David proposed a five year plan for Palestinian autonomy during which time Israel would maintain its control in the occupied territories. Talks were scheduled to begin on the 'final status' of the occupied territories by the end of the third year. The delegation engaged in discussions with the Israeli team was to comprise both Jordanian officials as well as elected Palestinians.⁶² The stipulations given by Israel regarding the composition of the Arab delegation representing Palestinian interests in the conflict in the Madrid and Washington rounds of the international peace conference, convened at the end of the Gulf War in 1991, can be traced back to similar discursive structures in the Camp David accords. Moreover, the structure for the implementation of the Declaration of Principles is also phased within an incrementally designed model as we

⁵⁹ 'A Framework for Peace in the Middle East Agreed at Camp David, 17 September 1978', Lukacs, op. cit., pp. 155-60

⁶⁰ For an analysis of the Camp David Accords and the political context in which they evolved, see Quandt W.B, *Camp David*, op. cit.

⁶¹ Khalidi R., 'The Palestinian People: Twenty Two Years After 1967', Lockman Z. & Beinun J. (eds.), *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*, (Washington D.C, Middle East Research and Information Project, 1989), p. 123

⁶² Wallach & Wallach, op. cit., p. 187-188

shall see in chapter six. The initial stages set in place the infrastructure for Palestinian autonomy with the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories identified for autonomous Palestinian rule, followed by subsequent negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements, Palestinian refugees and the final legal status of the autonomous Palestinian entity. The importance attributed to *process* as a constitutive feature of the peace agreement, generating further momentum, reveals an important dynamic underpinning changing discourses. Initial steps are taken on areas of agreement which, it is hoped will build the confidence needed to address more difficult issues. However, as has been noted by one scholar, such a tactic is also very fragile with the potential for violent outbreaks if confidence is built and then the process is halted or delayed.⁶³ The potential and indeed relative ease of scuttling a peace process already initiated was demonstrated by the suicide bombings of Israeli civilians by Islamic elements opposed to the Palestinian-Israeli peace treaty in March 1996.

Spilling-Over: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Lebanon

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 transformed the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict in three significant ways. Firstly it removed the arena of confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians onto the territory of a third sovereign state, and intensified the battle for international discursive space, strengthening the construction of the conflict as Arab-Israeli as opposed to Israeli-Palestinian.⁶⁴ Secondly, it was the first time since 1948 that the Palestinians were under a solely Palestinian leadership fighting for their cause.⁶⁵ Operation 'Peace for Galilee' was designed to destroy the Palestinian guerrilla base in Lebanon.⁶⁶ According to UN relief agency figures there were 372,000 Palestinian refugees

⁶³ This point was made by Dr. Shikaki, the director of the Centre for Palestinian Research and Studies in Nablus on the West Bank, during a presentation given at the Royal Institute of International Affairs entitled, 'The Peace Process, National Reconstruction and the Transition to Democracy in Palestine', 25 March 1996, London

⁶⁴ Bruzonsky M.A, 'The Second Defeat of Palestine', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 15, No. 3, Issue 59, Spring 1986), p. 34. Bruzonsky argues that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was designed by Israel to prevent the possibility of a comprehensive peace with the Palestinians.

⁶⁵ For further discussion of the interstate and communal aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, see Sandler S. & Frisch H., *Israel, The Palestinians and the West Bank* (Canada, Lexington Books, 1984) pp. 167-171

⁶⁶ Cobban H., *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power & Politics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984) p. 3

in Lebanon and another estimated 5,000 Palestinian guerrillas based in the Bekaa region of eastern Lebanon and northern Tripoli, areas under Syrian control.⁶⁷ Thirdly, the massacres of the Sabra and Shatila camps on 18 September 1982 in which thousands of Palestinian men women and children were murdered by Christian Phalangist troops with the encouragement of on-looker Israeli forces, served to modify Israeli domestic public opinion as well as world opinion.⁶⁸ The Palestinian plight received an unprecedented amount of publicity, something which political and diplomatic efforts had failed to achieve. Discursive parallels were beginning to emerge. Just as a significant component of the discourse constructed by Zionists to legitimise their claim on Palestine were Jewish security needs, so too the Sabra and Shatila massacres highlighted the plight of Palestinian refugees and their vulnerability in foreign lands. The Palestinian uprising or intifada began five years after the Palestinian camp massacres and succeeded in challenging and eventually delegitimising the 'refugee' status assigned to the Palestinians by the international community.

The Intifada: Grass-root Palestinian Revolt

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict had begun as a confrontation between the Palestinian and Jewish communities in mandate Palestine during the first three decades of the twentieth century. After the creation of Israel in 1948 and the first Arab-Israeli war which followed soon after, the inter-communal dimension of the conflict was overshadowed by what was now depicted as a conflict between Arab states challenging Israel's legitimacy in the Middle East. Significantly, the intifada re-defined the conflict as one between an indigenous Palestinian population - this time in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip- and the Jews represented by the Israeli Defence Forces.

⁶⁷ Figures quoted in Ziring, op. cit., p. 241

⁶⁸ For an assessment of Israel's role in the Sabra and Shatila camp massacres, see discussion in Gainsborough J.R., *The Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Aldershot, Gower, 1986) p. 244. See also 'The Massacres at Sabra & Shatila', in *Israel in Lebanon*, report of the International Commission, the Kahan Commission, pp. 162-83, set up on 8 February 1983 to enquire into reported violations of international law by Israel during its invasion of Lebanon. The report concludes that Israel's military and civilian leaders 'as responsible officials, bear legal responsibility for these events and the terrible tragedy they wrought.' p. 183.

The intifada or Palestinian uprising, erupted 8 December 1987, when an Israeli tank-transport truck crashed into several Arab cars in Gaza, killing four Palestinians and injuring several others.⁶⁹ That was the immediate trigger, however, tensions had been rising in the occupied territories. One month earlier, the Arab summit meeting held in Amman Jordan had focused primarily on the Iran-Iraq war, making only a marginal reference to the Palestinian problem. This suggested to Palestinians living in the occupied territories, that the likelihood of an outside Arab force coming to their rescue was gradually diminishing.⁷⁰ The intifada spread from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank. Although local committees affiliated with the PLO now based in Tunis, had contacted the PLO leadership at the start of the uprising, it was not until at least a month later that the PLO took control of the intifada through the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising.⁷¹ The local leadership of the intifada was drawn from local elites and comprised individuals representing the four major secular-nationalist organisations active within the occupied territories. These were, Fateh, The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.F.L.P), The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (D.F.L.P) and the Palestinian Communist Party (P.C.P). Cobban notes that it was the wide political constituencies represented by this unified leadership which ensured its longevity.⁷² The institutionalisation of the intifada through the establishment and co-ordination of units which jointly created a network of inter-acting elements may also be translated as the first successful attempt at functional organisation of Palestinians for Palestinians and the Palestinian cause as they defined it. Although limited in nature, it was an important development in the struggle for Palestinian self-determination. The publication and dissemination of leaflets backed up by regular radio broadcasts is one example of the way in which the intifada was gradually institutionalised.⁷³

⁶⁹ Smith C.D, chapter ten, 'The "New World Order" and its Implications for the Middle East 1984-91'. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, op. cit., p. 290

⁷⁰ Said E., chapter one, 'Intifada and Independence', Lockman Z. & Beinun J. (eds.), *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*, op. cit., p. 5

⁷¹ Smith, 'The "New World Order and its Implications for the Middle East, 1984-91', op. cit., p. 296. Although Smith claims the PLO assumed control of the intifada just one month into the uprising, Stein believes the PLO took two to three months to gain control of the uprising. Stein K.W, 'The Intifada and the 1936-39 Uprising: A Comparison', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 19, No. 4, Summer 1990), p. 69

⁷² Cobban H., 'The PLO and the Intifada', *The Middle East Journal*, (No. 44, 1990), pp. 211-212

⁷³ *ibid.*, pp. 208-211

A directive was issued at the outset of the intifada - significantly, the only Arabic word ever to enter the vocabulary of world politics in the twentieth century - informing crowds of protesters, comprised predominantly of the young and the poor, to limit protests to demonstrations and stone throwing. Weapons such as knives and guns were not to be used. This illustrates the local Palestinian leadership's political astuteness, for they realised that the images of the intifada would be beamed onto television screens across the world and that an indigenous Palestinian civilian population rebelling against armed Israeli soldiers would make an impact on world public opinion.⁷⁴ In January 1988, just one month into uprising, what became known as the Fourteen Points were disseminated by moderate leaders resident in the West Bank with known personal links to the PLO, individuals such as Feisal Hussein and Sari Nusseibeh. This political agenda of the intifada 'inspired and possibly instigated from Tunis', called for an independent Palestinian state led by the PLO, that would significantly, coexist with Israel.⁷⁵ Partition of mandate Palestine was anathema to an Islamic group that was contesting the PLO's leadership of the Palestinian cause during the intifada. This group was the Islamic Resistance Movement, *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*, known by its Arabic acronym Hamas.

Representing a Palestinian Islamist counter-discourse to the secular narrative articulated by the PLO, Hamas in a similar way to ultra-Right wing Zionist groups who believe that the land of Israel is the promised land, believes the land of Palestine to be a sacred Muslim trust or *waqf*. Under no circumstances is any part of this land to be sold, given or negotiated away, since no one has the authority to do so.⁷⁶ During the intifada, Hamas issued its own communiqués, separate to those issued by the UNLU and organised its own general strikes on different days to those set by the UNLU. In so doing, it was representing itself as an alternative to the PLO, whose leadership of the Palestinian national

⁷⁴ Edward Said points to the Arabic word *intifada* penetrating into Western political lexicon. See Said, 'Intifada and Independence', op. cit., p. 5. Smith notes the Palestinian leadership's decision to restrict the protests and not resort to the use of weapons in 'The "New World Order" and its Implications for the Middle East, 1984-91', op. cit., p. 296

⁷⁵ Smith, 'The "New World Order"--', op. cit., p. 296

⁷⁶ Abu-Amr Z., 'Hamas: A Historical and Political Background', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 22. No. 4, Summer 1993) p. 5. See also Taraki L., 'The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Uprising', chapter twelve in *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*, op. cit., p. 174

cause, it was now challenging.⁷⁷ Hamas identified itself as the Palestinian wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, a social movement which worked at a community level, most notably in some of the most impoverished sectors of the Gaza Strip in order to create an Islamic society. A mosque network was successfully set-up to provide charitable, educational as well as religious services to the most needy sectors of the Palestinian population. As such, Hamas' political development had a broad popular base, generated and nurtured through its benevolent activities funded in large part by the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan.⁷⁸ Hamas, drawing on Koranic teachings for its legitimacy, presented itself to the Palestinians of the occupied territories as an alternative to Arafat, offering them what the secular nationalist PLO had so far been unable to provide, their land and self-determination.⁷⁹

Support for Hamas within the occupied territories remained relatively small, concentrated predominantly in the Gaza Strip where it had approximately twenty per cent of the population's support.⁸⁰ However, a large number of Palestinians in the occupied territories was suspicious of Hamas, for in sharp contrast to Islamic Jihad which had strong nationalist credentials, many believed that Hamas was encouraged by the Israeli authorities to sow disunity and discord amongst Palestinians. The insertion and development of Islamic movements in the occupied territories had begun in an organised way during the early 1970's and was sanctioned by the Israeli government. The Israeli government sought to use the Muslim Brotherhood as a counterweight to the secularist, nationalist PLO. The long term aim was to fracture the unity of the Palestinian national cause through the divisive input of Islamic groups. Mosely Lesch contends that,

'Such an approach [the suppression of non-religious Palestinians by Islamic groups] suited the Israeli government, since it turned one faction against the others and side-tracked Palestinians from confronting the occupation.'⁸¹

⁷⁷ Taraki, *ibid.*, p. 172

⁷⁸ Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75. See also McDowall D., chapter eight, 'Resistance and the Intifada', *The Palestinians: The Road to Nationhood*, (London, Minority Rights Group, 1994), p. 104

⁷⁹ Sahliyah E., *In Search of Leadership - West Bank Politics Since 1967*, (Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1988) p. 137

⁸⁰ Smith, 'The "New World Order" --', *op. cit.*, p. 299

⁸¹ Mosely Lesch A., 'Prelude to the Uprising in the Gaza Strip', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 20, No. 1, Autumn 1990), p. 10

The Islamic Charitable League founded in Gaza by Shaykh Ahmad Yassin in 1973 and the Islamic Society founded by Khalil al-Qoqa in 1976 with Israeli acquiescence helped the poorest sections of Palestinian society through the distribution of alms, education and health care.⁸² Such services enmeshed the Muslim Brotherhood within the fabric of Palestinian society as it sought to create the conditions for an Islamic moral order. Unlike Islamic Jihad who adhered to the national consensus throughout the intifada and was reportedly in close contact with the Unified Leadership, Hamas considered itself part of the uprising yet it did not support Arafat, the PLO or the principle of partition.⁸³ However, despite their ideological differences, Smith contends that 'Hamas and Palestinians tied to secular groups overlooked their differences in order to combine their efforts against Israel.'⁸⁴ Two years after the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising, at the end of 1989, an estimated 626 Palestinians and 43 Israelis had been killed. In addition, some 37,439 Palestinians were wounded and between 35-40,000 arrested.⁸⁵ The violence used by the Israeli Defence forces against the protesting Palestinians led to public criticism inside and outside Israel. As the intifada continued month after month and year after year, Israeli society became divided over two issues: whether to negotiate with the PLO and the right to Palestinian self-determination, including the establishment of a Palestinian state. As the Israeli-Palestinian Member of the Knesset, Azmy Bishara noted, the intifada 'made the Palestine question the primary agenda item for the first time ever in an Israeli electoral campaign.'⁸⁶

The intifada constitutes a landmark in the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for it was the first direct confrontation of Palestinians in the occupied territories with Israeli forces since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Unlike the 1936 uprising where there was a perceived threat from a Jewish presence on an individual level, the

⁸² *ibid.*, p. 9

⁸³ Taraki, *op. cit.* pp. 175-6

⁸⁴ Smith C.D, *op. cit.*, p. 299

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Bishara A., chapter fifteen, 'The Uprising's Impact on Israel', *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*, *op. cit.*, p. 217

intifada represented a national, unified, communal revolt.⁸⁷ As such it marked an important stage in the development of a new 'self-image' of the Palestinians. The intifada served as a vehicle through which the Palestinians were no longer 'refugees' as they were represented by the United Nations in 1967, but were now visibly a *Palestinian people* revolting against the Israeli occupier.⁸⁸ The intifada thus marked a 're-Palestinization' of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and importantly anchored claims for self-determination in the West Bank.⁸⁹ This linkage was so powerful as to impel King Hussein of Jordan to relinquish Jordan's political claim to the West Bank in the Summer of 1988, - a territory that had been an integral part of the Hashemite kingdom until the 1967 war - a decision no doubt influenced by the support for the uprising expressed by Jordan's Palestinian constituency, comprising sixty per cent of Jordan's population.⁹⁰ The intifada served to locate and define a Palestinian people for a world audience. They were not 'terrorists', but a people seeking to empower itself after some twenty five years of Israeli military rule. They were revolting against their oppressor, but significantly they resisted from engaging in open warfare. As Uri Savir, director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry notes, the intifada changed many Israelis' perceptions about the Palestinians and the future of the occupied territories. 'The intifada convinced many other Israelis that we can't rule over you [Palestinians] forever.'⁹¹

The Israeli-Palestinian Dispute and Front-Line Arab States

A study of changing discourses around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would remain incomplete without reference to the role of the main Arab states, namely Jordan and Egypt. In its contribution to peace Lebanon has played a negligible role as it is a relatively weak player in the region falling within Syria's domain of political influence. Syria's role is significant in terms of its participation in the Arab-Israeli wars and its loss of the Golan Heights during the Six Day War of 1967. The role of Egypt since the signature of the Camp David accords has been constrained by the parameters imposed by that peace

⁸⁷ Stein K.W. 'The Intifada and the 1936-39 Uprising: A Comparison', op. cit., p. 72

⁸⁸ Khalidi R., chapter eight. 'The Palestinian People: Twenty Two Years After 1967', *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Israeli Occupation*, op. cit., p. 115

⁸⁹ Peretz D., *Intifada - The Palestinian Uprising*, (London, Westview, 1990) p. 192

⁹⁰ Smith, 'The "New World Order" and its Implications for the Middle East, 1984-91', op. cit., pp. 300-301

⁹¹ Savir U., *The Process*, (New York, Random House, 1998), p. 27

agreement with Israel. It has had to negotiate between maintaining its allegiance with other Arab states, extending its traditional leadership role of the Palestinian struggle whilst also balancing such actions against treaty commitments to Israel. The assassination of President Sadat by Islamic elements within the Egyptian army underlined the dangers for his successor President Hosni Mubarak. Egypt's role has been largely a placating one, serving as a go-between in negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis at various times.

Jordan has been a key player in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute over the years, a role that was first established by King Hussein of Jordan's grandfather Abdallah, the then Amir of Transjordan.⁹² Abdallah may be regarded as the first Arab ruler to recognise the permanent nature of the Israeli state in the Middle East. Jordan's discursive input has been determined in the main by its own self-interest, particularly in wanting to re-incorporate the West Bank into the Hashemite kingdom between 1967-88. The Palestinian problem is of particular concern to Jordan because of the geographic, political and historic links which have traditionally united Jordan with Mandate Palestine.⁹³ Stability within Jordan and the survival of the Hashemite monarchy have been threatened by the PLO culminating in the outbreak of war in Jordan and the expulsion of PLO bases from the Kingdom in 1970.⁹⁴ Jordan has a direct interest in the outcome of the Palestinian problem since approximately sixty per cent of the Jordanian population is made up of Palestinians.

Focus on the West Bank is a useful way of drawing out the main strands which connect Jordan to the Palestinian issue. The West Bank along with Arab East Jerusalem were both once under Jordanian rule constituted approximately half of the area of the Hashemite Kingdom.⁹⁵ The West Bank, an area of fertile valleys, was the richest part of the

⁹² Shlaim A., *The Politics of Partition, King Abdullah, the Zionists and Palestine 1921-1951*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990)

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 355

⁹⁴ Wallach and Wallach, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-324. King Hussein's troops smashed the military power of the Palestinians in Jordan which by September 1970 had grown in strength and posed a serious threat to the Hashemite monarchy. There were by this time, 52 different Palestinian guerrilla groups who had committed an estimated 44,000 violations against Jordanian law. The difficulty for King Hussein was in pursuing a policy he judged to be in Jordan's best interest whilst maintaining the support of a very large sector of the Jordanian population, the Palestinian Jordanians. 5000 Jordanian soldiers defected during Black September.

⁹⁵ The West Bank was annexed by Jordan during the first Arab-Israeli war 1948-49. It was in turn annexed by Israel, along with Arab East Jerusalem during the Six Day War of 1967.

Kingdom. It is a stretch of land measuring 5,600 km. square populated by 600,000 Palestinian inhabitants. The potential for political instability within Jordan arises out of the fact that the geographic proximity linking the West Bank to Jordan is coupled with demographic statistics which reveal that over half Jordan's population is Palestinian. There is a greater number of Palestinians in Jordan than there are in all other Arab states put together. The Arab-Israeli war of 1967, galvanised the displacement of a further 200,000 Palestinians from the territories of mandate Palestine to Jordan which increased the total Palestinian population in Jordan from 650,000 to 850,000.⁹⁶ The history of the Israeli-Jordanian relationship has been instrumental in shaping Israeli policies towards the occupied territories. What is commonly referred to as the 'Jordanian option' envisages a settlement of the Palestinian issue through federation with Jordan. The foundations for this policy were laid down in 1947 when an agreement was reached between King Abdallah of Jordan and the Jewish Agency.⁹⁷ It stipulated that at the end of British rule over Mandate Palestine, the territory would be divided into two, a Jewish state and an Arab entity which was to be confederated with Jordan.

Jordan, by virtue of its demography and geographical location, sharing the longest border with Israel, has been inextricably intertwined with developments in the Israeli-Arab conflict.⁹⁸ Successive Likud and Labour governments have insisted on the Jordanian option, refusing to recognise an indigenous Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories, claiming that a Palestinian state already existed in Jordan.⁹⁹ This construction of a Jordanian Palestinian identity has been symbolised by an Israeli insistence on negotiating with Jordan, thus seeking to discursively negate Palestinian nationalism in the West Bank and Gaza, and curtailing the development of a 'second' Palestinian state, Jordan being the first.¹⁰⁰ Black September represents the potential threat posed to King Hussein of Jordan by Palestinian nationalism and accounts in part, for Jordanian disengagement from the West

⁹⁶ Wallach and Wallach, *op. cit.*, p. 304

⁹⁷ Shlaim, *The Politics of Partition*, *op. cit.*, p. 425

⁹⁸ Gresh A. and Vidal D., 'Strategic Confrontation', in *The Middle East, War Without End?*, (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), p. 183

⁹⁹ Since 1967, Labour has insisted that any settlement of the occupied territories would necessarily involve an arrangement with Jordan. See McDowall D., 'The Jordanian Dimension', in *Palestine and Israel, the Uprising and Beyond*, (London, I.B Tauris, 1989), p. 64

Bank in July 1988, following the powerful discourse of Palestinian nationalism in the occupied territories narrated through the intifada.

The United States has consistently favoured the Jordanian option. As late as June 1988, Secretary of State Shultz was still discounting the notion of Palestinian independence in favour of the Jordanian option. President Reagan had illustrated his administration's preference for confederation when he called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and their confederation with Jordan six years earlier, in the Reagan Peace Plan of 1982, the first time the United States signalled its opposition to Israeli annexation of the occupied territories.¹⁰¹ Israel's invasion of Lebanon was in large part designed to destroy PLO bases in Lebanon and thus secure Israel's hold on the occupied territories.¹⁰² The Jordanian option illustrates the convergence of two distinct discursive strands, that of Zionism and the Hashemite's territorial ambitions for the West Bank. This discursive overlap served to strengthen the discourse of the Jordanian option for over twenty years. However, the narrative of the intifada which linked Palestinian nationalism to the territories of the West Bank and Gaza was powerful enough to finally de-legitimise and silence the Jordanian option.

The PLO: Structure and Organisation

The Palestinian Liberation Organisation is constituted by eight groups representing diverse political ideologies. Yasser Arafat is the leader of Fateh, the largest and most powerful group within the PLO. Fateh, the reverse acronym in Arabic for the Palestinian National Liberation Movement was created in the late 1950's as a secret underground cell in Kuwait by Arafat and Khalil Wazir (Abu Jihad). Fatah gained leadership of the PLO in 1969, five years after the foundation of the Palestinian Liberation Movement by thirteen Arab states headed by Egypt at the First Arab Summit in Cairo in January 1964. Initially

¹⁰⁰ Aronson G., 'The Road to Re-election', *Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada*, (London, Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 144

¹⁰¹ Wallach and Wallach, 'The Reagan Plan: A Political Bonus?', *Arafat, In the Eyes of the Beholder*, op. cit., p. 420

¹⁰² Black I. and Morris B., 'The Lebanese Quagmire', *Israel's Secret Wars*, (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1991), pp. 381-2

the PLO was conceived by the Egyptian President Nasser for the dual purpose of attracting Palestinian support and as an instrument for concentrating the emerging Palestinian national movement into one body which could then be controlled by Egypt and other Arab states.¹⁰³ Ahmad Shukeiry was nominated by Nasser as the PLO's first chairman. However by February 1969, Arafat and the Fateh party were in a position to win control of the PLO, replacing Shukeiry and his short term successor Yiyuha Hamuda. With his ascension to power Arafat changed the PLO from what was initially an instrument of Arab control to a guerrilla military and political organisation which strove to promote the struggle for Palestinian self-determination.

The PLO embraces several different secular groups which can be placed along a continuum stretching from extreme Right wing tendencies to extreme Left wing tendencies.¹⁰⁴ Despite the range of political ideologies embraced by the PLO, the ultimate objective which all factions subscribe to is a commitment to a *secular* approach to the resolution of the Palestinian problem, a point underlined and valorised by the entrance of the Islamic movements Hamas and Islamic Jihad into the political arena during the 1980's. The structure of the PLO prior to 1993 consisted of four separate but mutually dependant organs. The Executive Committee was comprised of 15 members elected by the PLO's legislative arm, the Palestine Liberation Council. The Palestine National Council acted as a parliament in exile. It consisted of several hundred members serving a three year term who were selected by the Executive Committee. The Palestine Central Council consisted of 55 members selected by the Palestine National Council to perform its duties when the National Council was not in session. The PLO also had a military wing with an army of 20-30,000 with Arafat acting as commander-in-chief.¹⁰⁵ The aims, justification and purpose of the PLO were expounded in the Palestine National Covenant proclaimed on 28 May 1964. Generally regarded as the most authoritative and authentic written document expressing the Palestinian perception of the Arab-Israeli struggle, it contained 33 articles describing the

¹⁰³ Wallach and Wallach, op. cit., p. 121

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 311. This panoply of political groupings embraced by the PLO, was mainly created in the aftermath of the battle of Karameh of 1968 when these disparate groups joined Arafat's Fateh faction. Wallach and Wallach note that, '[n]ot only did Fateh attract the fighters, it magnetised Marxists, Maoists, socialists, Communists, Baathists and members of other radical parties that had been banned in Jordan.'

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Ziring, op. cit. p.182

nature of the struggle against Zionism. Four of the 33 articles are of particular interest as they reveal the aims of the PLO. Arguably two of the most controversial points of the covenant were articles 6 and 7 which defined Palestinians as 'those Arab citizens who were living normally in Palestine up to 1947', and stated categorically that only those 'Jews of Palestinian origin' which were defined as those living in Palestine prior to 1948 were to be eligible to remain as citizens under a Palestinian government.¹⁰⁶ Equally problematic with regards to the establishment of peace with Israel were the clauses describing the Israeli state as 'null and void' (cited in article 19). In article 21, the absolute impossibility of accommodation contained within a two state solution, was underlined. The PLO 'rejects every solution that is a substitute for complete liberation.'¹⁰⁷ Since the twelfth Palestinian National Council held in 1973, the PLO has been split into two wings, the 'realists' and the 'rejectionists'. The 'realists' included Arafat and the core of Fateh and had the support of the Communists and the DFLP. They favoured a compromise with the United States. The 'rejectionists' however, comprising the PFLP led by George Habash and a number of small pro-Iraqi and pro-Libyan organisations, favoured a military approach over diplomatic channels to solve the Palestinian issue.¹⁰⁸ This confrontation within the PLO is important and accounts for the incremental way in which the PLO embarked on a process which culminated in the acceptance of Israel. Arafat had to secure the unity of the PLO and therefore proceeded cautiously, in stages.

Tracing the incremental process of change in the PLO's articulation of its objectives, Muhammad Muslih, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Long Island University, engages in an analysis of the language and content of successive resolutions of the Palestine National

¹⁰⁶ Flapan S., *The Birth of Israel* (Croom Helm, London & Sydney, 1987) p. 242

¹⁰⁷ Wallach and Wallach, op. cit. p. 490. A useful reference list is provided of the major Palestinian organisations. Al-Fateh was the principal guerrilla group and assumed leadership in 1969. It had a membership of approximately 18,000. As-Saiqa was organised and controlled by Syria. Its leader was Zuheir Mohsen who was Arafat's rival. He was murdered in France. It had 5,000 members. The Popular Democratic Front For the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) had an estimated 3,000 members, was organised by the Jordanian Naif Hawatmeh and supported Marxist ideology. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command was a pro-Syrian group with some 1,000 members. The Popular Front For the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) consisted of 2,000-3,000 armed insurgents led by Dr. George Habash, a Lebanese Christian and Marxist-Leninist. The Arab Liberation Front had approximately 1,000 men and identified with Iraq. The Palestine Liberation Front had a membership of a few hundred and was supported by Iraq. The Palestine Popular Front was a small personalised group organised and led by Dr. Samir Ghoshch who was represented on the PLO's Executive Committee.

Council (PNC), the highest body of the PLO.¹⁰⁹ Muslih attempts to illustrate how the substantive content of PNC Resolutions between 1964 and 1988 evolved to reflect the regional and international developments which impacted on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whilst being constrained in policy development by the multitude of factions of varying political affiliations within the PLO. What Muslih calls, 'programs of creative ambiguity' were formulated in order to acquiesce the range of parties concerned.¹¹⁰ Muslih's analysis divides the gradual journey in PLO thinking vis-à-vis Israel's legitimacy and a two state solution into three periods, from the idealist, almost utopian initial phase 1964-68, through to the secular democratic state phase from 1969-1973, and finally to the period 1974-1988 which was the period in which the two-state solution was conceived in the PLO's official political formulations. These articulations Muslih illustrates were initially embedded in highly ambiguous and qualified terms, but gradually became less ambiguous, serving to prepare the ground for the acceptance of a two-state solution and Israel's *legitimacy* in the region enshrined in U.N Resolutions 181, 242 and 338.

Interestingly, Muslih utilises various levels of analysis in his study of this political evolution within the PLO. The internal tensions of various factions within the PLO, the regional context of the conflict, in particular the role of Jordan and its designs on the West Bank before July 1988 and Egypt and the re-definition of the Palestinian question in light of the Camp David Accords and the subsequent Egyptian-Israeli peace agreements. Inclusion of these factors illustrates what may be seen as the interplay of various discursive threads which converge and diverge at various moments in time, situating discourses emanating from the PLO within a wider discursive context 'pressed by these external forces'.¹¹¹ Muslih highlights the effects of socio-political developments within the regional and international arenas on the Palestinians of the occupied territories, and how these developments erected a frame which constrained the PLO. Finally, Muslih contends that the viability of a secular Palestinian state in the whole of Mandate Palestine had to be rejected in response to external discourses as well as internal ones, particularly those emerging from the occupied territories.¹¹² The implications of Muslih's

¹⁰⁸ Gresh and Vidal, 'The Palestinians', in *The Middle East, War Without End?*, op. cit., p. 124

¹⁰⁹ Muslih M., 'Towards Coexistence: An Analysis of the Resolutions of the Palestine National Council', in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 19, No. 4, Summer 1990), pp. 3-27

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 18

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 24

¹¹² *ibid.*, p. 14

research for the process of mediation are potentially considerable. In identifying the dynamics of conflict as residing ultimately within the international arena, greater importance is placed on the interactive qualities of the socio-political dimension of conflict as an indirect means of inducing a change of behaviour in the protagonists. The force propelling the conflict forward in a particular direction is no longer solely and predominantly that of the political leadership of both warring camps. Joined to these is a subtle interplay of image generation or re-interpretation mediated by various agents, most notably political actors, extra-parliamentary groups and the media.

The Palestine National Assembly in the summer of 1968 issued a statement of its political agenda. One year after the humiliating Arab defeat in the Six Day War the PLO decreed 'the liberation of the entire territory of Palestine, over which the Palestinian Arab people shall exercise their sovereignty.' In addition the means of achieving this objective was to be through 'the course of armed struggle.'¹¹³ This position was reaffirmed in 1974, also issued one year after another military defeat against the Israeli Defence Forces. It is of interest to note how texts build on existing texts. This time it was the Palestine National Council which stated that peace in the area was contingent on 'the restoration to our Palestinian people of all their national rights, foremost of which is their right to return to and determine their fate on all their national soil' and added that 'the PLO will struggle by all means, foremost of which is armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian land and to establish Palestinian land'.¹¹⁴ By 1988 however, the PLO for the first time accepted UN Resolutions 181, 242 and 338 which called for the partition of Mandate Palestine and formulated the principle of land for peace. The PLO also accepted a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute by stating that 'the right to self-determination means the existence of the Palestinians and our existence does not destroy the existence of the Israelis'. Having accepted the existence of an Israeli state, the PLO was able to reject the course of violence. Arafat stated, 'regarding terrorism, yesterday I announced beyond doubt --- that we totally and categorically reject all forms of violence'.¹¹⁵ Within a period of twenty years the position of the PLO had been reversed. That a period of twenty years was involved points to a gradual process of re-interpretation. Having highlighted salient features of the PLO,

¹¹³ 'Palestine National Assembly Political Resolutions, 17 July 1968', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 296

¹¹⁴ 'Palestine National Council, Political Program, 8 June, 1974', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309

¹¹⁵ 'Yasser Arafat's Geneva Press Statement, 15 December 1988', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 434

the section which follows engages in a similar exercise which addresses the Israeli political arena.

The Israeli Political Arena

The two largest political parties in Israel are Labour (Mapai) and Likud, a right wing party. There are also a host of smaller religious nationalist parties which have increased in number over the years. Amongst the most prominent are Agudat Israel, Poelui Agudat Israel and Tahiya.¹¹⁶ Most parties claim Zionism as their founding principle. A radical brand of Zionist ideology is associated with Herut, and the larger political body within which it resides, the Likud.¹¹⁷ In order to understand the form it exists in today, it is necessary to engage in a brief historical survey of the growth and development of Zionist principles in Right Wing Israeli politics. Three distinct periods in Zionist evolution can be identified, Herzl's initial formulations during the first Zionist Congresses at the end of the nineteenth century, Vladimir Jabotinsky's Revisionism developed in large part in reaction to British designs on the future of the Holy Land and thirdly, the neo-Revisionist strand rooted in large part, as its name suggests, in Revisionist ideology, but developing additional features of its own.

Herzl's brand of Zionism contained two fundamental elements. Firstly, the historical religious attachment of the Jewish people to the Holy Land used to justify their claims to it, and secondly, the importance of striving for an eventual state of normalcy. Jabotinsky's development of Zionist principles and their application to the political arena followed on chronologically from Herzl's principles. Jabotinsky vehemently rejected the British decision taken in 1922 to exclude the geographical region east of the Jordan River from their mandate. His anger at what he saw to be the subdued acceptance of such designs by Weizmann and the Zionist leadership led him to withdraw from the World Zionist Organisation (WZO) and to establish the Revisionist Party. Territorial in essence, the

¹¹⁶ Reiser S., 'The Religious Parties and Israel's Foreign Policy', Reich B. & Kieval G., *Israeli National Security Policy* (New York, Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 105-123

¹¹⁷ For a critical analysis of Likud's achievements and failures during its period in power, see Harkabi, 'The Likud in Power', op. cit.

dispute which began in 1922 between mainstream Zionists and the Revisionists was to remain a constant feature in Israeli politics and exists today, embodied in the hawkish militancy of many religious parties as well as Right Wing Likud, as opposed to the relatively more secular, liberal Zionist tendencies of the Labour party. Since the neo-Revisionism Likud adheres to, descends almost directly from Jabotinsky's Revisionism, it would be useful to evoke the five predominant features which jointly define this philosophy.¹¹⁸

The most important element in Jabotinsky's thought was the claim on all territories previously inhabited by Jews. In political terms, this referred to the territory under British mandate since 1921 which included both sides of the River Jordan. Secondly, from a logical extension of the territorial claim is developed a wholesale rejection of any claims to partition the land between Jews and Arabs. Thirdly, and as a further corollary of the preceding tenets, Jabotinsky conceded to the possibility of Arab civil rights as individuals but fell short of advocating Arab claims of self-determination. The fourth feature of Revisionist Zionist ideology addresses military strategies. Restraint was to be rejected for a more direct approach in the face of Arab resilience. The Irgun Zvei Leumi was created specifically to counter-act the restraint exercised by the Haganah, the Israeli military forces. By such actions, the Revisionists were in effect challenging the Jewish government's legitimacy. Finally, Revisionism espoused a view which became progressively ethnocentric as international relations were seen as an eternal 'struggle of blood and soil'. Revisionist ideology was a form of nationalism, offering a return to a golden age of Jewish grandeur, territorial and ethical.

Neo-Revisionism developed during the inter-war years, its doctrine heavily influenced by Jewish experiences of the Holocaust. A philosophy rooted intellectually in Jabotinsky's Revisionist infrastructure whilst also drawing on more recent historical experiences, Neo-Revisionism expressed a more radical right wing appreciation of Zionist principles. Neo-Revisionism's recalcitrance with regards to exclusive territorial claims on the Holy Land is its strongest bond with Jabotinsky's Revisionism. Neo-Revisionists do not recognise the existence of a Palestinian people. This political posture is essential as Begin

¹¹⁸ For further details, see Reich & Kieval, *op. cit.* pp. 56-61

and Meir emphasised, if the principles of egalitarianism and liberty inherent in Zionist philosophy are to be preserved.¹¹⁹ The link between past and present is apparent in Likud's *raison d'être*. Likud was formed in 1973 with the specific goal of retaining the territorial gains acquired during the 1967 war. The following section seeks to locate key political reference points on the map of Israeli politics.

The 1977 elections serve as a good reference point from which to evoke the past and the future in a bid to understand the present. The 1977 elections were a watershed in Israeli politics. Labour, which had been in power (or had shared in equal power with Likud in the first government of National Unity in 1967) was now voted out of power for the first time since the creation of Israel in 1948.¹²⁰ Described as an 'earthquake' in newspaper articles at the time, the voting of a Right Wing party into power was a major turning point in Israeli politics.¹²¹ The interplay between the regional and the domestic was highlighted by Likud's active implementation of settlement policies which resulted in 'creeping annexation' as well as the legal annexation of Jerusalem, sanctioned by the Knesset in July 1980. Such actions served to heighten tensions amongst the Palestinians of the occupied territories as well as the Arabs of the region as a whole. The intifada which began in December of 1987 was in part the expression of frustrations caused by such policies which had been implemented by both Labour and Likud. The system of proportional representation had been in place since the creation of the state of Israel and ensured that smaller parties were used at different times by both Labour and Likud to secure political dominance.¹²² Policies implemented by Likud whilst it was in power translated into the practice of Neo-Revisionist philosophy. The results of these policies was to create the problems of the settlements and the question of the status of Jerusalem which were two of the predominant obstacles in negotiations between the two camps. A direct line of descent can be traced from Ben-Gurion through Meir and down to Begin and Shamir with regards

¹¹⁹ Golda Meir, *The Sunday Times* (15 June 1969) and Menachem Begin *Yediot Ahronot* (17 October 1969) quoted in Chomsky N., *The Fateful Triangle*, op. cit., pp. 26-27

¹²⁰ For an investigation of the reasons for Labour's decline, see Dowty A., 'Israel: From Ideology to Reality' in Rubinstein op. cit., pp. 115-119

¹²¹ Peretz D., 'The Earthquake - Israel's Ninth Knesset Elections', Mahler (ed.), *Readings on the Israeli Political System*, (Washington DC, University Press of America, 1982), p. 239

¹²² For a more detailed discussion of the technicalities of the balance of power and how alliances were struck between the Likud and various religious parties, see Beilin, op. cit., pp. 52-53

to the brand of Zionism they crystallised in their policy directives. Interestingly, the same expansionist policies were espoused by premiers of Labour and Likud alike, illustrating the difficulty in differentiating between both parties on certain key issues such as settlement policy and Jerusalem for example.¹²³ Extra-parliamentary groups have at times been influential in challenging discourses in Israel. The section below identifies some of the predominant lobby groups in Israel. A study of changing discourses and peacemaking which excludes an analysis of extra-parliamentary groups would omit an important constitutive element in the process of changing discourses.

It is significant to note that the Gush Emunim or the Party of the Faithful was formed in response to the general malaise experienced in Israel in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Relevant to this study are the tactics adopted by this movement in order to achieve its aims and reveals important features of changing discourses. For example, its illegal activity in setting up settlements followed by strong and constant recalcitrance to shift when the authorities intervene, have ended with success for the movement as the government was seen to give in. Such outcomes are indicative of government coercion. An example of such a case is that of the settlement of Kadum at Sebastia near Nablus. Led by Benny Katzover and Menachem Felix, the settlers were forcibly removed by the army eight times before the Rabin government succumbed to their demands. On the pretext of setting up a school, the settlement of Elon Moreh was established.¹²⁴ As Geoffrey Aronson notes,

‘Gush Emunim see the land of Israel as God’s promise to the Jewish people and Jewish settlements in these areas are an expression of the fulfilment of divine inspiration. So, obviously when you’re competing with that, what’s an Arab claim compared to God’s will?’¹²⁵

The point of particular relevance in its application to this study is located in the overlap of the official/unofficial distinction. The importance of linkages between official politicians and dominant figures within the Gush Emunim narrow the gap and allow for an easy bridging effect

¹²³ Flapan, op. cit. p.241

¹²⁴ Aronoff M.J. *Israeli Visions and Divisions*, (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1989), p. 75

¹²⁵ Interview with Geoffrey Aronson, 22 May 1997, Washington DC

across which there is an effective marriage of ideas and actions. Two examples of such individuals are Ariel Sharon who has served as Minister of Agriculture, Chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Settlements and as Defence Minister and Raphael Eitan, who once served as Chief of Staff. Two leading figures at the forefront of the official face of the settler movement, they both privately share the main thrust of Gush Emunim's religious arguments and convictions.¹²⁶ Another vehicle for Gush Emunim to gain access to the political domain is through Tehiya (renaissance) which it helped found in 1979 as part of the Movement to Stop Withdrawal from the Sinai.

On the other end of the political spectrum are Left wing groups who advocate peaceful co-existence with the Palestinians of the occupied territories, groups such as Peace Now, a lobby group, with close links to The Citizen's Rights movement, Change (Shinui), and Mapam. As with Gush Emunim the dividing line between official and unofficial is at times fluid. For example, two Peace Now leaders were elected to the Knesset by registering on the Ratz party membership register. This cross-cutting between the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary is an important feature underpinning changing discourses. The formation of Peace Now arose out of a perceived need to mobilise and disseminate a particular political view in response to hegemonic Israeli discourses. Significantly, Peace Now was also founded as a response to the Sadat peace initiative of 1977, but unlike Gush Emunim, it was to promote the peace initiative through generating and sustaining a climate for peace within Israel.¹²⁷ Its characteristic features as a movement is a lack of a fixed hierarchy, the posts of treasurer and spokesperson amongst the only official positions occupied. Amongst its leading figures are Mordechai Bar-On who has occupied the position of Chief Education Officer in the Israeli Defence Forces and has also been assistant to the then Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan. An active politician, he resigned his seat in the Knesset in November 1987. David Zucker was one of the original founders of Peace Now and is General Secretary of the Citizen's Rights Movement also known as Ratz. Peace Now played a crucial role in creating links with leaders within the Palestinian community even during the period when such meetings were officially prohibited by the Israeli government. For example Peace Now was responsible for arranging a meeting with Dr. Issam Sartawi, known to be a moderate within the Palestinian camp in Vienna in October 1980. A similar meeting between

¹²⁶ Aronoff op. cit., p. 77

Bar-On and Abu Iyad, the second in command after Arafat of the Fateh party of the PLO was arranged in Budapest. Such contacts aided the creation of a channel through which a learning process about the other was pursued and illustrate the complex, interactive process of changing discourses which would appear to transcend the simplistic official/unofficial divide.

A chronological account of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has shown it to be a protracted conflict which has passed through a number of different stages and has involved a variety of actors, both internal and external to it. In order to facilitate the study of changing discourses around this particular conflict, it would be useful to erect a framework to guide analysis. By focusing attention on the main landmarks in the conflict, five themes may be seen to run through the course of the conflict.

Five Salient Features: The Discursive Construction of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

An over-view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveals five salient discursive constructions which may jointly be seen to constitute the conflict. These are not statements or variables about the so-called reality of the conflict, but are powerful narratives which have defined the conflict. These themes, I will argue are the representation of the conflict as:

1. “Arab-Israeli”
2. zero-sum
3. a discourse on the negation of Palestinian identity
4. a discourse on Israeli security
5. as a discourse on Palestinian autonomy

1. The conflict as Arab-Israeli

The construct of the conflict as Arab-Israeli has meant that inter-state conflicts in the region have been dealt with at the expense of the core conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 94

1948 marks an important landmark in this construction. The creation of Israel and its acceptance as a nation by the international community gave Israel access to international organisations and therefore the forum to promote its cause. The Palestinians on the other hand did not fit in to this Westphalian model of inter-*national* relations and were left outside or on the margins. Having lost their voice through exclusion from the 'club of state representatives', the battle for Palestinian recognition and legitimacy had begun. The first Arab-Israeli war introduced a powerful discourse which represented the Israeli state defending itself against a concerted attack by Arab states. The Palestinians themselves, by seeking the help of their Arab brethren strengthened this powerful discourse. Successive Arab-Israeli wars served to re-structure the original inter-communal conflict. From being an inter-communal conflict between Jews and Palestinian in mandate Palestine, the dispute was now portrayed as a conflict, not between Jews and Palestinians over the territory of mandate Palestine, but one between Israel and Arabs over the legitimacy of the Israeli state in the Middle East. This discourse was conveyed through the powerful image of war and it was strengthened by the conflict settlements which eventually ended the wars, settlements again between Arab states and Israel. The Palestinian issue became concealed, hidden behind new actors opposed to Israel. Israeli statehood made it a member of the international community. Palestinians on the other hand, were not. This facilitated their representation, most notably in United Nations Security Council resolution 242 as 'refugees'. The process of reconstructing the Palestinians as a people was a lengthy and interactive process, involving the Palestinians themselves as well as the international community. The discursive genesis of the Palestinians from refugees to a people was punctuated by PNC statements, particularly after 1974, which in turn were encouraged by positive support from the United Nations and the European Union. As Rashid Khalidi notes, 'this shift in international attitudes was positively affected by the evolution of Palestinian goals since 1967.'¹²⁸

A landmark in the Palestinian battle for Western recognition of its identity as a distinct nation, part of yet separate from the Arab whole, was the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1964.¹²⁹ The PLO represented the Palestinians as separate from the Arabs. Although the PLO was originally created by the Arab League to control the Palestinians,

¹²⁸ Khalidi R., 'The Palestinian People: Twenty Two Years After 1967', chapter eight, *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising Against Occupation*, op. cit., p. 115

¹²⁹ It is important to note that the Palestinian people have always been recognised in the Middle East.

under Arafat's leadership, the Palestinians defined their autonomy through the creation of a political organisation which was *Palestinian*. This process of separation continued. Although the 1982 war was fought in Lebanon, the Palestinians, not other Arab states were fighting against the Israelis. The pre-1948 discourse which represented a Jewish-Palestinian confrontation for mandate Palestine was now being reproduced. Although in a foreign land, Lebanon, the conflict was once again between Jews and Palestinians for their 'legitimate rights' to mandate Palestine. By 1987, this confrontation defining a distinct Palestinian entity was taken back to the West Bank and Gaza. The circle was now complete. It had taken the Palestinians close to forty years, 1948-1987 to reconstitute the conflict as one between Israel and the Palestinian people.

2. The conflict as zero-sum

From as early as 1917 and the Balfour Declaration, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was defined as zero-sum, that is to say that the territory of Mandate Palestine was to be divided between two peoples, the Palestinians and the Jews. Twenty years later in 1937, the Peel Commission, as we shall see in chapter three, reinforced this construct when it recommended partition between Jews and Palestinians in mandate Palestine. Ten years later in 1947, the United Nations General Assembly proposed a zero-sum situation when it put forth partition as a solution to the inter-communal conflict in Mandate Palestine in resolution 181. Although the Jews accepted this, the Palestinians rejected it, claiming all of the territory. Not only the Palestinians, but also the Arab states in the region, rejected the zero-sum situation proposed by the international community. This rejection was articulated through successive Arab-Israeli wars, which were fought on average once every decade as we saw earlier in this chapter. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war is particularly significant as Israel now occupied all of mandate Palestine. However, the international community represented through the organs of the United Nations, resisted a positive-sum construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when the Security Council issued resolutions 242 and 338 in response to the 1967 and 1973 wars respectively. These resolutions once again reiterated a zero-sum outcome to the conflict, articulated through the "land for peace" formula. Significantly however, it was not the pre-1948 territory which was on offer, but the lands which were occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. The "land for peace"

formula introduced by the 1967 resolution set new parameters which implicitly designated the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Palestinian territories. The PLO rejected UNSCR 242 and 338 because they failed to make any reference to the Palestinian people, alluding only to Palestinian "refugees".¹³⁰ The acknowledgement of a Palestinian people, which the PLO was demanding, would have significantly altered the discursive tramlines set around the issue of land and the zero-sum outcome favoured by the international community. If a Palestinian people existed then it was entitled to self-determination in its homeland, the whole of mandate Palestine.

One territory, inhabited by two peoples created a zero-sum situation. However, the conflict was arguably transformed into a positive-sum construct when identity and security were no longer contingent on territoriality. The intifada played a very important role in this process. It had an impact on the way in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was being defined by the hegemonic discourse. The act of Palestinian rebellion showed the world that they were a suppressed population under Israeli occupation. As such, the intifada influenced the development of a positive-sum discourse, which was finally expressed in the Declaration of Principles document as we shall see in chapter six. The territorial component of the conflict would remain zero-sum, signalled through a sharing of the land, however, Palestinian and Israeli identity and security were gradually being redefined in terms dissociated from the territory. The Palestinian uprising which began in December 1987 signalled to Israel and to the Western world a Palestinian rejection of continued Israeli military rule in the occupied territories. The intifada articulated a powerful narrative reinforcing the existence of a distinct Palestinian identity. At the same time, the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories also challenged the Israeli claim that Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was vital to Israel's security. The intifada challenged this construct by linking Palestinian self-determination to Israeli security in a positive-sum equation. The zero-sum situation relating to territory would remain, but was now overlaid by a new emerging positive-sum discourse.

¹³⁰ Tessler M., 'The Camp David Accords and the Palestinian Problem', chapter one, *Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians*, op. cit., p. 242

3. The conflict as the negation of a Palestinian identity

The negation of a Palestinian identity, as we shall see in chapter three, can be traced back to discourses articulated in the period pre-1948. The creation of Israel in mandate Palestine strengthened this discursive trend. Successive Israeli leaders such as Golda Meir and Menachem Begin warned of the dangers that lay in acknowledging the existence of a Palestinian people for Israel's legitimacy. Significantly, this example illustrates the power attributed to articulation, since uttering the word 'Palestinian' would 'create' a people whilst conversely silence had the power to deny their existence. The battle for the PLO was to regain the land which Palestinians felt was unjustly taken from them. It was also a battle to change perceptions or public opinion outside of the Middle East, which did not recognise a Palestinian people, but Palestinian refugees after the 1948 and 1967 wars and then 'terrorists' in the 1970's. As Rashid Khalidi points out,

'The term Palestinian people sounds normal and natural and the existence of the Palestinian people is contested only by a lunatic fringe. In 1967 however, it was arguably the case that the adjective Palestinian, if used at all, was utilised primarily as a modifier for 'refugees' and that this was the context in which the Palestinians were best known.'¹³¹

The Jordanian option sought to place the occupied territories under Jordanian jurisdiction. This would have subjugated a Palestinian identity to a Jordanian one, thereby dissolving the Palestinian problem by removing the word 'Palestinian' from the international lexicon. Although this was the favoured American approach to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, particularly under the Reagan administration, the strength of the intifada which emphasised a Palestinian identity and expressed the Palestinian desire for independence weakened the Jordanian option. It was further weakened by King Hussein's political disengagement from the occupied territories in the summer of 1988. However, as late as 1991, the Jordanian option was still being articulated in the international political arena, this time in the guise of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation negotiating at the international conference convened in Madrid and Washington.

¹³¹ Khalidi R., 'The Palestinian People: Twenty Two Years After 1967', *op. cit.*, p. 114

4. The conflict as a discourse on Israeli security

Israeli discourses have tended to equate Israeli security with land. Jewish settlements are an important part of the discourse on Israeli security. Since Jews first began to emigrate to mandate Palestine, settlements were set up as 'outposts', often in the wilderness, to work the land and guard it. Throughout the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, settlements have been a salient feature of the dispute, used by Israelis to reclaim their land, secure the return of Eretz Israel or Greater Israel to the Jewish people and serve to delineate the Israeli states' borders. The latter point was underscored by Rabin who distinguished between two types of settlements, those that could be dismantled if need be and those which were necessary to ensure Israel's security, set up in strategic locations, along rivers or in valleys. Settlements, constructed as being a vital part of Israel's security, were the foundation stones upon which the state of Israel was erected.

The Arab-Israeli wars strengthened the Israeli discourse on security and linked it to territorial acquisition. The Sinai was returned to Egypt in 1980 through the provisions of the Camp David accords. This may be regarded as the first sign that Arab acceptance of Israel was more important to Israel's security than land. However, Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank and Gaza proved more problematic. This was essentially because Israel was not dealing with a state, but with a people who it refused to acknowledge, the Palestinians, and because those territories were strategically more important to Israel's security. As was alluded to earlier, United Nations resolutions 242 and 338 enshrined the idea of 'land for peace'. In exchange for the return of Arab land, that party would have to accept Israel's 'right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force.'¹³² The PLO could not subscribe to such directives especially when Israel did not recognise the existence of a Palestinian people. There was a stalemate around the discourse of Israeli security until the late 1980's. A series of events both regional and international impacted significantly on Israeli perceptions of what constituted security. The intifada as noted earlier in this chapter, created a schism within Israeli society as debate was generated by scenes of Palestinian rebellion. Significantly, where Palestinian security concerns had been non-existent, over-shadowed and

¹³² UN Security Council Resolution 242. Lukacs, op. cit., p. 1

negated in large part, by Israel's powerful construction of its own security needs, images of Israeli forces beating Palestinian civilians challenged this construct and introduced a discourse defining Palestinian security needs. Within Israel, the intifada generated debate which centred around the following questions: Was Israel's security served by its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and was it in its interest to continue ignoring the existence of a Palestinian people and by extension the PLO? As the intifada continued, 1990 saw another major change in the global balance of power. The collapse of the Soviet Union which had been a major financial and military backer of many Arab states in the region hostile to Israel, had a significant effect on redefining Israeli security for Israelis. The Gulf War of 1991 weakened the powerful Israeli belief that the Arab states (excluding Egypt after 1978) were unified in their desire to destroy Israel. As Arab states were now seen to be fighting each other with some siding with Israel in a coalition against Iraq, Israeli perceptions around the issue of security were changing. The Gulf War also highlighted the importance of oil producing countries to the West. This shift is expressed by Smith who states:

'The Gulf regimes, especially the Saudis, may prove far more crucial to American interests in maintaining regional security than Israel could be or has been, in a period when the Cold War justification of Israel's use as an ally has faded.'¹³³

A shift in the discourse on security held the key to major changes in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Although Israel had secured a peace treaty with Egypt, other Arab states were reluctant to follow suit before the Palestinian problem was brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Peace with the Palestinians would pave the way for peace with Jordan and other states in the region. The rise of Hamas and other Islamic groups who in the case of Hamas were beginning to challenge the PLO's leadership of the Palestinian national cause, was an added reason to negotiate with the secular PLO while it was still possible to do so. Peace with Arab states would 'root' Israel in the region as Arab markets would be open to Israel, ending its existence in the Middle East as an 'artificial' economy sustained by the United States. The importance of economic benefits which peace would bring Israel are revealed in the Declaration of Principles assessed in the next chapter.

¹³³ Smith C.D, 'The "New World Order" and its Implications for the Middle East, 1984-91', op. cit., p. 291

5. The conflict as a discourse on Palestinian autonomy

The discourse on Palestinian autonomy, enshrined in the Camp David accords of 1978 sought to resolve the Palestinian problem without relinquishing any part of Eretz Israel. Autonomy was used by the right wing Israeli Prime Minister at the time, Begin, to connote self-administration, whereby the occupied territories would remain under Israel's control but the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be given limited powers in the form of a 'self-governing authority'.¹³⁴ This was never to be realised as negotiations came to a dead end and were halted. However, it is significant for the study of changing discourses that the geographic area which was designated as a Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority (PISGA) in the Declaration of Principles fifteen years later, was demarcated as an autonomous Palestinian region (albeit with all sorts of qualifications) by a right wing Israeli government in 1978. By proposing autonomy as a solution to the Palestinian problem, the Begin government sought to maintain its own jurisdiction over the land in the form of occupation, whilst attempting to defuse the tension in those territories by allowing the Palestinian residents to govern themselves. Autonomy may be seen as one step further along the trajectory which began with the Jordanian option. In the intermittent period however, a gradual movement away from a zero-sum construction of the conflict by the PLO expressed in successive PNC statements particularly after 1974, and the positive international response which this emerging discourse was receiving, jointly served to give the PLO and therefore the Palestinian national movement, a higher international political profile. This in turn impinged on the Jordanian option making it a less viable political option. Autonomy was another formula or narrative which was mooted by Israel in what proved to be a failed attempt to address Palestinian calls for self-determination.

Significantly, the autonomy proposal sought to negate the existence of the PLO by developing a plan in which only the Palestinian residents of the occupied territories were recognised. Palestinian refugees who had left their homes during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war or had been abroad during the 1967 war and were not allowed to return to the occupied territories after the war by Israel, were not accounted for by the autonomy plan. In so doing, Israel was

¹³⁴ The Camp David Accords, 17 September 1978, Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 157

once again seeking to 'divide and rule'. If an alternative leadership could be nurtured in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza as the village league plan of the early 1980's sought to do, then perhaps the PLO could be marginalised and overtaken by a new indigenous leadership. This outcome however never materialised, for although there were always individuals who were prepared to work with the Israeli authorities, the PLO proved to have greater support in the territories. Autonomy was therefore an attempt at smothering the PLO, symbol of the struggle for Palestinian self-determination by cultivating an alternative, indigenous Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories. By the late 1980's however, the eruption of the intifada articulating Israeli domination and repression of a Palestinian people through violence, magnified and strengthened the discourse for Palestinian self-determination, importantly, for an international audience. Autonomy was no longer a viable discourse. The end of the Cold War which led to reconfigurations of allegiances in the region served to 'melt' discursive tramlines which had fixed discourses around the issue of Palestinian autonomy for decades. Discursive tramlines around the issue of Palestinian autonomy were now taking on new shapes and directions.

It is important however to contextualise the process of changing discourses. The chronological component within such a framework is central in accounting for and understanding change. Proposals or narratives constructing Palestinian autonomy may be regarded as a necessary stage in paving the way or bridging discourses articulating Palestinian self-determination. Palestinian autonomy as a discursive construct, provided a structure which prepared the ground for Palestinian self-determination. For, as Uri Savir, the Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry in 1993 and a key negotiator in the secret Oslo channel noted, there has to be a period of time set aside for psychological adjustment to change which allows people to come to terms with what leaders are proposing. If this process is curtailed or hastened, then the reaction could scuttle the process. He writes:

'Change is often best perceived in the immediate drama of its occurrence, before new routines have set in. In responding to change, society tends to linger in a kind of

psychological jet lag as long-standing perceptions resist the impact of new ideas and realities. Peacemaking tries to reset perceptual clocks.’¹³⁵

By the beginning of the 1990’s, ‘perceptual clocks’ had been reset as regional and international re-configurations of balances of power now meant that a recognition of a Palestinian people would no longer mean the end of Israel as it once may have done and autonomy could now be substituted for self-determination.

Conclusion

Chapter two has sought to introduce the chosen case-study which will be used in this thesis, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By focusing on key turning-points in the evolution of this protracted conflict, this chapter highlighted the involvement of a diversity of parties. The conflict began as an inter-communal dispute between Palestinians and Jews in Mandate Palestine which was impinged upon by Great Britain in its role as Mandate power until 1947. The end of the Second World War and the plight of the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust also had a major impact on socio-political developments in Palestine. The metaphor of widening rings illustrates this interconnection. The Anglo-American Commission of inquiry set up at the end of the Second World War introduced the United States as an external player in the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. The international community represented by the United Nations also became involved in the conflict when Great Britain ended its Mandate in Palestine in 1947-8 as did the Arab states who challenged designs for Palestine proposed by the international community.

What began as an inter-communal conflict soon became an international conflict, attracting a multiplicity of actors who impinged upon the development of the five core themes to the conflict. As we shall see in the forthcoming chapters, the salient themes to the conflict were impinged upon, not only by professional "mediators", but by a host of other parties, both external and internal. Research carried out in the following chapters which advance chronologically, assess the way in which external parties impinged upon the central themes to the conflict. In an attempt to better understand the peacemaking process, analysis of changing discourses

¹³⁵ Savir, *The Process*, op. cit., introduction, p. 1

undertaken in this thesis reveals a complex relationship between external and internal parties who interact in a highly political process of discursive change. Chapter three focuses on key moments of change between 1897-1948 with particular attention on the role of external parties therein.

CHAPTER THREE

External Parties and their Impact on the Construction of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1897-1948

Introduction

Chapter three focuses on interventions by external parties during the period 1897-1948. This chapter will show how core themes to the conflict, what I refer to as discursive tramlines were constructed and how external parties were implicated in their production. The chapter adopts a broadly chronological approach focusing attention on the role of external parties in mediation processes constituting the Jewish-Arab conflict. It is important at the outset to highlight the ambiguous and potentially misleading labels used in much of conventional mediation literature. The term ‘third party’ is generically used to refer to mediators. However, parties other than mediators as we shall see in this chapter, are implicated in the construction of the discursive tramlines which construct the conflict. Great Britain as colonial power in mandate Palestine was not a third party, but a primary player, directly implicated in the emerging conflict and particularly in setting up the salient features of the conflict. For want of a better term, ‘external party’ will be adopted in this thesis to distinguish between the two protagonists and other players.

The categories ‘internal’ and ‘external’ are themselves problematic, for it is not always possible to differentiate between the two. For example, the Manchester school of Zionism grouped a number of British Jews sympathetic to the Zionist cause. C.P Scott, the editor of the Manchester Guardian, led them. It was Scott who secured Dr. Weizmann’s introduction to

Lloyd George.¹ Would the members of the Manchester school be labelled ‘internal’ or ‘external’ parties? They were British but they were Zionists and worked to achieve Zionist ends. Indeed Sykes goes so far as to say that ‘[t]he British strategical interests of the Manchester school occupied a large place in Zionist thinking, Zionist diplomacy and Zionist propaganda at that time [1915].’² This example illustrates that agents have a plurality of identities which may challenge the internal-external divide. I shall analyse six moments in the period 1897-1948 during which, I shall argue, an external party was implicated in setting up the five discursive tramlines, transforming or reinforcing them. The seminal role played by Great Britain in 1917 and the Balfour declaration, Britain’s role once again in 1922 with the British Mandate, the Peel Commission of 1937, the MacDonald White paper of 1939, the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry set up at the end of the Second World War and finally the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947. These were all-important junctures at which an external party’s intervention brought about discursive change in the construction of what became the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after May 1948. However, significantly for the study of changing discourses, what will also emerge in this chapter is that internal parties can also play a very important role in changing discourses. The starting point for analysis was not set with the intervention of the first external party, Great Britain in 1915, but in 1897 which saw the convention of the first Zionist Congress. This proved to be a key turning point in the construction of the discursive tramlines constituting the Jewish-Arab conflict.

A Brief Overview of the Period 1897-1948

The period 1897-1948 is the scene of great change, frequently accompanied with unrest as mandate Palestine became the focus of the Zionist project. The year 1897 was chosen because it is a key turning point in the birth of political Zionism. The first World Zionist Congress was held in Basle that year, during which a pledge was taken by the delegates present to found a Jewish state. 1948 has been chosen as a cut off point for this chapter because it

¹ Sykes, Part One, number one, ‘Reasons, Theories and Some Consequences’, p. 20. See also Adams M. & Mayhew C., chapter five, ‘Bias in the Media’. *Publish it Not*, (London, Longman, 1975,1989), p. 68

marks the declaration of the state of Israel, a key moment which significantly shifted the balance of power between the protagonists. Israeli discourses would henceforth have the legitimacy ascribed to state-players within the wider international system, whilst the Palestine Arabs would henceforth be discursively negated as a distinct people by the hegemonic discourse and labelled as 'Arabs', underlining their membership of the wider Arab whole. Significantly, an inter-communal conflict between Arabs and Jews in mandate Palestine was constructed by the hegemonic discourse after 1948 as a conflict between a Jewish state, Israel and Arab states.

The emphasis in this chapter is primarily on the way external parties were implicated in setting up what became the core themes to the conflict. Great Britain was responsible for setting up discourses which it then became enmeshed in and strove to extricate itself from. Prior to the British mandate of Palestine, the European based Zionist movement and its objectives clashed with Arab aspirations in the Ottoman Empire for self-determination. Britain's intervention set the Arab and Jewish communities of Palestine on a collision course by adopting a policy which was essentially incoherent, making similar promises to both the Jews and Arabs of Palestine. Britain was to support a Jewish homeland in Palestine and at the same time ensure that the civil and religious rights of the indigenous Arabs, the 'non-Jewish communities' were safeguarded. This overall view of the conflict shows that discourses were set up to begin with outside Palestine and then were impinged upon from within the contested territory as various discursive strands interacted. Britain's role was dual. It initiated policy and reacted to pre-existing discourses and unfolding actions. This highlights the difficulty in attributing authorship of a particular narrative to a particular party, as discourses articulated by internal and external parties are often very tightly intertwined. Assessment of Britain's role during this period also reveals a gradual shift in the way in which the Foreign Office saw the emerging conflict. In the early period of the mandate, between 1917 and 1936, British policy in Palestine was seen through the lens of colonialism and the power politics of securing British interests abroad. Hence, it was politically expedient to discursively negate the existence of an

² Sykes, *ibid.*, p. 20

indigenous Palestine Arab population. However in 1936, inter-communal riots in Palestine and particularly the role of Palestine Arabs therein, induced a reappraisal of the situation by the British Foreign Office illustrating the dynamic two-way interconnection between agency and structure in the process of changing discourses referred to in chapter one. By 1937 the Royal Commission led by Lord Peel officially acknowledged the existence of a Palestinian people by recommending partition. This is a good illustration of the way in which internal discourses have an impact on external discourses.

The main parties to the conflict in the early phase, that is up to the Palestinian rebellion were the World Zionist Organisation, the leaders of Arab front-line states, Great Britain and the Palestine Arabs. But significantly it was the World Zionist Organisation who was defining the issues through the British Foreign Office. By the mid 1930's however, Britain's role changed and although still a colonial power, it began to take on a mediatory role, trying to assuage the Jewish and Arab communities of Palestine. It is also at this time that methods adopted by both Zionist supporters and Palestine Arabs to influence Great Britain changed. All along, internal parties sought to change the way in which the external party was dealing with them. They tried to use, manipulate or coerce the external party into doing what they wanted, but the political desires of the two internal parties were diametrically opposed. When diplomatic channels failed, they resorted to violence. In trying to meet both parties' demands, Great Britain's foreign policy in mandate Palestine failed as neither party was satisfied.

An initial period of courting the colonial power was replaced by violence against it as a perceived enemy. In the early period of the mandate, Britain laid down policies which proved inflammatory to both parties later on in the mandate; to Zionists because they did not go far enough and to Palestine Arabs because they gave too much to the growing Jewish community in Palestine. So, Britain was the colonial power and responded differently as the inter-communal conflict escalated. As the colonial power, both Jews and Arabs inside Palestine and outside considered it as a party to the conflict. This ambiguous role as adversary and mediator proved untenable and what had begun as a British Mandate of a strategically located territory,

Palestine, had now been transformed into a quagmire which Britain was anxious to extricate itself from. This it did in 1947 when it withdrew and handed the inter-communal conflict over to the United Nations. Another external party became involved. The change in world balance of power which had come about during the Second World War meant that the United States became involved in the conflict. The Anglo-American commission of Inquiry set up to resolve the Jewish refugee problem in the former axis countries brought in the United States not as a mediator, but as part of a joint commission of inquiry. This intervention would prove long lasting as we see in chapters four, five and six. What this chapter illustrates is just how central Britain's role was in setting up discourses defining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Those very discourses as we shall see in the remaining chapters proved very hard to change. But it would be a gross oversimplification to single out Great Britain alone. The foundations of the conflict were set through an interactive process which involved both internal and external parties. Britain's role was constrained by a pre-existing structure, most notably colonialism, but also by emerging discourses which slotted into that environment and reinforced it, namely the Zionist project in Palestine. What becomes apparent is that external parties who can be audiences, constituencies, onlookers, allies, commissions of inquiry or indeed colonial powers, can all impinge on the process of changing discourses and yet they are not 'mediators' in the narrow sense in which the term is used in conventional mediation literature. Mediators within the framework I am suggesting here, are all those parties, internal and external, who mediate discourses or impinge upon changing discourses in one way or another.

Analysis of the period 1897-1948 reveals three main features with regards to changing discourses. The first is the contextualised nature of emerging discourses, contained within and impinged upon by wider political processes. Secondly, that discourses either serve to reinforce existing structures or they challenge or transform them. And thirdly, that discourses can be changed not only by a mediator but by a plethora of other external parties, as well as internal ones, who all mediate, not by seeking to change the protagonists' behavioural patterns, but by influencing narratives constructing the adversaries and the conflict. As such, they are mediators of texts not of people, as is prescribed in the conventional mediation literature.

The Early Period 1897-1917: Great Britain's Role in Creating the Conflict

The first half of the century was still part of the age of imperialism and European colonialism and Britain's involvement in Palestine was very much conditioned by that wider context. The second decade of the twentieth century saw heightened British activity in the Levant. The First World War was to mark the end of the Ottoman Empire which had existed for almost four hundred years. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 effectively carved up the Ottoman region into two spheres of influence, British and French. France was to govern in Syria and Lebanon whilst Great Britain was allocated Iraq and Transjordan. It was agreed that Palestine should be placed under an 'international administration' the nature of which would be decided at a later date.³ This agreement, Hirst argues, violated an earlier agreement contained in the McMahon correspondence between Great Britain and the Sherif of Mecca between July 1915 and March 1917, in which Britain had pledged to 'recognise and support' the independence of the Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and Iraq in exchange for their contribution to the allied war effort.⁴ The ink had not yet dried on the last letters exchanged between Sykes and Picot when Lord Arthur Balfour, British Foreign Secretary, sent Lord Rothschild a letter, subsequently referred to as the Balfour declaration, in which he pledged that Britain would support the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. With the benefit of hindsight, this document marks a watershed in changing discourses around what was to become the Israeli-Arab conflict. Encapsulated within just one hundred and seventeen words, this declaration laid down important discursive tramlines;

³ Hirst D., chapter one, 'Seeds of Conflict, 1882-1920', *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, (London, Faber and Faber, 1977,84), p. 37

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 37. Avi Shlaim disputes this stating that due to the ambiguous nature of the letters exchanged, it is unclear whether Palestine was included in the area within which Great Britain was to recognise Arab independence. Shlaim A., chapter one, 'A Falcon Trapped in a Canary's Cage', *The Politics of Partition*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 22. For the McMahon Correspondence, see Antonius G., *The Arab Awakening*, (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1938)- Appendix A., pp. 413-427. A copy of the Sykes-Picot agreement which followed the McMahon Correspondence chronologically and prepared the ground for the discursive formations contained within the Balfour Declaration may be found in Appendix B, pp. 428-430.

narrative structures which were to direct the course of the conflict for the next eight decades. Lord Balfour wrote to Lord Rothschild:

‘His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.’⁵

Hirst contends that this declaration was inspired and drafted by Zionist leaders who saw it as ‘the charter of a future Jewish state’.⁶ As such, it was an important stage in furthering or implementing a decision taken by the World Zionist Congress in 1897, the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine.⁷ This illustrates the interplay between internal and external narratives and the central role of power in the process of changing discourses.⁸ In order to carry the Zionist project through, Zionist leaders recognised very early on that they would have to court the colonial power at the time, Great Britain and not local indigenous, Arab leaders.⁹ This reveals an important dimension of changing discourses which relates to the legitimising power of the articulator or author. The Balfour declaration transformed the Zionist project from one espoused by what was then a minority group to a project which now had the support of one of

⁵ Quoted in Hirst, *ibid.*, p. 38

⁶ Hirst, *ibid.* p. 39. One of the most exhaustive studies of the preparation of the Balfour Declaration is Leonard Stein’s *The Balfour Declaration*, (London, Valentine, Mitchell & Co., 1961). Although the Balfour Declaration gave the appearance of being drawn up by the British government, in fact it took five months to draft involving negotiations between Zionist leaders, headed by Chaim Weizmann, Lord Balfour and the British Cabinet.

⁷ The ESCO Foundation for Palestine, Inc., *Palestine, a Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies* (New Haven, Yale University, 1947), Vol. 1, p. 41. Quoted in Taylor A.R, ‘The Creation of Zionist Aims and Policy’, *Prelude to Israel, an Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947*, (London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1959), *ibid.*, p. 6

⁸ A detailed analysis of the concept of power falls outside of the remit of this thesis which is concerned with changing discourses. However, a useful working definition of power in conflict analysis is provided by V. Jabri who distinguishes between “potential power”, the level of resources available to each party, and “actual power” which is the ability to influence outcomes. Although the two are inter-related, it is more useful to focus on actual power in the study of changing discourses. Jabri V., “Agency, Structure and the Question of Power in Conflict Resolution”, *Paradigms*, (Vol. 9, No. 2, Winter 1995), p. 57

⁹ Shlaim A., introduction to *The Politics of Partition*, *op. cit.*, p. 14

the world's greatest colonial powers. As such, the Balfour declaration was a very important landmark and Zionist diplomacy was hailed for achieving such a diplomatic victory.¹⁰ Great Britain at this stage was not peacemaking, but acting as a colonial power safeguarding its own interests which happened to converge with those of the Zionist movement. It is important to remember that the Balfour declaration was issued during the First World War. Palestine at this time was still part of the Ottoman Empire, although the Sykes-Picot agreement had already planned for the days after the end of the war and the fracture of the Ottoman Empire. It would be advantageous to Great Britain if Palestine were to be administered by a non-Arab, Jewish government grateful to Great Britain, highlighting the highly political nature of changing discourses.¹¹

Assessment of the Balfour declaration reveals Britain's role in constructing the salient features of the conflict. The Balfour declaration contained a zero-sum construct of the latent conflict at this stage where Jews would have a 'national' home in Palestine without- Lord Balfour naively projected -impinging on 'the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.' It is important to note that in 1917 the Jewish population in Mandate Palestine constituted less than 10% of the total population. There were 56,000 Jews and 600,000 Palestine Arabs.¹² However, for someone reading the Balfour declaration, unaware of these statistics, the reverse would have been understood. The quotation below taken from a letter written by Lord Balfour in 1919, suggests that this was done on purpose for it was politically expedient to do so. The Palestine Arabs who made up over 90% of the population in Palestine were discursively negated in the Balfour declaration by being portrayed as the 'existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.' A letter written by Lord Balfour in 1919 shows that this formulation was carefully chosen so as to facilitate a politically desirable outcome for Great Britain, the creation of a Jewish national home in Palestine. He wrote:

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 3

¹¹ Sykes, 'Reasons, Theories and Some Consequences', *op. cit.*, p. 20

¹² Shlaim, introduction, *op. cit.*, p. 3. See also Gee J. chapter one, 'Independence and Catastrophe', *Unequal Conflict*, (London, Pluto Press, 1998), p. 29. Figures quoted by Paul Findley differ slightly. In 1917, there were 600,000 Palestine Arabs and 60,000 Jews. See Findley P., *Deliberate Deceptions*, (New York, Lawrence Hill Books, 1993), p. 5

‘The weak point of our position of course is that in the case of Palestine, we deliberately and rightly decline to accept the principle of self-determination. If the present inhabitants were consulted they would unquestionably give an anti-Jewish verdict. Our justification for our policy is that we regard Palestine as being absolutely exceptional: that we consider the question of the Jews outside Palestine as one of world importance and that we conceive the Jews to have an historic claim to a home in their ancient land; provided that home can be given them without either dispossessing or oppressing the present inhabitants.’¹³

This letter points to the importance given by the British government to Jewish security concerns, those same concerns which prompted Theodore Herzl to write *Der Judenstaat* outlining his vision of a Jewish state. This analysis reveals that two of the five discursive tramlines which I argued in chapter two constituted the core themes to the Jewish Arab conflict, the negation of a Palestinian identity and Jewish security concerns, were set up by Great Britain in November 1917, not in its role as a mediator but as a colonial power. Great Britain negated the existence of a Palestinian identity, but acknowledged the existence of the ‘present inhabitants’ of Palestine. So who were these inhabitants? They were ‘Arabs’ who had ‘civil and religious’ rights but not ‘political’ rights. Curiously however, Jewish inhabitants in ‘any other country’ enjoyed ‘rights and political status’. As we shall see below, this curious but purposive formulation drew on existing discursive continuities and marked an important link in the chain, paving the way for future British discourses on the status of Jews in Palestine, particularly discernible in the British Mandate of 1922. The dominant narrative articulated by Great Britain up to 1936 constructed Palestinians in Mandate Palestine as Arabs. The British Foreign Office was able to portray the Palestine Arabs as simply the ‘existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine’ because to a Westerner, their way of life and forms of political

¹³ Balfour A.J, from a letter to Lloyd George, 19 February 1919, quoted in Ingrams D., *Palestine Papers 1917-1922, Seeds of Conflict*, (London, John Murray, 1972), p. 61

organisation did not mirror Western European practices, but were different, marked by four centuries of Turkish rule.

The implied fragmentation of the Palestine Arabs in the Balfour declaration was enabled and supported by an existing surrounding discursive context. There was an absence of a centralised form of political government in Palestine in 1917. The Palestine Arabs had an Arab identity which distinguished them from the Turks, but they also had a more local sense of belonging, a sense of tribal or familial identity. This suggests that the legitimacy of a text is determined by existing 'contextual circumstances'.¹⁴ The Ottoman rulers made provisions for local self-administration, based largely on tribal affiliations. Palestinian society at the end of the nineteenth century was constructed along village or religious affiliation as David McDowall notes;

'Palestinian society in the nineteenth century was far from homogeneous. The vast majority of the population (well over 80%) was rural. Most of the peasantry lived in the same village as their forbears. Each village tended to be inhabited by one or two extended families (hamulas). Identity was governed essentially by village or religious affiliation. Nothing yet suggested a Palestinian identity.'¹⁵

However, Flapan disputes this view and contends that there was still 'a vague national consciousness, based on a feeling of collective destiny' although Palestine was divided administratively during four centuries of Ottoman rule.¹⁶ Prior to the carving up of the former Ottoman Empire into French and British Mandates, there was an attempt by the Arabs, through an Arab national movement to re-establish a past period of historical achievement. This Flapan contends did not mean that there was an absence of a Palestinian national sentiment, but only that,

¹⁴ Jabri, 'Agency, Structure and the Question of Power in Conflict Resolution', *op. cit.*, p. 56

¹⁵ McDowall D. *The Palestinians: The Road to Nationhood*. (London, Minority Rights Publications, 1994), p. 5

‘[t]he existence of a Palestinian national entity was obscured by the fact that the Palestinians had no ambition for an independent political future but saw themselves as eventually an integral part of a united Arab state. In this respect they were like the Arabs of Syria, Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula.’¹⁷

A watershed occurred between 1918-1920 in the Middle East which induced a re-direction of nationalist aspirations away from a Pan-Arab inclination towards provincial affiliations. Porath and Muslih would appear to concur on this point. Porath situates the emergence of a Palestinian national self-identity at the end of the First World War.

‘One of the most significant features of Palestinian-Arab ideology from the end of the second decade of the twentieth century until the 1930’s was its concentration on Palestine alone. Even if during this period there were occasional demands for partial or complete Arab unity, this was never expressed on an ideological plane.’¹⁸

Up to that point, Arab nationalism had been largely an expression of a common resistance against Ottoman rule.¹⁹ The turning point which occurred at the end of the First World War according to Muslih was a result of a weakening and fracture of Arab nationalist groups based predominantly around King Faysal’s government in Damascus.²⁰ It was at this point, directly after the growth of a localised sense of nationalism that there occurred a heightened concern with growing numbers of Jews in Palestine. Muslih posits that,

¹⁶ Flapan S., *Zionism and the Palestinians*, (London, Croom Helm, 1979), p. 81

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 79

¹⁸ Porath Y. *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement 1918-1929*, (London, Frank Cass, 1974), p. 62

¹⁹ Muslih M., *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 4

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 10 of preface.

‘Zionism did not create Palestinian nationalism. What Zionism did was provide the Palestinians with a focus for their national struggle. In other words, Zionism was the focus of the Palestinians and the pivot around which their politics centred.’²¹

The narrative negating a Palestinian identity was enabled by the wider structure in place at that time, highlighting the situated and inter-textual nature of changing discourses. There were significant differences during 1897-1948 between Europe and the Middle East with regards to social and political modes of organisation and particularly with regards to notions of nation-states. The French revolution of 1789 articulated a powerful discourse promoting the right to self-determination through democratic self-government. In the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire had lasted close to four hundred years ending in 1918. Assessed within the context of the Ottoman history of the Middle East, the complex relationship of the part to the whole, of a Palestinian local nationalist feeling distinct, yet part of, the wider whole emerges. Cultural ties were perceived as universal in the Middle East. This underpinning social unity spilled over into the political realm and rendered articulation of a distinct localised nationalism inconsistent with a strong Arab perception of overarching unity.

‘To devise a term such as *al-wataniyya al-Filastiniyya* [Palestinian nationalism] would have probably made many Palestinian nationalists uneasy, because it would raise a false antithesis between Arab culture, to which every Arab is irrevocably bound and the distinct character and interests of the different Arab regions (*aqtar*) to which the Arabs inhabiting any one of those regions were more faithfully and more strongly committed.’²²

It is important to stress that this was not a strictly Palestinian phenomenon, but an Arab one. To date there is no Arabic name for Palestinian nationalism or Syrian nationalism or any

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 217

²² Tibi B., *Arab Nationalism, A Critical Enquiry* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, Macmillan, 1981, 1990), p. 5

other form of nationalism in the Arab world.²³ The term *wataniyya*, Arabic for state nationalism is used as ‘an adjective to modify a movement, a party or a trend.’²⁴ The concept of nation and state as mode of political organisation was foreign to the Ottoman Empire and later to the Middle East prior to 1948.

‘Nation, nationalism and nation states are phenomena strange to Islamic history.--- Nationalism was originally a European phenomenon related to the emergence of the modern nation-state in Europe.--- Thus in the course of the twentieth century, nationalism and decolonisation have become inextricably interrelated. Only if organised as a nation-state can a community of people be a member of the international system.’²⁵

The discursive negation of a Palestinian identity was enabled by the wider structure. In this early period, a Palestinian identity was negated through reproducing powerful colonialist constructs. There was no Palestinian state so it was easy to negate the existence of a people who had an attachment to their land. There were only 'backward' Arab Bedouins who could only benefit from the expertise offered by Jews, many arriving from European states and bringing with them Western methods and expertise. The description of the indigenous population of Palestine as ‘non-Jewish’ in the British Mandate offers a discursive inlet into how the Palestinians were perceived and constructed by the West. The use of the term ‘non-Jewish’ is particularly significant in the study of the discursive representation of the indigenous population of Palestine for it introduces an element of contingency to the existence of the other. The other is conceived in relation to that which is Jewish and is stripped of an autonomous identity outside of his/her relation to a Jewish identity. Significantly, this whole highly political process occurs on a discursive level. This example illustrates how an indigenous people are rendered ‘other’ or ‘foreign’ in their own land through discursive constructs. The British Mandate refers to the Jewish community, the rights of that community to

²³ *ibid.*, p. 3

²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 3-4

immigrate into Mandate Palestine and its future position in the administration of Palestine. The indigenous population is constructed as fractured, heterogeneous groupings which exist in relation to the Jewish community. The Palestinians challenged this construct of a Palestinian identity fourteen years later in the inter-communal clash with the Jews in Palestine. The 1936 rebellion marks a discursive turning point in the evolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and particularly with regards to the evolution of a Palestinian national movement.

Palestinian nationalism began to develop in the 1920's and 1930's. Simha Flapan asserts that until 1914 and the outbreak of the First World War, the leaders and intellectuals of Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and the Hejaz (Saudi Arabia) had sought one united Arab state to be ruled by the Hashemite dynasty.²⁶ The Palestinians then recognised that they had a unique problem in addressing the creation of Jewish settlements and sought to unite with Syria to form a United Arab Kingdom with Damascus as its capital. Within a small area of land, numerical supremacy could be reversed within a matter of years, so Palestinian nationalism grew as they tried to respond to the problems which the Zionist project in Palestine presented, highlighting the political, interactive nature of changing discourses. Traditionally, political representation was tribal and in Palestine, leadership was divided between two families, the Husseinis and the Nashashibis. It was not until 1936 and the Arab rebellion that there developed a national leadership. Between 1932 and 1935, five new political parties were organised. During the Palestinian revolt, they united around a common platform calling for the immediate cessation of Jewish immigration, the prohibition of Jewish land purchases, the termination of the British Mandate and the proclamation of an independent state.²⁷ In the spring of 1936, the leaders of the political parties came together to form the Arab Higher Committee (AHC). Divisions between the two clans, the Husseinis and the Nashashibis continued within political groupings and weakened the Arab Higher Committee. During the

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 1

²⁶ Flapan S., 'Myth Two: Arabs Rejected the Partition and Launched War', *The Birth of Israel, Myths and Realities*, (London, Croom Helm, 1987), p. 59

²⁷ Shlaim, introduction, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7



course of the rebellion, the British declared the Arab Higher Committee illegal and arrested or exiled most of its members.²⁸ Mufti Hajj Amin Al-Husseini found his way to Germany and collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War. Weakened by factionalism, the Arab Higher Committee proved too weak to lead the Palestinian people effectively. Flapan asserts:

‘Rent by internal division and remote from those it purported to represent, the AHC was a total failure in its leadership of the Palestinian people, unable to bridge the gap between wild rhetoric and practical action. In every real test it turned out to be impotent.’²⁹

This consistent factionalism between the two main clans in Palestine, the Husseinis and the Nashashibis was carried through in allegiances of the political parties. This weakened the fledgling Palestinian leadership and left a power vacuum which was filled by the Arab League as the Arabs perceived and sought to act against an encroaching Zionist movement in Palestine. This is illustrated with reference to two Arab League meetings; the first in Bludan in 1946 and the second in Aley in 1947. At the first meeting, the Arab League members agreed to offer their support to the Palestinian leadership. By 1947 however, the promise of assistance was transformed into active leadership as there was no Palestinian leadership to speak of to assist.³⁰ This set a trend which proved difficult to change. When a Palestinian leadership did emerge first through Fateh and then through the PLO in the 1950’s and 1960’s, the conflict had been portrayed as Arab-Israeli and not Palestinian-Israeli for several decades. This construct proved difficult to change for many reasons, not least because it was politically expedient as we shall see in chapters four and five, for Israel to negate the existence of a Palestinian people. The Jewish community in Mandate Palestine tended to view the Palestine Arabs as Arabs, the same as other Arabs in the Levant with no particular attachment to the land which they inhabited. As Flapan asserts,

²⁸ Flapan S., ‘Myth Two: Arabs Rejected the Partition and Launched War’, *The Birth of Israel, Myths and Realities*, op. cit., p. 63

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 66

³⁰ Shlaim, chapter four, ‘Two Kinds of Partition’, *The Politics of Partition*, op. cit., pp. 86-7

‘From the beginnings of Zionist settlement in Palestine, the attitudes of the majority of the Zionist parties toward the local Arab population ranged from total obliviousness to their presence (‘the land without a people for the people without a land’) to patronising paternalism and indifference to outright denial of their national rights.’³¹

However, in his novel *Altneuland*, Herzl reveals his awareness of the existence of an indigenous Arab population in Palestine. In a section of the novel, Herzl addresses the issue of Palestinian identity. The Arab protagonist of the book, Rashid Bey is confronted by a Jew who proclaims: ‘We brought civilisation here’. Rashid Bey replies, ‘Excuse me, my friend, but civilisation has existed here before - my father planted orange trees here.’³² Subsequent official Jewish denial of an indigenous Palestine Arab population points to an implicit Jewish acknowledgement of a socio-political discursive interplay, whereby Jewish recognition of such a community would legitimise Palestinian claims for self-determination in Mandate Palestine and challenge parallel Jewish claims to the same area of land. Commenting on the early Jewish recognition of a Palestinian attachment to the land, Beilin contends that, ‘while Herzl was not unaware of the problem, the slogan of ‘a land for a nation for a nation without a land’ was as relevant to him as to the other Zionists.’³³ This example illustrates Zionist consciousness of the critical importance, discursive representation of the indigenous Arab population of Palestine would have on the legitimacy of the Zionist project. The dissonance between a Zionist silent acknowledgement of a Palestinian people and the political ramifications an official Zionist articulation of this would have on Jewish territorial claims in Palestine, has been a central preoccupation of the Left in Israel. Beilin notes:

³¹ Flapan S., ‘Myth One: Zionists Accepted the UN Partition and Planned for Peace’, *The Birth of Israel*, op. cit., p. 36

³² Quotations from *Altneuland* are reproduced in Beilin Y., *Israel, a Concise Political History*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1992), p. 109

³³ *ibid.*

‘To define the Arabs living in Palestine - and later Israel- as a nation leads to the necessary conclusion that they deserve the same right of self-determination demanded and received by the Jews. Only by defining them as an entity which does not constitute a nation can one explain why they are not entitled to self-determination.’³⁴

Counter-discourses to the Zionist project in Palestine were not only articulated by Arabs, but also by Jews, such as the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, David L. Alexander and the President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, Claude G. Montefiore. In a letter to The Times, published 24 May 1917, they emphasised their support for cultural Zionism whilst underscoring the negative side effects of political Zionism. The aim of cultural Zionism was to make Palestine a Jewish spiritual centre ‘in which the Jewish genius might find an opportunity of developing on lines of its own.’³⁵ They feared that the creation of a Jewish nation in Palestine would ‘have the effect throughout the world of stamping the Jews as strangers in their native lands, and of undermining their hard-won position as citizens and nationals of those lands.’³⁶ Laurie Magnus, a journalist for the London Quarterly Review was also critical of Jewish nationalism which he believed to be a betrayal of Jewish universalism. Magnus felt that Zionism was distorting the Jewish mission which aspired to

‘an ultimate Zion, not geographically fixed, nor dated in time, but gradually to be approached by the fulfilment of our mission in the countries in which we are dispersed.’ He adds, ‘the political Zionists of recent years are travelling away from the Jewish idealism of all the ages.’³⁷

The notion that there are two monolithic blocs, Jewish and Arab, confronting one another, is challenged by the above examples of counter-discourses to political Zionism

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 111

³⁵ Statement in The Times, 24 May 1917. Quoted in Antonius, *ibid.*, p. 265

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ Quoted by Cohen I., *Zionism and Jewish Ideals, A Reply to Mr. Laurie Magnus by Israel Cohen*, (London, English Zionist Federation, 1909), p. 3

articulated by Jews. This points to a more complex make-up of that which constitutes conflict and in turn the voices or discourses which are constitutive of the peace-making process. Jabri writes:

‘Recognition of a pluralism of identities applied to particular conflicts points to the importance of investigating the roles which could be played by identity groups which cross the conflict divide.’³⁸

Articulation of ‘existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine’ by the British Foreign Office in 1917 was enabled by the wider discursive environment in place during this period which did not differentiate between Arab and Palestinian. As such, Great Britain was situated within a wider discursive context and was constrained by it. It did not act as an external party but as a primary player who strengthened the structural properties of the patterned social discursive system in place at that time by its own articulations. Britain did not act as a third party but as a colonial power who responded to other discourses within the discursive realm, in particular Zionism. The discursive structures articulated in the Balfour declaration had already been articulated in 1897 in Basle in a meeting of Jewish community leaders. In 1917, Britain reiterated those narratives and in so doing legitimised them within the international arena. This example highlights the importance of authorship to changing discourses.

The Basle Conference of 1897: An Internal Party First Articulates the Core Discursive Tramlines

There is a correlation between acts of violence against Jews and the emergence of political Zionism which sought a permanent Jewish homeland in Palestine based on security needs. Discursive patterns equating Jewish security with a Jewish homeland in mandate Palestine were first articulated at the Basle conference of 1897 in the wake of the pogroms which swept Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. The birth of political

Zionism was a situated act, framed within wider political processes. The creation of the World Zionist Organisation came about in response to anti-Semitism which was rife throughout Europe. Although as Taylor notes ‘Zionism has existed for centuries as a facet of Jewish and Christian thought’, the creation of the World Zionist Organisation signalled an important turning point and reflected changes which were taking place in Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.³⁹ The assassination of Tsar Alexander the Second in 1881 sparked anti-Semitic sentiment and led to pogroms. Up to this point, enlightened Jews had advocated the assimilation of Jews into the societies in which they resided. However, as Jews were persecuted in Russia and Eastern Europe, many Jews began to reconsider their views regarding assimilation.⁴⁰ Leon Pinsker, for example, a Russian Jew, had advocated Jewish assimilation into Russian society through the organ of the Russian Jewish weekly *Razsvet* (Dawn). However, the anti-Semitism which was propagated by the Russian authorities had a profound effect on him. He no longer believed that the humanist ideals of the Enlightenment could overcome anti-Semitism.⁴¹ In response to this spate of violence, some three thousand Jewish refugees emigrated to Palestine. By 1882, an organisation called Hibbat Zion (Love of Zion) was established in Russia. Leon Pinsker was one of the leading founders of this organisation and was one of the first to advance the idea of a Jewish National Home, but not necessarily in Palestine.⁴² The followers of this organisation, Choveve Zion (Lovers of Zion), advocated the idea of settlement in Palestine as well as the revival of the Hebrew language. As Taylor notes, ‘the first seeds of political Zionism had taken root.’⁴³

The First Zionist Congress led by Theodore Herzl in 1897 discursively constructed the Jewish national home in Palestine. The wider discursive continuities of European imperialism

³⁸ Jabri, ‘Agency, Structure and the Question of Power’, op. cit., p. 66

³⁹ Taylor, A.R, ‘The Creation of Zionist Aims and Policy’, *Prelude to Israel, an Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947*, op. cit., p. 1

⁴⁰ Vital D., Preface, *Zionism: the Formative Years*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 5

⁴¹ Leon Pinsker entry in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, (Jerusalem, Keter Publishing, 1971), Vol. 8, p. 545. See also, Goldberg D. J., ‘Leo Pinsker and Chibbat Zion’, *To the Promised Land, a History of Zionist Thought*, (London, Penguin Group, 1996), p. 23

⁴² Taylor, ‘The Creation of Zionist Aims and Policy’, op. cit., p. 2

⁴³ *ibid.*

enabled such a narrative, for in 1897, Palestine was still part of the Ottoman Empire and was inhabited by close to half a million Arabs and only 50,000 Jews. Palestine Arabs made up 90% of the population and owned 99% of the land.⁴⁴ This however did not prevent the Zionists from making such a linkage. Symbols of state were articulated and institutions created which erected the necessary discursive structures which enabled or facilitated future discourses which advocated the creation of a Jewish state.⁴⁵ The convention of the First Zionist Congress brought 208 Jews together from 16 different countries. Hanging over the entrance to the municipal casino in Basle, where the meeting was to be held, was a blue and white flag which was to become the flag of the state of Israel. In his diary, Herzl wrote, 'In Basle I founded the Jewish state.'⁴⁶ The official programme of the first Zionist Congress stated the aim of Zionism to be the creation of a Jewish home, 'Heimstätte'. This euphemism was chosen to replace the use of the term 'state' for fear that it might antagonise the Turkish government and the majority of Jews at that time, who 'objected to the idea of a Jewish nation'.⁴⁷ The concept of 'homeland' as Herzl remarked, would be understood to imply statehood.

'No need to worry [about the phraseology]. The people will read it as 'Jewish State' anyhow.'⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Shlaim, introduction, *The Politics of Partition*, op. cit., pp. 2-3

⁴⁵ The Jewish Agency was created as the executive and representative of the World Zionist Organisation. Its aim was to assist and encourage Jews from all over the world to emigrate to Mandate Palestine. The Constitution of the Jewish Agency, signed in Zurich 14 August 1929 called for, 'Jewish immigration to be encouraged and furthered to the fullest extent practicable---. Land is to be acquired as Jewish property---. The Agency shall promote agricultural colonisation based on Jewish labour---.' See *Constitution of the Jewish Agency for Palestine*, (London, The Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1929, 1945), pp. 4-5. The Jewish National Fund, founded at the Fifth Zionist Congress in December 1901 served as the land purchase and development fund of the World Zionist Organisation and was authorised to use its funds solely for the purchase of lands in Palestine and Syria.

⁴⁶ Vital D., 'After the Congress'. *Zionism: the Formative Years*, op. cit., p. 4

⁴⁷ Taylor, A.R, 'The Creation of Zionist Aims and Policy', *Prelude to Israel, an Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947*, op. cit., p. 5

⁴⁸ The ESCO Foundation for Palestine, Inc., *Palestine, a Study of Jewish, Arab and British Policies* (New Haven, Yale University, 1947), Vol. 1, p. 41. Quoted in Taylor A.R, 'The Creation of Zionist Aims and Policy'. *Prelude to Israel, an Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy 1897-1947*, op. cit., p. 6

1903 marks an important watershed in the construction of the Palestine problem. The British government offered the Zionist Organisation a plot of land in East Africa, the Guas Ngishu, for autonomous settlement. By 1903, only six years since the first Zionist Congress, Great Britain, one of the most powerful Western states at the time, had taken Jewish nationalism seriously enough to offer it a territorial base in East Africa. However, this offer was rejected, for the World Zionist Organisation had defined its objective in 1897 as the creation of a Jewish state in Mandate Palestine and then sought to interweave its discourses with those of Great Britain which it succeeded in doing in 1917 and in 1922. Analysis of discourses articulated at the Basle conference of 1897 reveals that it was the Zionist Congress who set up what was then, the latent Arab-Jewish conflict as zero-sum by calling for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. If the state was to have a Jewish character, the Arab population could not remain.

Building on Existing Discursive Structures: The British Mandate

Powerful narratives articulated in the Balfour declaration were reinforced just five years later in the British Mandate. The British Mandate re-articulated and therefore reinforced discourses present in the Balfour declaration by incorporating them into the preamble. The British Mandate document is striking for its pre-occupation with practical, social and economic aspects of Jewish settlement in the area. Records of memos and letters which circulated within the diplomatic channels of the British Government which address the formulation of this document, reveal much about the behind the scenes conceptualisation and drafting of this important document. The formulation process of the Mandate document was one of an initial joint drafting exercise between representatives of the Zionist Organisation and British Government officials. It is important to note that the Zionist Organisation was a non-governmental organisation and as such, it is particularly remarkable that the British government should have been willing to adopt it as a body with a serious consultative role in the formulation process of such an important document. However, it is important to note that members of the World Zionist Organisation were in large part from

East European countries and were therefore at an advantage over Palestine Arabs, for they shared a common understanding of European politics and diplomatic channels.

The relationship which developed between the British government and the Zionist Organisation during the drafting period of the Mandate document was not limited to consultations designed to gather relevant information before the drafting process. Initial proposals were offered to the Zionist Organisation. They were in turn returned to the British government with recommendations for amendments and alternative formulations.⁴⁹ Subtle changes were proposed by the Zionist Organisation as can be seen in the examples below. What appear to be negligible amendments signal far-reaching political changes which prepare the ground for political developments designed to favour Zionist ambitions in Palestine. Even at this early stage of the conflict, the zero-sum construction of the dispute is apparent as the discursive struggle clearly revolves around a perception by the Zionist Organisation that Palestinian Arab gains would implicitly spell Zionist losses and vice-versa. The first notable victory for the Zionist Organisation in the drafting of the Mandate document came when the British Government, on 2 August 1920, agreed to include the text of the Balfour Declaration in its entirety, to serve as the preamble to the Mandate document.⁵⁰ In a letter dated 11 August 1920 signed by Chaim Weizmann, it would seem that a copy of the British Mandate had been sent to the Zionist Organisation between 2-11 August 1920. Gratitude is expressed for the ‘reincorporation in the preamble of the provision recognising the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute their National Home.’⁵¹ Through this ‘reincorporation’, it appears that on a diplomatic level at least, there was an implicit acknowledgement by the Zionist Organisation of the *political implications* of such an articulation and ‘the claim which this gives them’ to the future creation of a Jewish state.

⁴⁹ Document filed at the Public Records Office, Registry no., E9968/4164/44, Observations on draft Mandate from the Zionist Organisation, signed by Chaim Weizmann.

⁵⁰ A copy of the Mandate document of 2 August 1920 is contained in a document at the Public Records Office, Registry no. E9427/4164/44, Mr. Vansittart to Earl Curzon, 2 August, 1920

⁵¹ See document at Public Records Office, Registry no., E9968/4164/44

Three examples illustrate the discursive input of the Zionist Organisation in formulating the British Mandate for Palestine. Of the five articles that were ‘challenged’ by the Zionist Organisation, I shall cite three, as they show the interactive discursive process and how it unfolded. In the draft document these were articles 3, 5 and 7. In each instance, the articles shall be cited as they were in the three stages of their development; as they appeared in the draft Mandate, recommended amendments by the Zionist Organisations and the final version of the Mandate respectively.

Article 3: ‘The mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions and for preserving the civil and religious rights of all existing communities in Palestine.’⁵²

‘The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political administration and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home as laid down in the Preamble, and the development of a self-governing Commonwealth and for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race or religion.’⁵³

This became Article 2 in the final version of the Mandate Document:

⁵² Document at Public Records Office, Registry no., E9968/4164/44

⁵³ *ibid.* The concept of a Jewish Commonwealth was actively promoted by the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League whose objective was ‘to promote the transformation of Palestine into a self-governing Jewish State on both sides of the Jordan, with the status of a Dominion within the British Empire; to further friendship between the British and the Jewish peoples, based on justice, common interests and common ideals---.’ The League submitted a memorandum in favour of this political outcome to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine in January 1946. See, *Memoranda submitted to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry on Palestine*, (London, Excellent Printers Ltd., 1946)

‘The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home, as laid down in the preamble, and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.’⁵⁴

Analysis of the changes recommended by the Zionist Organisation points to a desired public right to statehood for the Jewish population in Palestine, but only a private civil and religious right for the Palestine Arabs. This is an extension of a discourse sown in the Balfour declaration as was illustrated above. Also important is the continuation of the discursive process of Palestine Arab fragmentation by the Zionist Organisation. It seems that another significant change in the article quoted above relates to the term ‘existing’. The Zionist proposal to substitute ‘all existing communities in Palestine’ with ‘all inhabitants of Palestine’ is an attempt to safeguard and strengthen the Jewish historic connection to Palestine, itself contingent on a discourse negating the existence of a people in Palestine, hence the Zionist slogan, ‘a land for a people for a people without land’. The existence of communities in Palestine would weaken this claim. Whereas in 1917 the Balfour declaration had called for ‘*a* national home for the Jewish people in Palestine’, only five years later, by the Summer of 1922, the Zionist Organisation was successful in moving the hegemonic discourse closer towards *its* objective. This is suggested in article 3 of the Mandate document in the clause, ‘*the* Jewish national home’ (italics added for emphasis). An indefinite article ‘a’ is replaced by a definite article ‘the’. This subtle change carries with it substantial political ramifications. The term ‘a national home for the Jewish people’ suggests it could be one of many such homes, whereas the re-formulation of this clause into ‘the Jewish national home’, implies greater permanency and stronger international political acquiescence to a permanent Jewish presence in Mandate Palestine. The way in which this is achieved is particularly important for this study.

⁵⁴ The British Mandate is reproduced in full in Laqueur W. & Rubin B. (eds.), *The Arab-Israel Reader*, (New York, Facts on File, 1969, 1985), pp. 34-42. Article 2 is on p. 35

The gradual political shifts in British foreign policy in Palestine are conveyed through ambiguous discursive constructions. This was to prove a constant feature in British formulations addressing the political status of the Jews and Arabs in Mandate Palestine. Assessment of article 3 in the draft document (which became article 2 in the final draft) attests to the re-current British attempt to treat both Jews and Palestine Arabs in Mandate Palestine equally. Two of the three proposed Zionist amendments are incorporated into the final version, resulting in the inclusion of the more neutral terms 'safeguarding' and 'inhabitants' in place of 'preserving' and 'communities'. The Zionist attempt to incorporate the term 'Commonwealth' did not succeed at this early stage and it may be surmised that the British government resisted on the grounds that inclusion would have represented too blatant a concession to Zionist aspirations for statehood. It is significant to note the way in which discourses articulated by a non-governmental Zionist group, the Zionist Organisation, became enmeshed with discourses articulated by the British government, a highly political, interactive process which resulted in Zionist objectives gaining international legitimacy. This example illustrates that it is not always or exclusively mediators who have the power to change discourses, but also other groups, in this case a colonial power.

These historical documents reveal how important it was for the Zionist Organisation to secure control of structures of political organisation in Mandate Palestine. Significantly, this battle was waged and won on a discursive level. This was achieved through the initial articulation of euphemisms to prepare the discursive environment for such an eventuality. Zionist amendments to article 3 suggest a two-pronged approach. In the first instance it was important to remove a Palestinian claim to Mandate Palestine as we shall see below, and in the second instance, there was a constant effort to construct a state infrastructure controlled by Jews in preparation for a Jewish state. Interestingly, this is an extension of an earlier discourse articulated by Theodore Herzl in 1896. Not only is 'Palestine' identified as a potential land for a 'sovereign' Jewish state, but the importance of controlling state structures is also emphasised for this project. In Der Judenstaat, Herzl writes,

‘Should the Powers declare themselves willing to admit our sovereignty over a neutral piece of land, then the Society [of Jews] will enter into negotiations for the possession of this land. Here two territories come under consideration, Palestine and Argentine. In both countries important experiments in colonisation have been made, though on the mistaken principle of a gradual infiltration of Jews. An infiltration is bound to end badly. It continues till the inevitable moment when the native population feels itself threatened, and forces the Government to stop a further influx of Jews. Immigration is consequently futile unless we have the sovereign right to continue such immigration.’⁵⁵

Two important constructions articulated in 1897 are reproduced in 1920; the importance of securing a ‘neutral piece of land’ and of ensuring ‘sovereignty’ over this land. This is suggested across three key amendments to what was originally article 3 of the Mandate document, ‘the development of *self-governing institutions*’ becomes ‘the development of *a self-governing Commonwealth*’, secondly, ‘*preserving* the civil and religious rights’ becomes ‘*safeguarding* the civil and religious rights’ and thirdly ‘of *all existing communities* in Palestine’ is changed to ‘*all inhabitants* of Palestine’ (italics added for emphasis). In the first amendment the term ‘Commonwealth’ suggests Jewish domination of state structures. It also extends the idea of a ‘western outpost in the Middle East’. In 1896, Herzl wrote; ‘The Society of Jews will treat with the present masters of the land, putting itself under the protectorate of the European Powers, if they prove friendly to the plan. We could offer the present possessors of the land enormous advantages,---’.⁵⁶ This quote reveals an early political consciousness of the importance for the Zionist cause of courting, not necessarily the indigenous rulers, but the ‘present masters of the land’. The Jewish question is thus removed from its ‘local’ geographic arena and is re-located within the international arena. Herzl was categorical in his proposal stating,

⁵⁵ Sections of Theodore Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat* are reproduced in ‘Document 3, Theodore Herzl: The Jewish State’, Laqueur and Rubin (eds.). op. cit., p. 11, in a sub-section entitled, ‘The Plan’.

⁵⁶ Herzl, *Der Judenstaat*, published under, ‘Theodore Herzl: The Jewish State’, in Laqueur and Rubin (eds.). *ibid.*, p. 11

‘It [the Jewish question] is a national question, which can only be solved by making it a political world question to be discussed and settled by the civilised nations of the world in council.’⁵⁷

The political strategy from the outset is one of discursively elevating the Jewish question onto the international stage to be dealt with by ‘the civilised nations’, a construction enabled and legitimised by the wider discursive orientalist structure in place at that time. The second and third proposed changes to article 3 of the draft Mandate document are inter-linked. The suggested replacement of ‘preserving’ with ‘safeguarding’ assessed alongside the replacement of ‘all existing communities in Palestine’ with ‘all inhabitants of Palestine’ is an amendment proposed by the World Zionist Organisation to remove a construct representing an indigenous Palestinian people. The term ‘preserve’ suggests an extension into the future of something which has existed in the past, allowing Palestine Arabs to claim prior existence on the land. This would challenge ‘land neutrality’ cited in Herzl’s *Der Judenstaat*, an essential pre-requisite to Jewish sovereignty over the land. Also, ‘safeguarding’ is a more neutral term which does not carry the same social and political connotations as the term ‘preserve’. To ‘safeguard’ is to ‘protect’. Similarly the replacement of ‘existing communities’ with ‘inhabitants’ fragments and thus weakens political claims for self-determination. Analysis of various stages of this article highlights the importance of authorship in the mediation process as well as the dynamics underpinning changing discourses, particularly the interplay between internal and external narratives. Proposed amendments to this article were rejected by the British government. The clause which was added in the final draft, ‘so long as in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate,’ adds an element of conditionality to the participation of the Zionist Organisation in its role of ‘advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine---’. However the Zionist recommended amendments illustrate the political battle, significantly, waged on a discursive level, which the Zionist Organisation was engaged in, to attain formulations articulated by the British government privileging Zionist control of the political infra-structure in Mandate Palestine.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 6

Article 5: ‘An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as in the opinion of the administration may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country.

The Zionist organisation shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty’s Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.’⁵⁸

‘---It [Jewish Agency] shall have a preferential right, upon fair and equitable terms, to construct public works, services and utilities, and to develop the natural resources of the country in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration.’⁵⁹

This became Article 4 in the final Mandate:

‘An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country. The Zionist Organisation, so long as its organisation and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognised as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty’s Government to secure the co-operation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.’⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Document filed at the Public Records Office, Registry no., E9968/4164/44

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ Laqueur and Rubin, *op. cit.*, p. 35

The process of incrementality which constitutes this political struggle gradually creates a new symbolic realm. With reference to carrying out of public services by the Jewish Agency, the Zionist Organisation seeks to allocate for itself a position subordinate only to the Mandate Power, Great Britain. It proposes the formulation, 'in so far as these matters are not directly undertaken by the Administration'. Hence, the concept of 'preferential right' is built upon. Such an amendment would entail the removal of the veil of ambiguity which has been woven into formulations by the British government, something which the British government was reluctant to do for political reasons.⁶¹ In the same letter presented to the British government containing the suggested amendments, the Zionist Organisation writes;

'It is submitted that an economic policy of such far-reaching importance should be specifically expressed in the Mandate instead of being left as it now is, to implication.'⁶²

Analysis of the history of the drafting process of this article exposes the importance attached by the Zionist Organisation to discursive clarity in important, legally binding international documents. We now turn to investigation of one more article, article 7 of the draft Mandate document.

Article 7: 'The administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of the present population are equitably safeguarded, shall facilitate suitable Jewish immigration and close settlement by Jews on the land in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 5 and shall open for such settlement State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.'⁶³

⁶¹ In a letter written on 2 August 1920, just days before the Zionist letter was sent to the British government on 11 August 1920, a communiqué from Mr. Vansittart to Earl Curzon, states in reference to article 7 of the draft Mandate document, that it 'gives as much assurance as is required or indeed possible without going into details which it is now our object to avoid.' Although clearly referring to one particular article of the Mandate document, this quote does however reveal something of the general British mood during the drafting period. This document is filed at the Public Records Office under the Registry no., E9427/4164/44

⁶² The letter in question, dated 11 August 1920, from the Zionist Organisation containing observations on the draft Mandate, is signed by Chaim Weizmann and is filed under Registry no., E9968/4164/44 at the Public Records Office.

⁶³ Quoted in document Registry no. E9427/4164/44, Mr. Vansittart to Earl Curzon, August 2, 1920

The Zionist Organisation objected to the use of the term 'suitable', stating that

'[t]he introduction of the adjective 'suitable' in describing the immigration to be facilitated is likely to offend Jewish opinion. The suggestion that some Jews might not be acceptable merely because of the country of their origin will produce unintended resentment among the Jewish people.'⁶⁴

In the final version of the British Mandate, this article, now Article 6, stated:

'The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes.'⁶⁵

The recommendation made by the Zionist Organisation may be interpreted as an attempt to shift the focus of attention away from the intended monitoring or control of immigration figures based on the absorptive economic capacity of Mandate Palestine, to one of Jewish discrimination based on country of origin. The removal of the adjective 'suitable' would in effect secure unlimited Jewish immigration into Mandate Palestine. The adjective 'suitable' is re-positioned from 'suitable Jewish immigration' in the draft copy to 'Jewish immigration under suitable conditions' in the final version. The 'suitability' of Jewish immigration into Mandate Palestine is thus applicable, not to the actual influx of Jews, but to the 'suitable conditions' of this act, a vague and ambiguous term. The numerical constraint which is at the core of the complaint by the Zionist Organisation *is* addressed by the British government. This is illustrated in the amendment made to this article in the final version of the British Mandate.

⁶⁴ Document Registry no., E9968/4164/44. 11 August 1920

⁶⁵ 'The British Mandate', Laqueur and Rubin, op. cit., p. 36

The important point is that a recommended change was addressed by the British government which would appear to go half way in responding to Zionist wishes. In this article for example, the term 'suitable' was not removed, but re-located, significantly changing the original meaning.

It is the persistent use of discursive symbols which belong to a particular realm, significantly in an official document, which provides the enabling vocabulary necessary for further formulations of the same idea to take shape. For example, in a letter of thanks to the British government from the Zionist Organisation, the use of capital letters in the writing of 'National Home' and not small letters as it stands in the Balfour document reveals the incremental approach adopted by the Zionist Organisation.⁶⁶ A subtle change of letter type can have political ramifications. The importance of the inclusion of the Balfour Declaration in the preamble to the Mandate document serves to erect the discursive structure necessary for future articulation of a 'National Home'. When the final document was agreed upon and final amendments made, the document was sent first for approval to the Zionist Organisation *before* being passed on to the Cabinet for ratification. This was done 'in order that they [the Zionists] may be able to say that no change has been made except with complete frankness.'⁶⁷

Both France and Italy openly expressed their disapproval of certain formulations of the Mandate. The French were particularly shocked at this 'much too judaised and judaising [document] - full of red flags indeed.' In fact President Millerand's reaction upon being shown the document was that he 'had nearly jumped out of his skin'.⁶⁸ By 1922, the main features of

⁶⁶ Document Registry no., E9968/4164/44. The quote in full reads, 'The Zionist Organisation desires to express its deep gratitude to Her Majesty's Government for the reincorporation in the preamble of the provision recognising the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and the claim which this gives them to reconstitute it their National Home.'

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, E9427/4164/44. Mr. Vansittart to Earl Curzon, August 2, 1920

⁶⁸ Document Registry no., E7033/4164/44, headed 'Confidential', From Mr. Vansittart (British Embassy in Paris) to Major Young, dated 21 June 1920, received 23 June 1920. For Italian reaction see document registry no., E9807/4164/44, from Mr. Vansittart, dated 11 August 1920 in which he writes, 'like the French they [the Italians] think Article 5 still goes too far in emphasising the predominant position of the Zionist Organisation. The Italians wish to point out that in their opinion this Article will lead to much trouble and friction in the future and they would like it toned down, though they do not insist upon the point. Their attitude in regard to this article therefore resembles exactly that of the French.'

the hegemonic discourse constituting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as multi-layered, zero-sum and as a discourse on the negation of a Palestinian identity were in place.

Counter-Discourses and the Arab Rebellion

The Palestine Arabs as Shlaim notes 'tended to view Britain and the Zionist movement not as distinct enemies but as allies in a conspiracy to deprive them of their national patrimony.'⁶⁹ During the 1920's and 1930's, Jewish immigration into Palestine continued as did Jewish land purchases. The Palestine Arabs, despite their factional tribal rivalry were united in their concern to preserve the Arab character of Palestine which they perceived was in danger of being eroded by Zionist designs in Palestine. They refused to recognise the legality or authority of the British mandate and expressed their resistance initially through boycotting all institutions proposed by the mandatory power.⁷⁰ The Arab Executive was set up in 1920 and was dominated by Hajj Amin al-Husayni, mufti of Jerusalem and president of the Supreme Muslim Council. In an attempt to respond to Great Britain's support of the Zionist project in Palestine, a delegation led by Shibly Jamal was sent to London to meet with Churchill. But this mission failed as the British Foreign Office refused to negotiate with them on the basis that the Arab Executive was not democratically elected and therefore not representative of the Palestine Arabs. However, Husayni's uncompromising attitude and insistence on full sovereignty over the whole of Palestine meant that Britain had nothing to gain from such negotiations.⁷¹ Viewed through the lens of discourse analysis, this episode illustrates the way in which emerging narratives are situated within wider political processes and discursive continuities. Once diplomatic channels had failed, resistance to the hegemonic discourse was expressed through riots and the 1920's were punctuated with violent inter-communal clashes between Palestine Arabs and Jews in 1920, 1921 and 1929.

⁶⁹ Shlaim, introduction, *op. cit.*, p. 7

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 6-7

⁷¹ Shlaim, chapter four, 'Two Kinds of Partition', *op. cit.*, p. 104

Increased Jewish immigration into Palestine and Jewish land purchases of land in Palestine heightened tensions between Palestine Jews and Arabs. British sanctioning of these measures led to the riots of 1936-9 which sought to reverse narratives articulated particularly in 1917 and 1922 and strengthened by the creation of 'facts of the ground' in the interim period. For the first time, Palestine Arab anger was directed at the British in Palestine who had prevented them from using their superior force to 'try and liquidate physically the Jewish national home.'⁷² By the mid-1930's, it was too late as the Jews under British protection, had become the stronger of the two local parties. The Arab Higher Committee set up in April 1936 as a representative body of the half dozen political groups which had formed in Palestine, declared a general strike with the aim of halting Jewish immigration, banning the sale of land to Jews and setting up a national independent government.⁷³ The stated objectives of the strike challenged the zero-sum construction of the conflict. The Palestine Arabs perceived their losses to be Jewish gains. By 1936, as a result of developments in Nazi Germany, Britain, even if it had wanted to, was now constrained in its policy options in Palestine in a way which it had not been up to that point, once again highlighting the highly political, interactive and situated nature of changing discourses.

The British response to the unrest in Palestine was swift as Lord Peel was sent to investigate the causes of the riots and propose measures which would resolve the conflict. Assessment of Peel's recommendations of 1937 illustrate once again the importance of the contextual setting within which narratives unfold. The Palestinian rebellion had redefined the Palestine Arabs in the eyes of the Jews and others in Palestine, including Peel who witnessed an uprising by a people who shared a common language, culture and identity. 1936-39 marks a clash of two national communities and as such is an important defining moment in the formation of a distinct Palestinian identity. The rebellion also re-defined the Palestine Arabs for the Jewish community in Palestine. As Benvenisti notes,

⁷² Shlaim, introduction, op. cit., p. 8

⁷³ Shlaim, chapter two, 'The Hashemite-Zionist Connection', *The Politics of Partition*, op. cit., p. 52

‘The Zionists realised that the Palestinians were in fact a national movement but could not grant it legitimacy, and therefore depicted it as a fascist, reactionary gang of murderers.’⁷⁴

In response to the Palestinian protest riots of 1936-9, the Peel report emphasised the untenability of British insistence on a bi-national Palestine and advocated the separation of Jews and Palestine Arabs through partition.⁷⁵ Weizmann accepted the land offered grudgingly, proclaiming ‘the Jews would be fools not to accept even if it were the size of a tablecloth’ whilst the Arab Higher Committee was totally uncompromising.⁷⁶ Peel’s proposals were judged ‘impracticable’ by the British government due to ‘the political, administrative and financial difficulties involved in the proposal.’⁷⁷ Although the overall proposal was rejected the concept articulated in the Peel Report was extended, namely that,

‘the international recognition of the right of the Jews to return to their old homeland did not involve the recognition of the right of the Jews to govern the Arabs in it against their will.’⁷⁸

The advent of the Second World War meant that Peel’s recommendations were never implemented, but his recommendations mark a departure or deviation from existing British discourses constructing the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine. It is significant to note that his intervention was secured not through diplomatic initiatives, but through a Palestinian rebellion, pointing to the two-way arrows between agency and structure. As a means of challenging the hegemonic discourse, Palestine Arabs rebelled and succeeded in bringing about an inquiry. Importantly for analysis of changing discourses, Peel’s report reflected the new emerging discourses. Recommendations for partition were based on an acknowledgement of a distinct

⁷⁴ Benvenisti M., ‘Peace Process and Inter-communal Strife’, Kipper J. & Saunders H. (eds.), *The Middle East in Global Perspectives*, (Colorado, Westview Press, 1991), p. 42

⁷⁵ ‘From the Report of the Palestine Royal Commission (Peel Commission) - 1937’, Laqueur and Rubin, op. cit., p. 57

⁷⁶ Flapan, ‘The Arab Revolt of 1936’, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, (London, Croom Helm, 1979), p. 242

⁷⁷ ‘Against Partition: British Statement of Policy - November 1938’, Laqueur and Rubin, op. cit., p. 62

⁷⁸ Peel Report, Laqueur and Rubin, op. cit., p. 57

Palestinian people in Palestine who were demanding self-determination. Partition would reinforce the zero-sum construct of the conflict where neither party would get the whole. Also significant was the challenge represented by a Palestine Arab uprising to the construction of the dispute in Palestine as Arab-Israeli. No Arab army was involved. The Palestinian uprising was an inter-communal clash. It is also important to note in a the study of changing discourses that Lord Peel was not despatched by the British government to mediate between the two conflicting parties but to investigate the underlying causes which had led to conflict and suggest ways in which they could be addressed. As such he was not a mediator, in the sense in which the term is used in the conventional mediation literature, and yet he played an important role. Lord Peel re-directed the course of discourses which had been constrained within discursive tramlines laid down, as we saw earlier in this chapter, in the Balfour declaration of 1917 and in the British Mandate of 1922. So far in this chapter, discourses have been changed not by a mediator, but first by a colonial power, then by an investigating commission. It is significant to note that in both instances, the internal parties were implicated in the process of discursive change, first the Zionist Organisation in 1917 and 1922 and the Palestine Arab population in 1936-9. This reveals the highly political, interactive nature of changing discourses which are always situated within wider political discursive processes.

On 17 May 1939 Britain issued the MacDonald White paper which developed discourses contained in the Peel recommendations. It imposed strict limits on land sales to Jews and restricted Jewish immigration into Palestine to 75,000 spread over five years. The White paper stated:

‘After the period of five years no further Jewish immigration will be permitted unless the Arabs of Palestine are prepared to acquiesce in it.’⁷⁹

These proposals were designed to ensure that the final demographic balance would remain predominantly Palestinian, spelling a zero-sum outcome, with ‘the Jewish population up

⁷⁹ The White Paper of 1939, Laqueur and Rubin, op. cit., p. 74

to approximately one-third of the total population of the country.’⁸⁰ This discursive structure is particularly important viewed against the backdrop of governance. Developed within the same document, proposals for the administration of a bi-national government related numerical communal representation to proportionate representation in administrative bodies,

‘Arab and Jewish representatives will be invited to serve as heads of Departments approximately in proportion to their respective populations.’⁸¹

Implicit in this document is a Palestinian dominated future sovereign state, for the White paper called for self-governing institutions to be developed in preparation for an independent Palestinian state within ten years. However, in spite of appearing to spell an Arab victory, it was rejected by the Arab Higher Committee headed by Hajj Amin al-Husayni who had not learnt from previous experiences, but insisted that his demands of an immediate end to Jewish immigration and the independence of Palestine be met in full immediately.⁸² In spite of the fact that it was never implemented, the White paper signals an important shift in discourses by the British government around the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. This episode illustrates that although discourses are constrained within wider political processes, the potential for change is ever present.

However, the Second World War and the Holocaust curtailed discourses articulated in the Peel report and in the White Paper. As a result of the Holocaust and the death of close to six million Jews, Jewish security needs, one of the five core themes constructing the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, were once again highlighted as they were at the Basle conference in 1897, convened in the wake of pogroms. The Zionist movement called for the creation of a Jewish state, for it claimed that only a Jewish government would ensure Jews were protected. The Second World War also led to a changed balance of power with the United States replacing Great Britain as world power. This was recognised by members of the World Zionist

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 73

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 69

Organisation during the war. In May 1942, 600 delegates met in the Biltmore hotel in New York and unambiguously declared their desire to create a 'Jewish Commonwealth' in Palestine, as Gee notes, 'essentially a Jewish state.'⁸² The delegates also called for unlimited Jewish immigration into Palestine and the need to court the United States in order to help them achieve this objective. Their projections were right. The United States did emerge as the new Superpower and it would soon replace Great Britain as the main external power constructing discourses around the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

The end of the Second World War brought in the United States as a key external player in the evolution of events in Palestine. Once the Allied forces and then the world learnt of the true horrors of the concentration camps in Germany and Eastern Europe, there was a sense of shock at the magnitude of the crime committed by Nazi Germany against Jews. There was also the immediate question of where surviving Jews were going to re-settle. The Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry was set up to deal with this urgent question. The United States therefore became directly involved in the fate of the Jews and the question of Palestine came to the forefront of the international agenda. Discourses articulated prior to 1939 and the attachment of many Jews to Palestine made this connection inevitable after the war. The Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry may be depicted as a conduit which secured interconnection between at least three discourses, President Truman's efforts to secure a safe-haven for the Jews, Truman's electoral considerations and thirdly, the Holocaust which circumvented or silenced voices of Jewish dissent to political Zionism. Domestic and international discourses converged in 1946 strengthening and legitimising the Zionist project in Palestine. Truman's role in re-defining the contours of the conflict highlights the overlap of internal and external discourses, Truman's electoral considerations and Middle Eastern politics. When assessing the prelude to the setting up of the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry, it becomes apparent that discourses articulated by the British government in 1946, echo those traced by Peel in the aftermath of his inquiry into the inter-communal unrest in mandate

⁸² Gee J.R, chapter one, 'Independence and Catastrophe', *Unequal Conflict*, (London, Pluto Press, 1998), p. 51

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 52

Palestine. The following passage reveals the continuity of British discourses around the conflict between 1937 to 1945. A British note to Truman outlining British concerns in the region stated:

‘The fact has to be faced that there is no common ground between the Arabs and the Jews. They differ in religion and in language; their culture and social life, their ways of thought and conduct, are as difficult to reconcile as are their national aspirations. These last are the greatest bar to peace.’⁸⁴

British concerns were based on a projected escalation of inter-communal hostilities if Jewish immigration increased into Palestine. Expressed in a letter to Truman, the British government stated its fears,

‘[A]ny violent departures decided upon in the face of Arab opposition would not only afford ground for a charge of breach of faith against His Majesty’s Government, but would probably cause serious disturbances throughout the Middle East, involving a large military commitment.’⁸⁵

Roosevelt had also left a report for Truman outlining his government’s stand on the Middle East issue. It is notable that the discourses articulated by Roosevelt reproduce similar patterns to those of the British government quoted above. In one passage, Roosevelt warns Truman,

‘As you are aware, the Government and people of the United States have every sympathy for the persecuted Jews of Europe and are doing all in their power to relieve their suffering. The question of Palestine is however, a highly complex one and involves questions which go far beyond the plight of the Jews in Europe.--- as we have interests in

⁸⁴ Extracts of the British letter sent to President Truman are quoted in *The Memoirs of Harry S. Truman, Years of Trial and Hope, Volume Two, 1946-1953*, (Suffolk, Hodder and Stoughton, 1956), p. 150

that area which are vital to the United States, we feel that this whole subject is one that should be handled with the greatest care and with a view to the long-range interests of the country.’⁸⁶

President Truman responded to these concerns in his memoirs stating,

‘It was my feeling that it would be possible for us to watch out for the long-range interests of our country while at the same time helping these unfortunate victims of persecution to find a home.’⁸⁷

The British government had suggested a three-stage approach to the Jewish refugee problem at the end of the Second World War. Firstly, it suggested consultations with Arab representatives in order to ensure there would be no interruption in refugee immigration into Palestine. Secondly, it proposed negotiations with the parties concerned to devise temporary arrangements to deal with the problem until a final arrangement could be reached. The third stage was to prepare a permanent solution to be presented to the United Nations.⁸⁸ Significantly, the British government proposed that other destinations to Palestine should also be considered when assessing how best to resolve the Jewish refugee crisis. Truman however objected to this, writing in his memoirs,

‘I suggested that Palestine should be the focus of the inquiry and not just one of many points.’ And continues, ‘The British were none too happy with our reaction. Bevin wrote to Byrnes [American Secretary of State in Truman’s administration], insisting that the inquiry should extend to places other than Palestine as potential settlement areas for European Jews. We had our point of view, however, lest the inquiry result in drawing

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 69

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

things out interminably and when the proposed meeting was held, this point of view prevailed.’⁸⁹

Why did Truman decide to ignore British concerns and go forth with plans for exclusive Jewish immigration into Palestine? Although in his memoirs, Truman cites moral considerations behind his policy, targeting the State Department in particular which he considered ‘didn’t care enough about what happened to the thousands of displaced persons who were involved’, research reveals another impinging discursive strand, electoral considerations.⁹⁰ Bevin expressed his belief that Truman’s foreign policy formulations around the Jewish refugee problem were underpinned by re-election considerations. Weiler writes that,

‘his [Bevin’s] irritated observation that Americans agitated for Jewish immigration to Palestine because ‘they did not want too many Jews in New York’ had a point - immigration restrictions excluded most Jews from going to the United States.’⁹¹

Hamby concurs citing a strong vocal advocacy amongst American Jews for Jewish immigration into Palestine which was not challenged by a counter-discourse. He writes,

‘For him [Truman], as many other members of Congress, the issue had been an easy one: American Jews, preponderantly advocates of Zionism in the wake of Nazi persecutions and the Holocaust, had money and votes; their opponents were all but invisible.--- In 1946 he [Truman] met with American Middle East diplomats who warned him that American prestige in the region was sinking because of statements indicating sympathy with the Zionists. His response: ‘I am sorry gentlemen but I have to answer to hundreds

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 151

⁹⁰ Truman H., *Memoirs of Harry S. Truman, Volume One, Year of Decisions* (New York, Doubleday and Company, 1955) p. 69

⁹¹ Weiler P., *Ernest Bevin*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 170

of thousands who are anxious for the success of Zionism. I do not have hundreds of thousands of Arabs among my constituents.’⁹²

Analysis of this period is particularly important for we see the intervention of another external party, the United States. The report produced by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry once again highlights the situated nature of discourses, surrounded by wider political processes. In 1945, the Holocaust was a powerful discourse which impinged upon narratives produced by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry. A weakened Britain invited the United States to participate in examining the status of Jews in former axis-occupied states and to ascertain how many Jews would feel impelled to emigrate. The report isolates Palestine for Jewish immigration,

‘We know of no country to which the great majority [of Jews] can go in the immediate future other than Palestine. Furthermore, that is where almost all of them want to go. There they are sure that they will receive a welcome denied them elsewhere.’⁹³

It is within such a context that a recommendation was advanced stating that,

‘100,000 certificates be authorised immediately for the admission into Palestine of Jews who have been the victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution; (b) that these certificates be awarded as far as possible in 1946 and that actual immigration be pushed forward as rapidly as conditions will permit.’⁹⁴

The 1946 Anglo-American report circumvented the discourse articulated in the 1939 MacDonald White Paper by rendering its political recommendations null and void. The 1939

⁹² Hamby A., *A Life of Harry S. Truman, Man of the People*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 405. Hamby’s research concurs with earlier views such as that of Cochran B. who wrote about this issue in 1973. See Cochran B., *Harry Truman and the Crisis Presidency*, (New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 1973), p. 218. Also published in 1973 is President Truman’s daughter’s defence of her father over this issue. See Truman M. *Harry S. Truman* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1973). pp. 383-390

⁹³ ‘The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry - 1946’, Laqueur and Rubin, *op. cit.*, p. 87

White Paper sought to limit Jewish immigration into Palestine to a maximum of 75,000 by 1944. The 1946 discourse, in addition to recommending the immediate admission of an additional 100,000 Jews into Palestine refrained from setting an upper limit on immigration stating,

‘We cannot recommend the fixing of a minimum or of a maximum for annual immigration in the future. There are too many uncertain factors.’⁹⁵

The inter-textuality which is a constitutive feature of changing discourses is illustrated in the 1946 Paper, for although not mentioned in name, the White Paper is clearly referred to.

‘We reject the view that there shall be no further Jewish immigration into Palestine without Arab acquiescence, a view which would result in Arab dominating the Jew. We also reject the insistent Jewish demand that forced Jewish immigration must proceed apace in order to produce as quickly as possible a Jewish majority and a Jewish State.’⁹⁶

It also highlights a contradiction within the recommendations proposed by the Committee. In identifying a direct link between numerical superiority and governance and through the advocacy of what amounts to limitless Jewish immigration into Palestine, the roles envisaged in the White Paper for both communities is once again reversed with the implication in 1946 that Jewish domination and governance will ensue. The point from a discursive viewpoint is the demographic emphasis, based on a strong categorisation.

It is important to point to the existence of dissident discourses which challenged the construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as zero-sum. There were two groups in particular in Mandate Palestine who called for the establishment of a bi-national Palestinian state, the Bi-nationalists, led by Martin Buber, Judah Magnes and Moses Smilansky who were

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 86

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

represented in the Ihud (Union) Association of Palestine and the Hashomer Hatzair, the Workers' Party of Palestine.⁹⁷ Both groups viewed the Palestine problem through distinct prisms or lenses. The Ihud group was driven by humanist considerations whilst the Workers' group assessed the situation through the filter of Marxist ideology. Both groups identified bi-nationalism as the answer to the inter-communal strife which was gradually unfolding in Mandate Palestine. A Memorandum drafted in March 1946 by the Hashomer Hatzair stated its objective as the pursuit of

'the best manner whereby Zionist aims might be realised on a bi-national basis and on the steps necessary to secure co-operation between Jews and Arabs for the development of Palestine and the establishment of a common State while maintaining unhindered Jewish immigration.'⁹⁸

The Ihud Association similarly sought to arrive at a political framework which would ensure parity between both communities and as such would de-politicise Jewish immigration into Palestine on the basis that numerical superiority would not alter the institutionalised equitable power equation in place. In a written statement prepared for submission to the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry, the Ihud states that,

'There is to be no Jewish State, there is to be no Arab State, there is to be a bi-national Palestine, a common country for two equal peoples; and there is to be the fullest measure of self-government.'⁹⁹

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 93

⁹⁷ The Ihud by its own admission was not a political party but 'a group of individuals belonging to different parties and of independents belonging to no party.---they are united in the firm conviction that there is but one way of meeting the Palestine problem-that of Jewish -Arab co-operation.' Quote taken from Buber M., Magnes J., Smilansky M., *Palestine A Bi-national State*, (New York, Ihud Association of Palestine, 1946), p. 7

⁹⁸ *The Case for a Bi-national Palestine, Memorandum Prepared by the Hashomer Hatzair Workers' Party of Palestine*, (Tel Aviv, Executive Committee of the Hashomer Hatzair Workers' Party, March 1946), p. 19

⁹⁹ 'Written Statement to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, Jerusalem, by the Ihud (Union) Association of Palestine, Jerusalem, March 5, 1946', *Palestine A Bi-National State*, *op. cit.*, p. 18

It is significant to note that it was the Left who first officially recognised the Palestine Arab community and sought a bi-national political solution to reflect this. Unlike the Ihud Association and the Hashomer Hatzair, the Communist Party calls for a halt to any future Jewish immigration into Palestine on the basis that,

'no country or countries have the right to impose upon another country that is not free or able to express an opinion through its democratic representative institutions, the acceptance of immigrants.' and adds, *'It would be entirely at variance with the declarations of the United Nations that questions profoundly affecting the future constitutional, political and social structure of Palestine should be decided upon now by anybody other than the people of Palestine.'* (italics in original)¹⁰⁰

The Communist party called for a speedy end to the Mandate so that both Arabs and Jews protected by the guarantee of equal rights, could determine the future of an independent Palestine based on democratic institutions recommended by the Committee.¹⁰¹ This did not happen though. In February 1947, Britain decided to hand over the Palestine problem to the United Nations and so another external actor became involved in the conflict. Oscillating British policy in Palestine weakened its ability to govern. The 1939 White paper outraged Zionists who resorted to terrorism and the use of violence against the mandatory power in Palestine. This culminated in 1946, with the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem by members of the Irgun, an underground Jewish terrorist group led by Menachem Begin who was later to become the Prime Minister of Israel. A wing of the hotel was used by the British as

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 13-14

¹⁰¹ In 1946, the Communist Party was still able to maintain Communist principles over the simmering conflict between two nationalities, Arab and Jewish within the Party. However with Soviet communiqués calling for continued Communist support of the Palestine Arabs, a split occurred in August 1965, fracturing the party along ethnic lines. Rakah, with a 90% Arab majority was recognised by the Soviet Bloc as the official Israeli Communist party in July 1967, but was known in Israel as an electoral list only. Maki, however was almost purely Jewish and was recognised by the government of Israel as the sole Communist Party in Israel. This example illustrates the multi-faceted nature of identity formations. Nahas offers an analysis of evolutions within the Israeli Communist Party. See Nahas D.H, *The Israeli Communist Party*, (London, Croom Helm, 1976), particularly chapter three, 'The Split - August 1965' pp. 55-61

government offices. In the massive blast, some 88 people died, both British and Arab and also included 15 Jews.¹⁰² Britain passed on the Palestine problem to the United Nations.

The General Assembly considered the recommendations of the United Nations Special Commission in November 1947. The Commission proposed partition of Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish, joined through economic union. 56% of the land was to be allocated to the Jews who at that time only constituted one third of the population in Palestine. Jerusalem and Bethlehem were to be placed under an international administration whilst the rest of Mandate Palestine would become an Arab state.¹⁰³ A two-thirds majority vote in the General Assembly was needed in order for the Resolution 181 to be approved. Both the United States and the Soviet Union supported the Resolution whilst Great Britain abstained. Soviet-aligned states followed Moscow's lead whilst the United States pressured six countries to change their vote from a 'no' to a 'yes' in favour.¹⁰⁴ The Jewish Agency accepted the plan whilst the Palestine Arabs rejected it.

United Nations Resolution 181 echoed discourses articulated ten years earlier by Lord Peel's Commission. Once again as with Great Britain, the United Nations did not act as a mediator in Palestine, but was a commission of inquiry. It performed the same task as Lord Peel's commission and came up with the same solution, partition. However, the Palestinian Arabs who owned most of the land in Palestine felt it was an unjust solution to the problem and rejected it. By November 1947 therefore, an Arab Palestinian identity was acknowledged by the international community as was its right to self-determination. However, Jewish security needs strengthened after the Second World War were translated into the need for a Jewish state in Palestine, hence the logic of partition and the zero-sum construction of the conflict. On the 14 May 1948, the British Mandate in Palestine officially ended. On the same day, the independence of the state of Israel was declared.

¹⁰² Karmi G., 'The 1948 Exodus: A Family Story', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 2, winter 1994), p. 33

¹⁰³ Gee, 'Independence and Catastrophe', *ibid.*, p. 53

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that in the period 1897-1948, the main external parties were Great Britain in its role as colonial power in mandate Palestine up to May 1948, the United Nations and the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry and the prominent role of the United States therein. None of these actors were mediators in the conventional sense and yet they all influenced the construction of the conflict. Britain acted as a colonial power responding differently as the inter-communal unfolded, whilst the United Nations and the Anglo-American responded to the conflict by despatching a commission of inquiry to Palestine in order to study the situation, not to mediate between the protagonists. Analysis highlighted the importance of the contextual setting or surrounding political discourses in constraining or enabling external party discourses.

Chapter three also illustrated the complex interweaving of internal and external discourses. The five discursive tramlines constituting the central themes of the Jewish-Arab conflict were set by Great Britain, acting within and constrained by the wider context of European colonialism in Mandate Palestine. The discursive tramlines were set by Britain particularly in 1917 with the Balfour declaration and in 1922 with the British Mandate. However, back in 1897, the Zionist Congress had already set up the themes of Jewish security needs and the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine, implicitly defining the latent Arab-Israeli conflict as zero-sum and denying the indigenous population, the Palestine Arabs their right to self-determination. These narratives were enabled by the surrounding context of European imperialism. Arab diplomatic initiatives challenging these constructs failed and it was not until the Palestinian uprising 1936-9, significantly, an act of violent rebellion, which succeeded in challenging what had become the hegemonic discourse. Lord Peel's report of 1937 redefined the Palestine Arabs as a nation with a distinct Palestinian identity, paving the way for the 1939 MacDonal White paper which reversed a zero-sum construct of the conflict into a positive-sum outcome, by implicitly calling for Palestinian self-determination in the whole of Mandate

Palestine. However, the wider context of the Second World War constrained British discourses. Jewish security needs after the Second World War, coupled with the intervention of the United Nations as an external party to the conflict, returned the hegemonic discourse to a zero-sum construction by advocating partition. The declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 redefined the conflict as one between states and therefore as Arab-Israeli. Palestinian identity was once again negated in the complex and highly political process of changing discourses, highlighting the multi-layered nature of mediation processes.

The application of a discourse analytic framework to the study of mediation has challenged the individualistic orientation presumed but never justified in conventional mediation literature. This chapter has illustrated that actions do not take place in a vacuum but within a powerful socio-political context which impinges upon actions within it. The following chapter continues analysis of changing discourses around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with particular focus on the role of external parties in this process.

CHAPTER FOUR

External Parties and their Impact on the Construction of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1948-87

Introduction

This chapter continues the analysis of the mediation process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and focuses on the way this process was impinged upon by external parties between 1948-1987. This time span was chosen because it begins and ends with important discursive watersheds around the conflict. In 1948, Israel was created and the Palestinian national identity negated by the hegemonic discourse. The chapter concludes in 1987 with the intifada, which saw the Palestinians of the occupied territories revolting against Israeli military occupation and expressing their struggle for self-determination. As we shall see in this chapter, in 1948, the Palestinians are portrayed as 'refugees' by the dominant discourse. However, between 1948-87, a series of mediation interventions impinge upon discourses constructing the conflict, the main issues in the conflict and the protagonists transforming the Palestinians from 'refugees' to a people with a 'legitimate right to self-determination. The intifada or Palestinian uprising which began in December 1987 may be seen as another key turning point, reinforcing existing narratives representing the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. 1987 also sees the Palestinian question pushed to the top of the international agenda, attracting more mediation interventions which result in further changing discourses around the conflict as we shall see in the following chapters.

The five core themes, identified in chapter two, and used to guide research in chapter three, are the construction of the conflict as multi-layered, zero-sum, a discourse on Israeli security, a narrative on the negation of a Palestinian identity and as a discourse on autonomy as opposed to self-determination. How and when did narratives defining these themes change between 1948-87 and how were external parties implicated in this process?

Chapter four seeks to answer these questions. It is not possible to assess every single mediation intervention in the specified time span, given the restrictions of space. Only the main mediation attempts which had a marked impact on changing discourses around the conflict will be assessed here. The main external parties who intervened between 1948-1987 were the United Nations, in 1948 with General Assembly resolution 194, in 1950 when it created UNRWA, in 1952 when the United Nations Secretary General Trygve Lie successfully removed the Palestine Question off the United Nations General Assembly Agenda and in 1967 and UNSCR 242. The other important mediation attempts which I will concentrate on in this chapter are the Camp David accords 1978, the Venice Declaration by the European Union in 1980, the Reagan Peace Plan of 1982 and the Brussels European Declaration 1987. As we shall see, analysis reveals that changing discourses were not only impinged upon by external parties, but also by internal parties, and also that both internal and external parties were at various moments enabled and constrained by the wider political context in which they were situated.

The United Nations Strengthens the ‘Arab-Israeli’ Construction: The Situated Nature of External Party Interventions in Mediation Processes

Now that the British Mandate had ended and Israel was accepted by the United Nations as a member of the state-system, the 1948 Arab-Israeli war brought in the United Nations, representative of the community of states, as mediator. The protagonists were no longer appealing to Great Britain for change as they had been up to 1947, but were now engaged in a direct confrontation with each other. The Palestine Arabs whose cause was championed by the neighbouring Arab states, attacked the nascent Israeli state in order to reclaim the whole of Mandate Palestine as a Palestinian Arab state. The Palestine Arabs were rebelling against the hegemonic discourse which at that time acknowledged their existence as a people by passing UN resolution 181, but denied their right to self-determination in the whole of Mandate Palestine. Dr. Ralph Bunche helped mediate the armistice agreements which were signed at the beginning of 1949 between Israel and each

of her Arab neighbours, Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan and Syria.¹ Negotiating from positions of weakness, the Arab states, through the intermediary of the United Nations signed peace settlements with Israel, implicitly acknowledging and legitimising Israel's existence in the region.

The 1948-9 Arab-Israeli war resulted in 726,000 Palestinians, that is approximately two-thirds of the total population of 1.2 million fleeing their homes.² With the exodus of so many, it was easy to 'forget' the initial inter-communal conflict in Palestine between Jews and Arabs and redefine it solely as a dispute based on Palestinian refugees. United Nations General Assembly resolution 194 of 11 December 1948 declared that

'the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property---.'³

The creation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in 1950, an organisation which was to deal specifically and exclusively with the Palestinian refugee problem, reflected and reproduced discursive continuities which surrounded the UN's activities at the time. However, by focusing on the refugee problem, the label 'Palestinian' was almost exclusively used to refer to refugees, shifting the emphasis away from the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and implicitly empowering the 'Arab'-as opposed to 'Palestinian'-Israeli interpretation of the conflict. Analysis of this episode also highlights the multi-layered process underpinning changing discourses. By providing 'drip-feed' assistance to hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who had lost their homes and their land and resentful of Arab governments for not securing the restitution of their rights,

¹ Shlaim A., chapter thirteen 'Negotiating the Armistice Agreement', *The Politics of Partition*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 273

² Findley P., *Deliberate Deceptions*, (New York, Lawrence Hill Books, 1993), p. 5

³ United Nations General Assembly resolution 194. 11 December 1948 is quoted in Cattani H., Chapter ten. 'Exodus of the Palestine Refugees', *The Palestine Question*, (London, Croom Helm, 1988), p. 64

UNRWA served to keep them in check. Gee links this role carried out by the UN to the United States' support of Israel, claiming that,

‘some have seen it as significant that the largest donor state to UNRWA by far has been the United States, principal arms supplier and financier of Israel.’⁴

It is important to highlight the intertwined nature of changing discourses. It would be wrong to suggest that the United Nations as an external party was wholly responsible for negating a Palestinian identity. The 1948 war which involved the internal parties to the conflict created the refugee problem which the United Nations then responded to. Just three years after the end of the first Arab-Israeli war, mediated through the organ of the United Nations, UN Secretary-General Trygve Lie articulated a narrative which negated a Palestinian identity and reinterpreted the Palestine Question as a refugee question. By virtue of his occupying such a senior post in the United Nations, Trygve Lie was able to reinterpret one of the core themes to the conflict, enabled to do so by the socio-political discursive continuities surrounding his actions at that time. The power relegated to the Secretary-General by the UN Charter to sanction formulations of items for discussion on the General Assembly agenda, empowers the Secretary-General to allow certain discourses to be articulated and also allows him, by the same token, to suppress the emergence or continuity of other discursive strands. The example of the actions taken by Secretary General Trygve Lie in 1952 illustrates this point, for it marks an important discursive turning point in the development of the definition attached to the ‘Palestine Question’ as it was defined in the United Nations. Assessment of this episode highlights the often-subtle process involved in changing discourses whereby changing narratives are the result of an interactive process intertwining internal and external discourses.

An important change occurred in the Seventh Session of the General Assembly in 1952. The definition of the ‘Palestine Question’ was amended by the Secretary-General of

⁴ Gee J., chapter three. ‘Renewal and Retreat’, *Unequal Conflict*, (London, Pluto, 1998), p. 88

the United Nations to refer to the issue of Palestinian refugees.⁵ The mechanics behind such a change stem from Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly which states that items for debate listed on the Agenda, are formulated and presented by the Secretary-General.⁶ Secretary General Trygve Lie, who held office in 1952, was a sympathiser of the Zionist cause and believed in the historic legitimacy of the Zionist project.⁷ In the introduction to the Fourth Annual Report to the General Assembly, Lie states that,

‘The creation of the State of Israel, was one of the epic events of history, coming at the end not merely of thirty years, but of two thousand years of accumulated sorrows, bitterness and conflict and symbolised historical forces behind which the present ideological conflict appears to be a transitory phenomenon.’⁸

Jewish security needs first raised by the Zionist Congress in Basle in 1897 and again highlighted in the wake of the Second World War created a powerful socio-political continuity within which the actions of the United Nations and its Secretary-General were situated. The Arab/Palestinian-Israeli conflict was mediated by a filtering lens of Jewish security needs and as such was perceived as ‘a transitory phenomenon’. The wider discursive realm impinged on the actors within it. In 1952, another powerful discourse, orientalism, outlined in chapter two, also impinged on narrative constructions of the Palestine Arabs. They were not perceived as a people which would imply rights to self-determination, but as part of the wider Arab population of the Middle East. Lie describes them in the following terms:

⁵ Tomeh G., ‘When the UN Dropped the Palestinian Question’, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 4, No. 1, Autumn 1974), pp. 15-30. George Tomeh was Syrian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, 1965-72.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 19

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Lie T., *In the Cause of Peace*, (New York, Macmillan, 1954), p. 194

‘About the Arab fellahin, I knew only that they were frequently oppressed by absentee landlords and would no doubt benefit from the great Zionist development projects already launched in the land.’⁹

In 1952, Secretary General Trygve Lie, surrounded and supported by wider political processes, succeeded in removing the Palestine Question off the United Nations General Assembly Agenda and substituting it with the title, ‘Report of the Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (item 20)’.¹⁰ This episode points to one set of dynamics behind changing discourses in the United Nations. The definition attached to the ‘Palestine Question’ was changed and replaced by a derivative issue, Palestinian refugees.

Stephen Lukes defines such an act as a three-dimensional conceptual view of power which ‘offers---the prospect of a serious sociological and not merely personalised explanation of how political systems prevent demands from becoming political issues or even from being made.’¹¹ This supports the idea advanced in this thesis of external party actions being situated within a wider context or framework which impinges upon them. Through introducing and acknowledging the role of the sociological in the exercise of power, the role of prevailing hegemonic discourse within a particular decision-making environment is taken into account in the exercise of power. Going back to the example of the UN Secretary General Lie, his pro-Zionist stance may have been in reaction to such sociological factors. Barros suggests that,

‘[h]is [Lie’s] support of the Zionists, first behind the scenes and then publicly, may have been affected by the atmosphere of the times: the general consensus of a guilt-ridden Christian world that the Holocaust could be redeemed by accepting the Zionist argument for partition.’¹²

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 159

¹⁰ Tomeh, *op. cit.*, p. 20

¹¹ Lukes S., *Power: A Radical View*, (London, Macmillan, 1974, 1980), p. 38

¹² Barros J., *Trygve Lie & the Cold War*, (Illinois, Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 351

Articulated in 1952, the Palestinian refugee problem is maintained, extended and legitimised fifteen years later, through the United Nations once again, following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. UN Resolution 242 was passed in response to the Six Day War of 1967. This example illustrates the multi-layered nature of changing discourses, where old discourses are buried beneath the new. Once again, the issue at the core of the conflict, an inter-communal confrontation between Palestine Jews and Arabs, is overshadowed by the chronologically more recent event of war, with the result that the formula 'land for peace' is articulated, constructing a zero-sum outcome to the conflict. The 1967 war repeating a pattern traced in the 1948 war, acts as a transformative discourse which, through the intermediary of an external party, brings about a change in the dominant discourse constructing the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. What is a manifestation of protest through war by Arab states against the creation of Israel, results in a renewed interpretation which eclipses the original construction of the conflict and replaces it with a new one. The unresolved issues of Palestinian identity and self-determination are redefined as an exchange of territory for peace. This interpretation also strengthens the hegemonic discourse which legitimises the state of Israel by annulling the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and replacing it with the refugee problem. The articulation of the Palestinian problem as a refugee problem in 1967 is an extension of an earlier discursive formation alluded to above with reference to Secretary General of the United Nations Trygve Lie, illustrating the way in which the discursive context provides structures of enablement and constraint. In November 1967, the newly formed PLO expresses the reason for its rejection of resolution 242 stating that,

'The resolution ignores the right of refugees to return to their homes dealing with this problem in an obscure manner which leaves the door wide open to efforts to settle them in the Arab countries and to deprive them of the exercise of their right to return'.¹³

¹³ 'Statement Issued by the Palestine Liberation Organisation Rejecting UN Resolution 242, Cairo 23 November 1967', Lukacs Y. (ed.), *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - A Documentary Record, 1967-90* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 290-1

In resolution 242, the United Nations impinged upon the construction of two core themes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Firstly, it reinforced the narrative negating a Palestinian identity by substituting it with the term 'refugee', and secondly, it reinforced a zero-sum outcome through 'land for peace'.¹⁴ The significant point here with regards to discourse analysis, is not that the refugee problem was not important, but rather the way in which it effectively overshadowed and marginalised a central issue of the conflict, the inter-communal confrontation of two emerging national movements. The original definition of the Palestine Question, with the passage of time, is engulfed and eventually buried beneath new narratives.

Changing Discourses and the Mediation Process: Intertwining Internal and External Narratives

Not only external but also internal party actions are situated within wider political processes. Between 1967 and 1974, the PLO's objective was to recover the whole of Mandate Palestine through force of arms.¹⁵ After the 1967 War which saw Israel occupy the whole of Mandate Palestine, Fateh issued a new slogan, 'A Democratic Palestinian State', acknowledging that large numbers of Jews now resided in what was Mandate Palestine and that an eventual solution to the conflict would have to accommodate them.¹⁶ This underlined the Palestinian desire for self-determination but also illustrates the way in which surrounding narrative structures impinge upon actors, both internal and external. As Gresh and Vidal assert,

'The logical conclusions were drawn: at long last the existence of Israeli Jews had been recognised: why not establish a dialogue with them? This was how the first contacts were made between Israelis and Palestinians.'¹⁷

¹⁴ UN Resolution 242, Lukacs. *ibid.*, p. 201.

¹⁵ This is expressed in articles 1, 2, 9 and 29 of 'The Palestinian National Covenant, 1968', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-295.

¹⁶ Gresh A. and Vidal D., 'The Palestinians', *The Middle East: War Without End?*, (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1988). p. 121

¹⁷ *ibid.*

After King Hussein of Jordan expelled the PLO from Amman in what became known as Black September 1970-1, alluded to in chapter two and the Arab defeat in the 1973 War, the PLO feared King Hussein would negotiate the future of the West Bank on his own. In order to prevent such an outcome, the PLO had to become involved in the peace process. After months of bitter debate between the two wings of the PLO the 'rejectionists' and the 'realists', the 12th PNC held in June 1974 issued a statement declaring that,

'The PLO will struggle by *all means, foremost of which* is armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian land and to establish the people's national, independent and fighting authority *on every part of Palestinian land to be liberated.*'¹⁸ (italics added for emphasis)

The 1974 statement is a turning point in the mediation process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, if mediation is used to mean changing interpretations around the core themes to the conflict. The struggle is no longer solely an armed struggle, but now includes other means, implying the opening of diplomatic channels. Also significant is the beginning of a movement towards a two-state solution. This was the first indication of an intermediate goal or anything other than the total liberation of Palestine. Four months later the Arab League recognised the PLO as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people' and one month after that, for the first time ever, Arafat was invited to address the United Nations General Assembly. It would appear that PLO moderation created a discursive environment which enabled external parties with legitimising powers, such as the United Nations, to support the new narratives and recognise the author, in this case, the PLO. A pattern is discernible which appears to suggest an amplification of certain discursive constructs through their adoption by a broader constituency. In the above example, this began with the PNC, followed by a reiteration by external parties, the Arab League representing Middle Eastern states and then by the wider international community, represented by the United Nations. The example of the PLO's initial self-designation as

¹⁸ 'Palestine National Council, Political Program, 8 June, 1974', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 309

‘sole representative of the Palestinian people’ offers an example of discursive linkage between internal and external discourses as is illustrated below.

‘[T]he Palestinian Liberation Organisation will continue to be the highest command of the Palestinian people; it alone speaks on their behalf on all problems related to their destiny, and it alone, through its organisations for struggle, is responsible for everything related to the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination.’¹⁹

The following year, in October 1974 in Rabat, the Arab Summit declared the PLO,

‘the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.’²⁰

The United Nations incorporated this discursive construction into its own narrative through the passage of UN General Assembly resolution 3236 one month after the Rabat communiqué. The resolution declared,

‘the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the representative of the Palestinian people,--- [and] *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation on all matters concerning the question of Palestine;’²¹ (italics in original text)

The dilemma for the United States and for Israel, lay in the knowledge that official recognition of the PLO, symbolising the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, would reinterpret the Palestinian problem from a limited and contained private sphere, defined as such by the refugee problem, to a public issue with political as well as geographic implications. If the existence of a Palestinian people was openly and officially acknowledged, Israel’s legitimacy would be jeopardised, for the territory that the Israelis now inhabited was the Palestine to which the PLO laid claim. A discursive link connected

¹⁹ ‘Palestine National Council, Political Program, 12 January, 1973’, Lukacs, op. cit., pp. 304-5

²⁰ ‘Arab League Summit Conference Communiqué, Rabat, Morocco, 29 October, 1974’, Lukacs, op. cit., p. 464

'Palestinians' to 'Palestine', hence Golda Meir's narrative annulment of the Palestinian people in 1969 which was necessary to re-enforce the process of legitimisation of the Jewish claim on Israel.²² This mutually constitutive process of identity formation between the Palestinians and Israelis is conditioned by the maintenance of a certain network of interconnected symbols.

The period 1973-1974 also sees the narrative reconstruction of the Palestinians by certain Arab states. In assessing the motives behind an Egyptian led initiative to create an official representative political Palestinian body, it becomes apparent that political expediency dictates the discursive construction of the Palestinians at various moments in time by Arab states. In 1964, the Palestinian movement represented a threat to Arab states in general and to Egypt's President Nasser in particular who feared 'unrestrained Palestinian commandos who might wreck his 1957 armistice with Israel and bring him into war'.²³ It is significant to note that although the PLO was created at the First Arab Summit held in Cairo in January 1964, it was not until the Rabat Arab League Summit of 1974, ten years later that the PLO was acknowledged as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people'.²⁴ The Arab states were predominantly responsible for the creation of the PLO and its legitimisation as representative of the Palestinian people. Arab negation of a distinct Palestinian nation prior to 1974, situated within the broader context of political self-interest, resulted from a clash of two intertwined strands; articulation of a separate Palestinian nation and the threat which this would present to established Arab regimes. One important reason why certain Arab states decided to back the PLO, would appear to involve political power considerations. In 1964, the creation of the PLO had been largely a diplomatic move designed to re-locate the locus of power away from emerging Palestinian guerrilla groups, to control by Arab states. By 1974 however, under the leadership of the

²¹ 'UN General Assembly Resolution 3236 Concerning the Question of Palestine, 22 November, 1974'. Lukacs, op. cit., p. 15

²² In 1969, Meir stated, 'There was no such thing as Palestinians---. It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist.' *Sunday Times*, 15 June 1969. Quoted in Cattani H., *The Palestine Question*, (London, Croom Helm, 1988), p. 220

²³ Wallach J & Wallach J, *Arafat, in the eyes of the Beholder*, (London, Heinemann, 1991), p. 121

²⁴ 'Arab League Summit Conference Communiqué, Rabat, Morocco, 29 October, 1974', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 464

largest group within the PLO, Fateh, led by Arafat, the armed struggle was shifted back to the PLO, so that the PLO had a diplomatic wing as well as a powerful military wing.²⁵

Prior to the Palestinian uprising which began in December 1987, the PLO was legitimised in the international arena by a complex process including various actors, among them the United Nations. This was done gradually and appears to have been in response to developments in other areas of the international arena, particularly on the Arab stage. Significantly, the United Nations had already acknowledged the existence of a distinct Palestinian people in 1947 when it proposed a partition plan in UN General Assembly resolution 181. However, as we saw in chapter three, after the creation of Israel in 1948, (enabled and legitimised through the United Nations), the conflict was constructed as a multi-layered Arab-Israeli conflict negating a Palestinian identity. Analysis of changing discourses constituting the mediation process reveals that internal actions within Israel/occupied territories are then followed by a response from an external party outside Israel who plays a defining role in how the conflict develops. For example, the PLO was recognised by the United Nations as ‘the representative of the Palestinian people’ on 22 November 1974 through the passage of UN General Assembly Resolution 3236.²⁶ Members of the Arab League had officially recognised the PLO as ‘the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people’ less than one month earlier, on 29 October 1974.²⁷

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War was an act of resistance by Arab states, resentful that UN resolution 242 had not returned occupied Arab lands to them. The United Nations was defining the issues and the Arab states, led by Egypt sought to challenge those interpretations not by appealing to the United Nations, but by attacking Israel. Israel, not the United Nations was perceived as the enemy. A unified Arab attack on Israel reproduced and reinforced the construction of the conflict as Arab-Israeli. A joint attack on Israel also

²⁵ When the First Arab Summit created the PLO in January 1964, the PLO was the name chosen to refer to the political, diplomatic organ of this body. The military wing, the Palestine Liberation Army, was not to constitute a separate army, but battalions to remain under the control of the Arab governments. See Wallach and Wallach, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-122

²⁶ ‘UN General Assembly Resolution 3236 Concerning the Question of Palestine, 22 November, 1974’, Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 15

²⁷ ‘Arab League Summit Conference Communiqué, Rabat, Morocco, 29 October, 1974’, Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 464

reproduced the discourse constructing Jewish security needs. By attacking Israel, Arab states were challenging the zero-sum construct of the conflict by seeking the removal of Israel. External parties were defining the core themes of the conflict, and paradoxically, although they negated the existence of a Palestinian people fighting for their right to self-determination by attacking Israel, they repeatedly claimed to be fighting for their Palestinian brethren and their right to self-determination in Mandate Palestine. Successive Arab-Israeli wars acted as transformative discourses, galvanising a response from an external party. Between 1948-1973, the main intervening external party had been the United Nations. However, after the 1973 war which had brought the two Superpowers so close to direct confrontation, the United States intervened unilaterally where previously it had intervened as part of a wider body, the Anglo-American commission of inquiry in 1946 and the United Nations thereafter. It was at this point that the US adopted a more central role in Middle Eastern diplomacy signalled by Kissinger's mediating role as US Secretary of State, first under President Nixon and then in Carter's administration.²⁸

The Role of the United States in the Construction of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The United States' intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was constrained by wider political processes, United States interests in the Middle East and maintaining world peace through a Cold War balance of power. Kissinger was a strong advocate of the balance-of-power theory. Within the context of the Cold War, Israel's strategic importance was secured through the application of this theoretical framework to the Middle East.²⁹ This is one illustration of the way in which narratives are structured by a wider discursive framework. Soviet support of many Arab states including the largest, Egypt, provided further justification for the United States to support Israel's political position in the Middle East. These wider considerations impinged upon the way in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was portrayed. In order to secure Israel's legitimacy, the Palestinian problem was

²⁸ Quandt W.B, *Camp David - Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1986) p. 33 where Quandt notes that, 'Fortunately for Carter, the United States had established a record after 1973 as a negotiator of limited agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours.'

²⁹ Commenting on Kissinger's role in the Middle East, Quandt observes that, '[h]is [Kissinger's] inclination was to look at issues in the Middle East in terms of the broader US-Soviet rivalry.' Quandt W.B, *Peace Process*, (The Brookings Institution, Washington DC, University of California Press, 1993).

constructed by the United States as an Arab problem. Any attempts to articulate Palestinian rights to self-determination were frustrated by emphasising the Arab dimension of the conflict and the Palestinians as ‘refugees’, a construct which emphasised their membership to a greater Arab entity. This discourse was enabled by the construction of the conflict as Arab-Israeli by three Arab attacks on Israel, in 1948 and 1967 and 1973 as well as the United States’ vested interest in reproducing such a discourse.

Kissinger’s struggle for political power in Washington in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s impacted on the interpretation of the slogan ‘land for peace’ in UN resolution 242, as Kissinger sought to promote his interpretation of this which differed with Secretary of State, Rogers’ interpretation. Up to February 1971, there was an international consensus around the meaning of the contested clause ‘withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict’ to mean full Israeli withdrawal from those territories.³⁰ A significant shift occurred in 1971 which reinterpreted that clause to mean partial withdrawal by Israel.³¹ The laying down of this discursive track in 1971 was to remain in place by September 1993. UN resolutions 242 and 338 incorporated into the Declaration of Principles, are interpreted by Israel’s Deputy Foreign Minister as partial withdrawal. Yossi Beilin stated this explicitly,

‘the permanent solution will be based on Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and from most of the West Bank. We agree to a confederated formula between Jordan and the Palestinians in the West Bank, but we will not return to pre-1967 borders. United Jerusalem will remain the capital of the State of Israel.’³²

In February 1971, UN mediator Gunnar Jarring proposed a course of action to the protagonists which reiterated and reinforced the existing international hegemonic discourse in place at that time. A key clause in the Roger’s plan stated that,

p. 70

³⁰ UNSCR 242, Lukacs op. cit., p. 201

³¹ Chomsky N., *World Orders Old and New*, (London, Pluto Press, 1994), pp. 207-8

³² Beilin Y. New York Times, 31 August 1993, quoted by Chomsky, *ibid.*, p. 248

'any changes in the pre-existing lines should not reflect the weight of conquest and should be confined to insubstantial alterations required for mutual security. We do not support expansionism. We believe troops must be withdrawn as the resolution provides. We support Israel's security and the security of the Arab States as well. We are for a lasting peace that requires the security of both.'³³

Jarring proposed to the protagonists, Israel and Egypt, that Israel withdraw from occupied Egyptian territories in exchange for peace between the two states. Significantly, Sadat accepted whilst Israel refused to withdraw to the pre-1967 lines.³⁴ Although consistent with UN resolution 242 and the Rogers's plan of 1969, the US rejected Sadat's offer, signalling a re-interpretation of UN resolution 242. US concern for the security of *both* the Arab states and Israel in December 1969, was to gradually change towards concern for Israel's security after 1971. Chomsky assesses certain features of the wider political environment within which the Jarring proposal is situated in order to account for the United States' decision to change its existing policy, which moreover was consistent with an international consensus around the conflict. Chomsky offers a strong argument which underlines the importance of individuals in discursive constructions and specifically in this instance, Henry Kissinger's role in this transformative process. Kissinger at that time was engaged in a battle to relocate the locus of power underpinning foreign policy formulations away from the State Department represented by Rogers, to himself as National Security Advisor. With regards to strategy which would guide US foreign policy in the Middle East, Kissinger advocated political stalemate which he believed would fracture the Soviet Union's hold on its Middle Eastern satellite states, either by inducing the Soviet Union to compromise or by causing states aligned with the Soviet Union to re-direct their allegiances to the United States. However, Chomsky notes that Egypt's acceptance of the Jarring proposal signalled its willingness to detach itself from the Soviet Union whilst the Soviet Union's own position vis-à-vis Israel was one of acceptance and not rejection.³⁵ This

³³ 'The Rogers Plan: Address by Secretary of State Rogers, Washington DC, 9 December, 1969', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 59

³⁴ Chomsky, *op. cit.*, p. 208

³⁵ Chomsky cites Senate Foreign Relations Committee Middle East specialist Seth Tillman who notes that 'the official Soviet position has been consistent since 1948 in support of Israel's right to exist and consistent

suggests that had two discursive strands not collided, that is to say Kissinger's struggle to wrest power away from the State Department and US foreign policy formulations in the Middle East, Israel could have had a peace settlement as early as 1971 without addressing Palestinian claims.³⁶ February 1971 thus marks a significant moment in changing discourses. Kissinger's rejection of Sadat's acceptance of the principal of 'land for peace' signals the United States' implicit advocacy of peace for Israel without full withdrawal from the occupied territories. Power political struggles within the United States impacted on the construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East, highlighting the historically situated and contingent nature of changing discourses. United States' support of Israel within the context of the Cold War and struggles for political power within the United States created two powerful narratives which surrounded the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and which impinged upon its development. Kissinger's reconstruction of 'land for peace' reproduced an Israeli interpretation of this key clause, highlighting Jewish security needs, interpreted as continued Israeli military control of certain strategic areas of Arab occupied territories. This construction was enabled by the definition of the conflict as Arab-Israeli by the dominant discourse, implicitly negating a Palestinian identity.

Another key moment in changing discourses occurs in 1977 with President Carter's intervention. In order to situate the discourses which emerged from the Camp David accords, it is important to identify the main defining features of the conflict by 1977. Between 1971-73, US diplomacy in the Middle East was aimed at the 'complete frustration' of the Arabs.³⁷ This Kissinger calculated, would induce the Arabs to turn to the United States as it would become apparent that they could not rely on the Soviet Union.³⁸ The various concentric 'policy' circles which constrain discourses are further illustrated by the example of American silence induced by electoral considerations. In 1972, Sadat ordered the expulsion of his Soviet advisors in a bid to induce change in US discourse in the Middle

since 1967 in support of Israel's right to a secure national existence, as called for in Security Council Resolution 242, within its 1967 borders.' *World Orders Old and New*, op. cit., p. 209

³⁶ I am grateful to Professor Chomsky for referring me to this episode. Telephone interview, 14 May 1997, Washington DC.

³⁷ This was a term used by Kissinger. He later admitted that this policy was short-sighted and may well have contributed to the 1973 War. See Quandt, *Peace Process*, op. cit., p. 117

³⁸ Chomsky, *World Orders Old and New*, op. cit., p. 73

East.³⁹ In the lead up to elections, the United States did not react. In contrast, Soviet statements issued in the same period emphasised the ‘legitimate rights of the Palestinians’ and called for full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.⁴⁰ Such formulations were unacceptable to the United States who in a joint US/USSR communiqué went as far as articulating the ‘legitimate interests of the Palestinian people’.⁴¹ The change of ‘rights’ to ‘interests’ extended the discursive strand on which the term ‘refugees’ is located. This illustrates the refusal of the United States to recognise Palestinian rights to self-determination at that point in time. The choice of ‘legitimate interests’ rather than ‘rights’ constructs the Palestinian peoples’ struggle as a private, civil affair whereas ‘rights’ would have reinterpreted the Palestinian struggle, implying a public right to statehood.

After the 1973 War, the Palestinian issue was drawn to the top of the international agenda. In the Geneva Conference convened jointly by the US and the USSR, Palestinian representation was negated as the PLO was not invited to the conference. Arab state leaders were invited, reflecting the hegemonic narrative which constructed the conflict as Arab-Israeli. The Geneva Conference was a multi-lateral meeting which was conceived as a first step towards the initiation of bilateral meetings between Israel and its Arab adversaries.⁴² For the first time, high level representatives were sent to the Conference by Egypt and Jordan. Both the US and the USSR emphasised the ‘legitimate rights’ of the Palestinians, but significantly failed to define what they were.⁴³ Based on Resolutions 242 and 338, the Conference once again sought to represent the Palestinian problem as one of refugees and not as one involving national rights to self-determination. Although the conference broke down after only two days, a military working group was formed to discuss Israeli disengagement from occupied territories. Significant to the study of changing discourses, the Sinai Disengagement Agreement of 1975 between Egypt and Israel, contained a secret provision signed between Israel and the United States. The United States pledged that it would not negotiate with the PLO until the PLO formally

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 146

⁴⁰ Gromyko document setting forth nine principles of an Arab-Israeli settlement presented to Kissinger during his visit to Moscow in May 1973. Quoted in Quandt, *Peace Process*, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-142

⁴¹ ‘US-USSR Joint Communiqué, June 25, 1973’, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. 69, (July 23, 1973), p. 132. Quoted in Quandt, *ibid.*, p. 143

⁴² Kissinger H., *Years of Upheaval*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), p. 794

acknowledged its acceptance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, recognising Israel's right to exist in the region.⁴⁴

During the same period of time, European Union articulations defining the conflict represented a powerful counter-discourse to the dominant discourse. The next section assesses the input of the European Union in erecting counter-discourses defining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Actions and Reactions: An Interlinked Process of Discursive Change

The formation of the European Economic Community signalled a greater degree of cooperation in certain areas amongst member states.⁴⁵ The European input into the discursive construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict came primarily through official statements formulated in response to actions relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As we shall see in chapter five, the European Union gathered momentum during the intifada in challenging the hegemonic discourse constituting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, highlighting the interweaving nature of internal and external discourses. The intifada as an internal challenging narrative empowered surrounding discursive continuities. Prior to the outbreak of the intifada in December 1987, three official statements of policy stand out as key indicators of the direction in which European discourse developed with regards to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each of the three documents is divided by a seven year interval and begin in 1973 with the Statement by the European Community Foreign Ministers, Brussels, 6 November, 1973.

Formulated in response to the 1973 War, the document is an inter-textual one which lends support to UN Resolutions 242 and 338, whilst at the same time acts as a transformative discourse, signalling a departure from these formulations through the use of

⁴³ Cattan, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 141-142

⁴⁵ The signature of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 signalled the creation of a European Economic Community. However, Great Britain did not join the European Community as a formal member until 1972. The European Parliament was created in 1958, but was transformed in 1979 into an Assembly of European communities whose representatives were elected through universal suffrage.

less ambiguous constructions. Whereas the main point of contention which prevented the PLO from accepting UN Resolutions 242 and 338 was the discursive negation of a Palestinian people through the use of the term 'refugees', the Brussels statement of 1973 not only acknowledged the existence of a Palestinian people, but also their legitimacy. The European Community thus signals its linkage of a 'just and lasting peace' to 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinians'.⁴⁶ Whilst acknowledging the basic premise of Resolution 242 which encapsulates the idea of 'land for peace', the European document's emphasis on 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinians' re-constructs the Palestinian question not as one of 'refugees' to be re-settled in Arab countries, but as one of Palestinian 'legitimate rights'. This interpretation highlights the national component of the Palestinian question and draws the conflict away from its fringes to its territorial centre. It is interesting to note Henry Kissinger's reaction to this document. He contends that its appearance in November 1973, weakened Sadat's position by imposing terms which would be difficult for him to meet. Kissinger writes,

'the European Community on November 6 had adopted a declaration on the Middle East strongly urging Israel's immediate withdrawal to the October 22 cease-fire line, and had thrown in a wholesale endorsement of the Arab interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242 for good measure. This abdication---did harm: It reduced Sadat's manoeuvring room. Could he settle for less than the Europeans were proposing? The answer would determine what could be achieved, for the European program guaranteed a prolonged stalemate.'⁴⁷

Although contributing to the construction of a peacemaking discourse, the timing of the European declaration unwittingly endangered the development of a narrative emerging in another discursive arena. The absence of a central co-ordinating body has undoubtedly produced such situations. The implication of this is that a peacemaking discourse in itself may not necessarily contribute positively to the strengthening of a broader peacemaking narrative, if its timing endangers the growth of other similar discourses. The element of

⁴⁶ 'Statement by The European Community Foreign Ministers, Brussels, 6 November, 1973', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 14

⁴⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, op. cit., p. 635

secrecy which is often involved in the formulation of peacemaking narratives increases the risk involved. Analysis of narratives articulated by the European Union, addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shows such narratives to be responsive to internal as well as external party actions. Working within the surrounding discursive structures of enablement and constraint, the European Union beginning in the early 1970's has responded to narratives either by reinforcing them through its support or challenging them as it did in the Venice declaration.

As was alluded to above, during his shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East between 1973-76, Secretary of State Kissinger promised the Israeli government that the United States government would not negotiate with the PLO, which it would henceforth regard as a terrorist organisation, reproducing, legitimising and reinforcing Israeli security concerns.⁴⁸ This commitment made by the United States precipitated against the emergence of narratives articulating the existence of a Palestinian identity, for it set a structure of constraint which excluded the PLO, symbol of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. Significantly and somewhat ironically, Israel, suspicious of Superpower mediators favouring the Arab side for strategic reasons, preferred direct negotiations with the Palestinians.⁴⁹ Kissinger's letter excluded such a possibility, at least on an official level. Within this framework which marginalised the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination and erased the PLO as an official interlocutor within the international arena, President Carter articulated 'the right of the Palestinians to have a homeland, to be compensated for losses they have suffered' and in so doing was the first US President to articulate the existence of a distinct Palestinian identity by coupling the terms 'Palestinians' and 'homeland' in the same sentence. Carter

⁴⁸ Prime Minister Rabin, in reaction to the Rabat conference's statement of November 1974 stated, 'The Rabat Conference decided to charge the organisations of murderers with the establishment of a Palestinian State,--- Negotiations with such a body would lend legitimacy and encouragement to its policy and its criminal acts.' 'Israel Knesset Statement, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Following the Rabat Conference, 5 November, 1974 [Excerpts]', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 188. In 1982, in response to the Reagan plan, the Israeli government declared that with 'the terrorist organisation called PLO --- It is inconceivable that Israel will ever agree to such an 'arrangement' ['the establishment of a Palestinian State in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district']---'. 'Text of Israel's Communiqué on the Reagan Plan, Jerusalem, 2 September, 1982', Lukacs, op. cit., pp. 201-202. In 1984, the National Unity Government stated, 'Israel will oppose the establishment of an additional Palestinian state in the Gaza District and in the area between Israel and Jordan. Israel will not negotiate with the PLO.' 'Basic Policy Guidelines of the Government of Israel, 13 September, 1984 [Excerpts]', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 204

⁴⁹ Touval S., *The Peace Brokers*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 139.

also urged Israeli ‘withdrawal from territories occupied in the 1967 war’ in March 1977.⁵⁰ However, the disjuncture between the situated narrative articulated by the President of the United States and the surrounding discursive continuities, proved too great, and two and a half years later, in August 1979, Carter abandoned the discourse constructing a Palestinian identity and rights to self-determination. He stated:

‘I am against any creation of a separate Palestinian state. I don’t think it would be good for the Palestinians. I don’t think it would be good for Israel. I don’t think it would be good for the Arab neighbours of such a state.’⁵¹

Carter’s intervention in the Middle East was hastened by President Anwar Sadat’s historic trip to Jerusalem, when he ‘simply and deliberately and very successfully sabotaged Jimmy Carter’s efforts to get the Geneva Conference going.’⁵² In so doing, Sadat’s intervention did much to impede the growth of a challenging discourse to the hegemonic one in place. The Camp David accords which followed Sadat’s historic visit to Jerusalem in 1977, described by Quandt as ‘a rather convoluted and overly complex smoke-screen’, sought to address the Palestinian question by granting the Palestinian populations of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank administrative autonomy through the election of a self-governing authority.⁵³ The inclusion of the Palestinian issue in the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty reveals much about the dynamics behind changing discourses. As we saw above, Egypt had been ready to reach an agreement with Israel back in 1971 without addressing the Palestinian issue. Israel had refused then. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war had brought the United States and the Soviet Union close to direct confrontation and Egypt’s military strength had been demonstrated. The Palestinian struggle for self-determination, championed by Arab states led by Egypt, violently forced its way back onto the international agenda. For Israel, it was important to remove Egypt from the equation. The 1973 war had shown Egypt to be a leading Arab state and one of the largest and most

⁵⁰ Quoted in Cattan, *op. cit.*, p. 232

⁵¹ Published in the New York Times, 11 August 1979. Quoted in Cattan, *op. cit.*, p. 232

⁵² Interview with Chris Mitchell, 19 May 1997, Virginia, Maryland, USA

⁵³ Interview with William Quandt, 23 May 1997, Washington DC

powerful. As such, it could not be seen to engage in negotiations with Israel without addressing the Palestinian issue.

The Camp David accords mark an important watershed in the study of changing discourses and the mediation process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Camp David accords were signed between Egypt and Israel in 1978 and were mediated by President Carter of the United States. Although the PLO was excluded from negotiations, a significant change occurs with the recognition of 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people'.⁵⁴ This is the first official recognition by an Israeli government of the existence of a Palestinian people. It was but nine years earlier that the Labour leader Golda Meir had remarked that there were no Palestinians.⁵⁵ Now, a Likud leader acknowledged not only that a Palestinian people existed, but that they also had legitimate rights. This statement was in line with the Arab League's position on the status of the Palestinians which was also echoed by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 3236 of November 1974. Although the Camp David accords reproduced Begin's December 1977 plan calling for Palestinian autonomy, the inclusion of Palestinian legitimate rights in many ways challenges the notion of Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories.⁵⁶ Autonomy was a politically expedient outcome for the Israeli government since it overcame the demographic problem which was one of Israel wanting to retain control of the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria, without the people. The essence of Camp David was therefore one of granting the Palestinians limited powers for self-administration, but no control of the land. As Begin later commented, this limited and contained outcome was all that was ever envisaged by him.⁵⁷ The inclusion of Palestinian rights was a trade-off for getting a peace treaty with Egypt, one of the most powerful and most populous Arab states.⁵⁸ However, situated within a discourse analytic framework, the inclusion of a clause recognising the legitimate

⁵⁴ 'The Camp David Accords, Washington DC, 17 September 1978', *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, a Documentary Record*, (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993, 1994), p. 236

⁵⁵ Golda Meir, *The Sunday Times*, (15 June 1969) quoted in Chomsky N., *The Fateful Triangle*, (London, Pluto Press, 1983), pp. 26-7

⁵⁶ Hirst D., Chapter ten, 'Peace with Egypt'. *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, (London, Faber & Faber, 1984), p. 362

⁵⁷ Neff D., Chapter Five, 'Palestinians, America Discovers a People 1947-1995' *Fallen Pillars*, (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995). p. 119

⁵⁸ Lenczowski G., Chapter Seven, 'The Carter Presidency', *American Presidents and the Middle East*, (Durham & London, Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 177-179

rights of the Palestinian people, (although what recognition of 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people' would entail is not mentioned), signals a major breakthrough for the Palestinians and their struggle for international recognition of their existence and their cause. Interpretations contained within the Camp David accords had an impact on what was on the agenda, on who the participants were to any mediation attempt and on what sort of outcome could be sought. Although the accords were bitterly denounced by the PLO at the time as a sell-out of the Palestinian cause, study of changing discourses with the benefit of hindsight reveals their importance. Their occurrence was a crossover, a bridging mechanism which reveals some of the dynamics behind changing discourses.

Firstly, by 1978, there was already a fertile environment which recognised the existence of a Palestinian people. This had been achieved gradually, by the formation of the PLO in the late 1964 and the important battle of Karamah which it had fought during the 1967 war. Although slow to respond, the Arab League finally officially recognised the PLO as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people' ten years later in 1974. This was speedily followed by the United Nations inviting Arafat to address the General Assembly. President Carter himself, less than five months after taking office spoke of the need for a Palestinian 'homeland'.⁵⁹ Although Begin's Likud government would acquiesce only to Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories in 1978, the recognition of Palestinian legitimate rights reinforced the narrative identifying a Palestinian people. The proposed autonomy within such a framework could only be temporary, paving the way towards an eventual relinquishing of the occupied territories, which consecutive UN resolutions had called upon it to do. Although the PLO was rejected, a Palestinian people was acknowledged.

President Carter mediated the Camp David accords over an eight day retreat away from the media. It quickly became apparent that Begin and Sadat were at loggerheads and could not negotiate face to face. Carter met with them individually and acted as a go-between.⁶⁰ It was his persistence and commitment that saw the negotiations culminate in the accords, for Sadat had packed his bags and was ready to leave on more than one

⁵⁹ Neff D., 'Palestinians. America Discovers a People 1947-1995', *Fallen Pillars*, op. cit., p. 118

occasion. It was Carter who managed to persuade him to stay.⁶¹ One of the main failings of the Camp David accords was the absence of any linkage between the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and the Framework for Peace in the Middle East. Begin in effect gave up the Sinai for peace with Egypt, but managed to retain control of the West Bank.⁶²

The Camp David accords articulate powerful new tramlines which set the direction which United States foreign policy in the Middle East was to follow over the next decade. Indeed, the Reagan peace plan of 1982 reproduced and reinforced narrative structures articulated in the Camp David accords. In September 1982, Reagan identified the problem between the Israelis and the Palestinians as 'how to reconcile Israel's legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians', echoing the structures erected in the Camp David accords.⁶³ Following the signing of the Camp David accords, Palestinian autonomy was challenged by the international community, by the PLO exiled from Lebanon to Tunis after 1982 and in 1987 by the Palestinians of the occupied territories during the intifada. As well as erecting structures of constraint, the Camp David accords also reinforced and strengthened structures of enablement in the clause recognising the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. It would be a while yet however before the United States and Israel were to change their attitudes towards the Palestinians. As we shall see in the rest of the thesis, this came about through a complex, political process of changing discourses which saw the input of internal as well as external parties.

In an essay published in 1988, Naomi Chazan assessed the impact which the Camp David accords had on Israeli domestic politics. She noted that,

'the rapprochement between Israel and Egypt triggered a series of political adjustments that assumed a trajectory of their own in the course of the 1980's.'⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Carter J., 'Israel'. *The Blood of Abraham*, (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985), p. 43

⁶¹ Lenczowski, 'The Carter Presidency, *American Presidents and the Middle East*, op. cit., p. 174

⁶² Hirst, Chapter Ten, 'Peace with Egypt', *The Gun and the Olive Branch*, op. cit., p. 363

⁶³ The Reagan Peace Plan - US Involvement in Mideast Peace Effort, 'A Moral Imperative'. President Ronald Reagan, 1 September 1982', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 74

Following the signature of the Camp David accords, the political climate within Israel changed, as 'it became increasingly difficult to distinguish the direct effects of the talks from the processes with which they merged.'⁶⁵ This illustrates the way in which an action may create further momentum for change, highlighting the interactive process between agency and structure alluded to in chapter one. The action creates an environment which is fertile for the propagation of a particular kind of symbol or discourse and a particular kind of action, the two as pointed out by the quote above, becoming enmeshed in one another. The result is a trickling down effect of a political action into other inter-related domains. Chazan notes that, 'the Camp David Accords and the processes associated with them had an effect on the terms of political discourse in Israel, on attitudes towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, on political alignments, on the public agenda and modes of political behaviour and on foreign relations.'⁶⁶ The question which emerges from this observation relates to what joins these diverse fields. One possible answer links the signing of the Camp David accords to the generation of a particular climate not unlike a magnetic field which would attract a particular type of magnetic force. Drawing the metaphor further, the stimulation of the magnetic field relates to notions of legitimacy and illegitimacy regulated by the hegemonic discourse in place. The Camp David accords, brokered by the United States, were a major turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Discourse analysis illustrates the way in which the intervention of the United States as an external party, modified narratives constructing the conflict.

Articulated by the European Union in 1980, the Venice Declaration in a similar way to the Brussels statement, responded to narratives constructing the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. In 1973, it had responded to the Arab-Israeli war and UNSCR 338 which followed, whereas in 1980, it responded to the Camp David accords.

'The main unspoken objective of the sponsors of the Venice formula was to set aside the terms of the Camp David Accords concerning the Palestinian Arab territories

⁶⁴ Chazan N., 'Domestic Developments in Israel', Quandt W. (ed.), *The Middle East - Ten Years After Camp David*, (Washington, The Brookings Institution, 1988), p. 151

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

occupied by Israel in 1967 [including Jerusalem] and to replace them with the Venice formula favouring the PLO.⁶⁷

The Venice declaration builds on the Brussels declaration of 1973 and moves towards a Palestinian interpretation of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. It also signals the Union's articulation of a transformative discourse, introducing a positive-sum construct to the conflict, based on the fulfilment of Palestinian and Israeli security and identity needs. The European Union calls for Israel's 'right to existence and to security' reconciled with 'the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people'.⁶⁸ However, there is still no mention by the European Union of Palestinian security. Significantly, it is the European Union responding to the Camp David Accords, and not a mediator in the sense in which the term is used in the conventional mediation literature, who challenges the status quo. Two points are particularly noteworthy about this document. First it acknowledges its support of UN resolutions 242 and 338, legitimising its own discourse, and then challenges them by urging a recognition of the 'Palestinian problem, which is not simply one of refugees'.⁶⁹ The European Union goes on to support the section of the Camp David Accords which calls for Palestinian self-government in the occupied territories. A departure from UN narratives constructing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is signalled through the European Union calling for the PLO to participate in negotiations leading to a peace settlement.⁷⁰

On 5 August 1980, the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of the British House of Commons published its fifth report for 1979/80 which expressed the intentions and objectives behind the Venice Declaration.⁷¹ The US, the report stated, could not address Palestinian and Arab concerns 'since domestic political constraints limited the amount of pressure the United States could put on Israel'.⁷² The intersection of the political and the economic is highlighted in this example, as the members of the European Community saw an opportunity to dissociate themselves from the United States and Israel and benefit

⁶⁷ Kimche D., 'Venice 1980: Europe Joins the PLO', *The Last Option*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), p. 262

⁶⁸ Point no. 4. of 'The Venice European Declaration, 13 June, 1980', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 18

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, Point 6.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, Point 7

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 260

economically from such a political manoeuvre.⁷³ The Palestinian issue was the vehicle through which it could effectively do this. Issued at the conclusion of a two day summit held in Venice, 13 June, 1980, the European Union, through the Venice declaration, admonished Israel, urged it to withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, to evacuate Jewish settlements on the West Bank and to accept the PLO as a negotiating partner, effectively urging Israel to recognise a Palestinian identity and the Palestinian right to self-determination in Mandate Palestine.

Assessed through the lens of changing discourses, the value of the Venice Declaration lies in the status of its author, the European Union and in the narratives which it articulated, challenging the United States' construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its marginalisation of the PLO in particular. However, the PLO's response to the Venice Declaration illustrates its failure to grasp the political significance of narratives contained within this document. It condemned the European initiative as 'a disavowal of friendship and a disregard for the Arab people'.⁷⁴ This dissonance between external and internal discourses around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, highlights that in the aftermath of what was regarded by the PLO as an Egyptian sell-out of the Palestinian cause in the Camp David accords, the PLO was unable to appreciate the European Union's efforts to re-focus international attention on the Palestinian cause.

It is important to highlight the situated nature of the Venice Declaration. Two significant narratives preceded it. First, the speech given to the UN General Assembly by the European Union's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Michael O'Kennedy in 1979, during Ireland's second presidency of the Council of Ministers, and second, what became known as the 'Bahrain Declaration', 10 February 1980, articulated by the new Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs Brian Lenihan during an official visit to Bahrain.⁷⁵ Drawing once again on the useful analogy of concentric circles introduced in chapter two, the Camp David accords of 1978-79 may be seen to have stimulated discursive activity by the European Union in the

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 266

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

shape of foreign policy formulations toward the Middle East which offer support for the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. The 1979 speech at the UN General Assembly in turn prepares the discursive arena for further change, articulated in the Bahrain Declaration. The Venice Declaration lies on the outer rim, metaphorically propelled outwards, enabled and supported by earlier discourses. By juxtaposing key formulations of these three documents, beginning chronologically with the UN speech, a progression will become more clearly discernible illustrating the gradual clarification of the position of the European Union with regards to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. A speech delivered to the UN General Assembly by Michael O’Kennedy representing the European Community, stated that,

‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people---include the right to a homeland and the right, through its representatives, to play its full part in the negotiation of a comprehensive settlement.’⁷⁶

The statement went on to say that the Palestinian people were, ‘entitled, within the framework set by a peace settlement, to exercise their right to determine their own future as a people’. In addition, as Keatinge asserts, through the formulation identifying ‘all those involved’ to accept UN Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for negotiation, a discursive watershed occurs as the first explicit reference is made to the PLO in a European Union Political Co-operation statement.⁷⁷ Less than five months later, ‘homeland’ becomes ‘State’, a change with significant political ramifications. In the Bahrain Declaration of 10 February 1980, the Palestinian people,

‘had the right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State in Palestine---.’ The statement adds, ‘all parties, including the PLO should play a full

⁷⁵ Keatinge P., ‘Ireland’, Allen D. & Pijpers A. (eds.), *European Foreign Policy-Making and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), p. 28

⁷⁶ Speech delivered by Michael O’Kennedy on behalf of the Nine, 25 September 1979. Keatinge reproduces sections of the original text of the UN speech. *ibid.*, pp. 24-25

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

role in the negotiations for a comprehensive peace settlement. In this regard, Ireland recognises the role of the PLO in representing the Palestinian people.’⁷⁸

There appears to be a linkage between the level of nuance attributed to the description of a homeland/state for the Palestinian people and the politically calibrated choice of term used to designate the body which is to govern this geographic entity. The choice of both terms appears to reflect an approximate level of parity in nuance. Hence, in September 1979, the PLO is referred to as the ‘representatives’ of the ‘Palestinian people’. A further re-enforcement is provided by the inclusion of ‘all those involved’. This stage in formulation to designate the PLO corresponds to ‘homeland’. By February 1980, ‘homeland’ is replaced by ‘an independent state in Palestine’ and this corresponds with a parallel refinement mirrored in the choice of terminology which names the ‘PLO’, hence removing any remaining scope for ambiguity. The PLO is identified as ‘representing the Palestinian people’ with the added proposal that it ‘should play a full role in the negotiations’. It is important to quote article 3 of the Venice Declaration in full, since the multi-layered process constituting changing discourses or the mediation process is illustrated. Article 3 states that,

‘the nine countries of the Community base on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the positions which they have expressed on several occasions, notably in their declarations on 29 June, 1977, 19 September 1978, 26 March and 18 June 1979, as well as the speech made on their behalf on 25 September 1979 by the Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs at the 34th United Nations General Assembly.’⁷⁹

The Venice declaration has highlighted the responsive and constructive role played by the European Union. The other external parties which have intervened in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between 1948-87, the United Nations and the United States have also responded to actions. But it would also be true to say that internal parties are also

⁷⁸Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the communiqué known as ‘the Bahrain Declaration’ of 10 February 1980 produced at the conclusion of talks between the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Brian Lenihan and the Foreign Minister of Bahrain, His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad Bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa. Keatinge, *ibid.*, p. 25

⁷⁹The Venice European Declaration, 13 June 1980. Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 18

responding to the hegemonic discourse constructing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The analytical difficulties involved in establishing differential influence in the construction of discursive tramlines is not dissimilar to the 'chicken and egg' argument. It is impossible to say with any degree of certainty which came first. In both cases, internal and external parties are agents who are constrained by the wider discursive continuities making up social systems. Internal parties also play a vital role in changing discourses by challenging the hegemonic discourse. Writing in 1985, Flapan identifies three Israeli politicians Professor Shlomo Avineri, Haim Herzog and Mordechai Gazit.⁸⁰ On the Palestinian side, as early as the mid-1970's, high ranking officials within the PLO were initiating secret rendezvous with Israelis a dangerous initiative at that time, for it was illegal for an Israeli to have any contact with the PLO. Three individuals stand out, Wael Zueitar, PLO representative in Rome who was killed by the Mossad, Issam Sartawi, a PLO guerrilla leader turned diplomat and Said Hammami who was PLO representative in London until his assassination on 4th January 1978. All three were assassinated for making contact with Israeli officials and/or for advocating mutual Israeli-Palestinian recognition and existence in Mandate Palestine. Similar initiatives today would be encouraged and indeed praised for their bravery and depth of vision. The so-called 'architects' of the Oslo agreement, Peres, Rabin and Arafat were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace. They implemented what Zueitar, Sartawi and Hammami were publicly advocating two decades earlier. This highlights that the same action, at one moment in time may be unacceptable, whilst a few years later, with a more receptive discursive environment in place, it is encouraged and praised. Such a phenomenon underscores the importance of creating a discursive environment receptive to peace. Although high-ranking officials are often singled out and given credit for the signing of a peace agreement, it is the input of multitudes of individuals who often remain anonymous, who generate the forces for peace needed for the creation of this necessary discursive environment. As early as 1973, the year before the PNC issued a statement calling for a two-state solution, Said Hammami articulated such an outcome. The media provided the much needed vehicle for disseminating such ideas which at the time were radical ideas since the Palestinians and Israelis did not recognise one another. In a letter to the Times, Hammami wrote;

⁸⁰ Flapan S., 'Israelis and Palestinians: Can They Make Peace?', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 15, No.

‘Many Palestinians believe that a Palestinian state on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including Al-Hammah region, is a necessary part of any peace package.’⁸¹

Written by a PLO official, proposals made for partition would have necessarily required the consent of the PLO leadership. Interestingly from a discourse analysis viewpoint, such publications which received wide public circulation in Western Europe, contrast with official PLO statements made at the same time. This contrast points once again to the apparent official recognition of the importance of creating a receptive discursive environment as a necessary precursor to change in official policy, the two being intertwined. The oft-made distinction between internal and external, official and unofficial channels of peacemaking, appears to dissolve when the peacemaking process is considered from the perspective of discourse analysis. Creating a discursive environment which promotes or empowers peace brings together individuals with similar ideas, blurring the internal/external divide and making it difficult to establish differential influence in the construction of tramlines.⁸²

In ‘Permission to Narrate’, Said illustrates how a hegemonic discourse has in-built mechanisms which protect it against rival discourses.⁸³ Referring to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 which was designed to quash Palestinian nationalism, legitimisation of this act for a Western audience was based upon the application or extension of an Orientalist perspective outlined in chapter two. In other words, a hegemonic discourse legitimises a certain set of symbols within the symbolic order which mirror the hegemonic discourse, whilst at the same time the dominant narrative suppresses challenging discourses by

1, Autumn 1985), p. 31

⁸¹ Hammami S., ‘The Palestinian Way to Middle East Peace’, *The Times*, 16 November, 1973. Reproduced in *A Man of Peace, in Memoriam, Said Hammami*, (London, CAABU, date of publication withheld), p. 4

⁸² Flapan S., ‘Israelis and Palestinians: Can They Make Peace?’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, op. cit., p. 31. Flapan identifies ties created by ‘economic and social ties’ which have ‘dispersed many of the demonic images which dominated thinking for so long.’

⁸³ See also Milliken J. and Sylvan D., ‘Soft Bodies, Hard Targets and Chic Theories: US Bombings Policy in Indochina’, *Millennium*, (Vol. 25, No. 2, Summer 1996), p. 341. Milliken and Sylvan draw on the work of Goodman N., *Ways of Worldmaking*, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1978) to elaborate a ‘world-specific’ theory which is primarily constituted by objects and the relations among those objects. From this theory they extrapolate two important consequences, ‘[o]ne pertains to the principles by which worlds are constructed; the other, to the positions from which scholars discuss those worlds’.

rendering them illegitimate. Hence in 1982, at the time of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, when, for the first time, Israel invaded an Arab capital, the narratives produced were constrained by surrounding political processes. Israel's invasion of Lebanon, framed within wider discourses, was perceived by a Western audience through a distorting lens which did not portray Israel as an aggressor, but justified the Israeli military offensive into a neighbouring sovereign state. Said writes,

‘Since Israel is in effect a civilised, democratic country constitutively incapable of barbaric practices against Palestinians and other non-Jews, its invasion of Lebanon was *ipso facto* justified.’⁸⁴

This view, the ‘civilised Jew’ confronting the ‘backward, uncivilised Arab’, is itself framed within wider discursive continuities. One of these continuities is Jabotinsky's plea to Great Britain to allow the creation of a Jewish nation ‘that is foreign in culture and social forms from the other peoples in the region [which] can serve as a prop for the British forces in the region’, a construct which legitimises the establishment of an Israeli state in the Middle East. The narrative which appeared in 1982, particularly during the time of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, was contained within surrounding discursive continuities.⁸⁵ Also in illustration of the above point, Said offers the example of an American journalist who reported the 1982 war from Beirut. In his reports, he spoke of ‘savage Israel’ and of

⁸⁴ Said E., ‘Permission to Narrate’, *The Politics of Dispossession*, (London, Vintage, 1995), p. 248. This article was first published in the *London Review of Books*, 16-29 February 1984. See also Uri Avnery, *My Friend, the Enemy*, (London, Zed Books, 1986), p. 57. Avnery highlights the creation of a new term in Hebrew to describe the Palestinians. The word ‘ha-mehablim’ is used officially to refer to the PLO as ‘the organisation of murderers’ or ‘saboteurs’. In 1982 during the Israeli bombing of Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Avnery notes that ‘[t]he name played a major role in the dehumanisation and the demonization of the Palestinians, providing justification for the perpetration of any kind of atrocity. The Israeli Air Force was not bombing refugee camps in Lebanon, but ‘nests of saboteurs’. It was not women and children who were killed, but saboteurs.’ Referring to the same phenomenon, Issam Sartawi, Arafat's leading advisor on European affairs in 1980 gave an interview in December of that year, in which he revealed the discursive enabling structure contained in the Labour election manifesto which was published on 14 November 1980 in preparation for the forthcoming General Elections the following year. Article 17 of the programme calls for the liquidation of the PLO. Sartawi reveals that ‘[s]ince the PLO is the embodiment of Palestinian nationalism, a call for its liquidation is synonymous to a call for the liquidation of the Palestinian people,---. This article is therefore a clear call for genocide.’ Quoted in ‘The Israeli Labour Party's War Program’, *Monday Morning*, 15-21 December 1980

⁸⁵ Jabotinsky V. quoted in Chomsky N., *Peace in the Middle East*, (London, Fontana/Collins, 1975), p. 25

‘an imperialist state that we never knew existed before.’⁸⁶ However, a few days later he retracted his comments claiming he had made a ‘mistake’. In assessing this episode, Richard Poirier focuses on what may be regarded as the context, relating the outcome, the retraction, to the forces inherent in a discursive structure which act as mechanisms of enablement and constraint. Quoted by Said, Poirier’s assessment of this discursive curtailment deserves to be quoted in full. He notes that the retraction made by the journalist,

‘unwittingly exposed the degree to which the structure of the evening news depends on ideas of reality determined by the political and social discourse already empowered outside the news-room. Feelings about the victims of the siege could not, for example, be attached to an idea for the creation of a Palestinian homeland, since, despite the commitments, muffled as they are, of the Camp David accords, no such idea has as yet managed to find an enabling vocabulary within what is considered ‘reasonable’ political discourse in this country.’⁸⁷

This suggests that the narrative ground has to be fertile in order for a discursive seed to take root and stresses the contingency which characterises external party actions. Since ‘facts do not at all speak for themselves but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain, and circulate them’, the path to discursive change is by necessity a slow, incremental process, as this example illustrates.⁸⁸ Dramatic change is rarely, if ever, instantaneous for it cannot survive within a symbolic order hostile to it. Emerging narratives have to be concordant or congruent with the social and discursive patterns traced by ever-present surrounding continuities. If they do not, they are delegitimised and marginalised. In order for ‘the ‘idea’ of a Palestinian homeland’ to take root and develop, it ‘would have to be enabled by the prior acceptance of a narrative entailing a homeland.’⁸⁹ Recognition of this incremental process of change is evidenced in a statement made in 1979 by the President of the American-Arab Relations Committee in a letter to the New York

⁸⁶ Said, ‘Permission to Narrate’, op. cit., p. 255

⁸⁷ Poirier R., ‘Watching the Evening News: The Chancellor Incident’, Raritan 2:2 (Fall 1982), p. 8.

Quoted in Said, ‘Permission to Narrate’, op. cit., p. 256

⁸⁸ Said, *ibid.*, p. 254

Times. Comparing the PLO to the ‘civil rights movement here in the US’, President Carter, Mehdi notes optimistically, ‘is moving forward toward the gradual recognition of the PLO and the human right of the Palestinians to return to Palestine.’⁹⁰ In this example, the parallel made between the PLO and the civil rights movement by the President of the United States is important for two reasons. Firstly, due to its *author-ity*, because it was made by a figure in a position of enormous political power and secondly, because such imagery contributes towards the gradual building up of an ‘enabling vocabulary’. Exploration of the conditions behind discursive constructs in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reveals that mediation processes are impinged upon by a plethora of parties, not necessarily ‘mediators’, but all mediating discourses. They are joined by the fact that they are all situated within wider discursive continuities which constitute structures of enablement or constraint.

In response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the Palestinian camp massacres of Sabra and Shatila, the United States responded with the Reagan Plan of September 1982. It re-articulated American policy, the ‘land for peace’ formula, UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and the Camp David accords as a basis for any negotiation. An internal party, the PLO, was challenging the hegemonic discourse through non-conformity, its assertion of a Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was in direct response to this. By following the PLO into Lebanon, Israel attempted to suppress this damaging counter-discourse by eliminating the PLO. The United States’ intervention reproduced narrative structures articulated in the Camp David accords. In 1982, discursive continuities were such that the ‘legitimate rights of the Palestinian people’ could only be accommodated by limited self-government or ‘autonomy’. This was the best formula the United States could provide to the problem, framed within the complex network of symbolic orders present at the time. The problem at the core of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute was constructed by the United States at the end of 1982 as ‘how to reconcile Israel’s legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians’.⁹¹ Palestinian interests were now transformed into Palestinian ‘rights’, thus acknowledging the

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 254 and 256

⁹⁰ Mehdi M.T., ‘The Cause of Palestinian Terrorism’, New York Times, 13 August 1979, p. 16

⁹¹ ‘The Reagan Peace Plan - US Involvement in Mideast Peace Effort. ‘A Moral Imperative’. President Ronald Reagan, 1 September, 1982’. Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 74

Palestinian peoples' public rights. This new construction clashed with 'Israel's legitimate security concerns'. This linkage had been recognised in the 1960's by Golda Meir who refused to articulate the word 'Palestinians' for fear that it would jeopardise Israel's legitimate claims to statehood in what had been Mandate Palestine. As an internal party, the PLO's resistance to the hegemonic discourse through an assertion of difference, succeeded in making this linkage public in the international arena. Under the heading 'A Moral Imperative', the narrative constituting the Reagan Plan of 1982, sought to present a fait accompli 'solution' to the problem, which did not involve negotiations with the Palestinians but based a solution on Israel's security needs. By pursuing the PLO into Lebanon, Israel had helped redefine the conflict not as Arab-Israeli, but as Israeli-Palestinian.

UN Resolutions 242 and 338 became associated with an American attempt to bypass the Palestinian people through promoting direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab adversaries, a demand which was described by Kissinger as 'as seemingly reasonable as it was unfulfillable'.⁹² The role of the United States in the discursive construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict illustrates the way in which this process is fed by various discursive strands in constant evolution as they react to each other. The peacemaking process which is located within and is a constitutive part of such shifts and changes is not a linear process, but traces a complex pattern which is fed by parallel discourses located in the present, as well as being retroactive, building on past narratives. The highly political environment of changing discourses is further highlighted in the assessment of the Brussels European Declaration made seven years after the Venice Declaration.

The importance of the Brussels European Declaration of 23 February, 1987 lies in its last paragraph. The body of the statement reiterates past statements making special reference to the Venice Declaration.⁹³ A departure occurs in the last point which expresses concern for 'the living conditions of the inhabitants of the occupied territories, particularly regarding their economic, social, cultural and administrative affairs.' The concern expressed, lays the ground for the following sentence which shifts the focus back to the Community and its efforts to address the situation outlined. It states that '[t]he Community

⁹² Kissinger, *op. cit.*, p. 197

has already decided to grant aid to the Palestinians resident in the occupied territories and to allow certain products from those territories preferential access to the Community market.’⁹⁴ The importance of this document lies as much in what it says as in what remains implicit. Since the occupied territories are under Israel’s military authority, the Community’s concern over living conditions in those territories, the granting of aid to the Palestinian inhabitants of those territories and the preferential access given to certain products exported from the occupied territories, are as powerful for what they propose as they are in their condemnation of the inadequacies of the Israeli military authority and therefore indirectly of the Israeli government itself which is responsible for the administration of the occupied territories.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is essentially a national struggle between two peoples. Discursive representations strengthening one group, were perceived to be at the cost of the other, so that an acknowledgement of Palestinian nationhood threatened to de-legitimise the Zionist enterprise in Israel.⁹⁵ This zero-sum component of the conflict is an important one, for it decelerated any movement towards a peaceful settlement, since national existence was perceived as being threatened by the ‘other’. A symbol of the national Palestinian movement, the PLO was discursively de-legitimised particularly by the United States as a way of suppressing a powerful counter-discourse. Discursive fragmentation of the Palestinians would undermine the claims of the PLO to represent a unified Palestinian people. Within this frame, the importance of the term ‘refugees’ becomes apparent suggesting a ‘displaced people’ rather than displaced Palestinians belonging to a Palestinian nation. Dissenting discourses which sought to challenge the hegemonic discourse were frequently initiated by internal parties. External parties responded to these counter-discourses either reinforcing them or challenging them. This mutually constitutive interplay between agency and structure makes it analytically difficult to always attribute authorship, for the process is an essentially interactive one.

⁹³ The Brussels European Declaration, 23 February 1987, Lukacs, *ibid.*, p. 27

⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁵ ‘What is the Arab-Israeli conflict? It is the competition between two national movements for sovereignty on one land.’ Arrival statement made by Shultz in Cairo, published under ‘Arrival Statements by Secretary of State George Shultz During his Visit to the Middle East, Cairo, 3 June, 1988; Amman, 4 June 1988; Tel Aviv, 5 June 1988’, Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 106

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to illustrate the way in which various external parties have impinged upon the construction of the five core themes constituting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict at various times between 1948-87. The main external actors during this period were the United Nations, the United States and the European Union. Using a discourse analytic framework, analysis of key moments of change can be traced to narratives articulated by external parties. This supports the claim that the intervention of external parties had a decisive impact on the construction of the conflict, on what was on the agenda, on who the participants were to any mediation attempt, and finally on what sort of outcome could be sought, given the constraints.

The United Nations, as was illustrated in this chapter, did much to define the Palestinians solely as refugees, overtaking and negating previous UN discourses which recognised the Palestinian people as a nation with a right to self-determination, as illustrated in the November 1947 Partition Plan. The United Nations remained the main external party which impinged upon the narrative construction of the conflict until after the 1973 war, which marked the beginning of a new phase, with the United States becoming the main external party. Analysis of American influences on the narrative construction of the conflict reveals the intertwining of the domestic and the international. Between 1969-73, as we saw earlier in this chapter, Henry Kissinger's struggle to wrest control of foreign policy away from Secretary of State Rogers and the State Department to himself as National Security Advisor, impinged upon discourses around the conflict, particularly on the interpretation of 'land for peace'. Kissinger reinterpreted this to mean partial, not complete withdrawal from the occupied territories. Carter's direct intervention in the mediation process of the conflict came just months after he was elected President in 1977 and offers a second example illustrating the overlap of the domestic and the international. Carter began by overtly supporting the Palestinian people's right to a homeland. However, after he became aware of the strength of the Israeli lobby in the United States, he quickly changed his line. As Neff notes, when 'he understood fully the great power of the Israeli lobby' he negated earlier articulations favouring Palestinian rights to a homeland, declaring, 'We do not and never

have favoured an independent Palestinian nation.⁹⁶ This illustrates the idea of concentric, outwardly expanding circles, alluded to in chapter two, referring to the structures of constraint and enablement constituted by narratives. As I quoted Edward Said earlier in this chapter,

‘Facts do not at all speak for themselves but require a socially acceptable narrative to absorb, sustain, and circulate them.’⁹⁷

What Poirier refers to as an ‘enabling vocabulary’ was provided by multiple actors, both internal and external.⁹⁸ The PLO did much to challenge the representation of the Palestinians as refugees. It did this through various texts, such as the response to UNSCR 242, and the twelfth PNC statement of 1974 calling for a democratic Palestinian state. These texts were in turn built on by the Arab League in the Rabat declaration of 1974 recognising the PLO as the ‘sole representative of the Palestinian people’ and UN resolution 3236 of November 1974 which reinforced this interpretation of the PLO. This points to a gradual, interactive, inter-textual and highly political process underpinning narrative change in the mediation process, impinged upon by multiple actors, both internal and external.

The idea of discursive tramlines which I introduced in chapter two refers to the setting of interpretations around the conflict which prove difficult to change. During the 1970’s and 1980’s, the United Nations and the European Union did much to challenge the hegemonic discourse, articulating Palestinian rights, the PLO as leader of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination. The structures set up by the UN Security Council in resolution 242 of 1967 however, proved powerful and constraining. Significantly, discourses around the conflict did change through a gradual process, introducing an enabling vocabulary recognising a Palestinian people and its political rights. Carter’s intervention in the conflict constituted a discursive watershed. Challenging discourses to the dominant narrative portraying the Palestinian as refugees, articulated by

⁹⁶ *New York Times*, 10 March 1978. Quoted in Neff D., chapter five, ‘Palestinians’, *Fallen Pillars*, op. cit., p. 118. Carter changed his line within one year. In May 1977 he spoke of a Palestinian homeland, whereas by March 1978, Carter was against the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

⁹⁷ Said, ‘Permission to Narrate’, op. cit., p. 254

⁹⁸ Poirier R., ‘Watching the Evening News: The Chancellor Incident’, *Raritan 2:2* (Fall 1982), p. 8. Quoted in Said, ‘Permission to Narrate’, op. cit., p. 256

the United Nations and the European Union after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war were strengthened by Carter, in his powerful position as president of the United States, when he spoke of 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people'. Carter, Begin and Sadat were also enabled and constrained by structures erected in UNSCR 242, tracing the occupied territories as 'non-Israeli'. In the Camp David accords, the occupied territories are once again isolated, but this time, they are identified as Palestinian territories. The intervention of the European Union and the United Nations no doubt played an important role in providing an 'enabling vocabulary' which allowed such a linkage by 1978.

Another narrative shift takes place 1980-87. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 sees the reconfiguration of patterns that were traced in the pre-1948 period. What had begun as a Palestinian-Jewish inter-communal confrontation, became an inter-state Arab-Israeli conflict between 1948-1982. However, Israel's pursuit of the PLO into Lebanon in 1982 redefines the salient features of the conflict as a confrontation between the Jews and Palestinians in their dispute over the land of Mandate Palestine. The Israeli invasion of a neighbouring sovereign state had an impact on the discourse articulating Israeli security needs. The destruction of the Lebanese capital Beirut challenged the image of Israel being threatened by its Arab neighbours. The Sabra and Shatila camp massacres arguably for the first time, put Palestinian, not Israeli security concerns onto the international agenda. This shows that not only external, but also internal parties impinge on discourses defining the conflict. As we saw in this chapter, the environment in 1982 still constrained critical reporting of Israel, but the climate was changing slowly and by 1987 and the outbreak of the intifada, Israel's image as aggressor, first shown to a Western audience during the 1982 war, would be reinforced in future years as we shall see in the following chapters.

Study of changing discourses between 1948-87 reveals the way in which external party interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict impacted on discourses around the conflict, defining who the protagonists were and on what sort of outcome could be sought. The United Nations did much to construct the Palestinian as refugees. It did this through General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948 and Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. It

also did this through the creation of UNRWA in 1950 and Trygve Lie's removal of the Palestine Question off the General Assembly agenda. The latter two interventions illustrate that there are subtle ways in which discourses are impacted upon which would not be recognised by conventional analyses of the mediation process. The struggle for the Palestinians was to reverse that interpretation and replace it with international recognition of a Palestinian people and its right to self-determination. Assessment of the mediation process also reveals the importance of authority. Powerful states and organisations such as the United States, the United Nations and the European Union had to articulate narratives and in so doing 'lift' them into the international narrative arena, providing a conduit to secure their impact on the hegemonic discourse. This interplay of internal and external discourses can be seen throughout the 1970's and 1980's with the United Nations and the European Union gradually reinforcing the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and jointly with the United States asserting Palestinian rights to self-determination. The parameters of a possible outcome to the conflict were set in UNSCR 242 demarcating the occupied territories as 'apart' from Israel and calling for Israel's withdrawal from those territories. This example illustrates that external parties are not neutral or 'outside' the conflict, but are very much part of it, contributing to its construction. The following chapters look at the mediation process between 1987-93 and provide further examples which reveal the constitutive role of external parties in changing discourses around the conflict.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Mediation Process 1987-93: The Role of External Parties and the Evolution of Symbols into New Discursive Patterns

Introduction

Analysis of the mediation process in this chapter reveals a similar pattern to that traced in chapters three and four, whereby external parties play an active transformative function in the process of constructing and reconstructing the conflict. 1987 and 1993 are defining moments in changing discourses around the conflict. The Palestinian uprising or intifada began in December 1987 and galvanised external party responses. A discursive shift takes place around the core themes to the conflict in the Declaration of Principles document of 1993. In this document, the conflict is interpreted as an Israeli-Palestinian confrontation in which the Palestinian people are seeking the right to self-determination. Israeli security concerns are reconstructed as joint Palestinian-Israeli security concerns reflecting the way in which a salient feature of the conflict, a zero-sum component, is now overlaid by a positive-sum construct. A chronological assessment of watersheds in the mediation process reveals a highly interactive and political process. It also reveals the tight interweaving of internal and external inputs which jointly constitute the peacemaking process.

Between 1987-93, the Palestinians of the occupied territories were the main internal party that challenged the hegemonic discourse which constructed the outcome to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict along the lines of the Camp David accords, Palestinian autonomy within the occupied territories. During this period, Israel reacted by attempting to quash a dissenting narrative which sought to secure Palestinian rights to self-determination in the occupied territories. The intifada, as we shall see in this chapter, galvanised interventions by external parties who responded to issues as they emerged. The external parties who

intervened in the conflict during this period, either transforming representations of the conflict or reinforcing them, were the United States, the United Nations, Jordan, the European Union and Norway. This chapter highlights the complex interaction between internal and external influences on the conflict, making it analytically difficult to attribute differential influence on the construction of the five main discursive tramlines constructing the conflict. Analysis of changing discourses during this period, as in chapters three and four, shows mediation to be located within and contingent upon certain discourses which enable or constrain the peacemaking process.

It is not possible to identify every single external party intervention that had an impact on changing discourses around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict between 1987-93. Only the main interventions will be assessed in this chapter. These include the Shultz initiative which began in response to the Palestinian uprising in 1988, Shultz's Wye Plantation speech of September 1988, the intervention of five American Jews in November 1988, the United States' role in the International Middle East Peace Conference of October 1991 and finally Norway's role in the secret Oslo Channel negotiations which led to the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993.

Palestinian Popular Resistance against the Dominant Discourse

The Palestinian uprising of December 1987 was the first sustained and protracted rebellion by the Palestine Arabs on the contested territory since the Palestinian rebellion of 1936-9 outlined in chapter three. This spontaneous, popular rebellion was an expression of resistance against the constricting surrounding social systems constructing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The intifada was also an expression of Palestinian frustration with and resistance against Israeli military rule in the occupied territories. The act of rebellion by Palestinian men, women and children asserted a distinct Palestinian identity inside the territories. This was a Palestinian act of resistance which did not include any other Arab states. The Palestinians were speaking for themselves, expressing a distinct Palestinian identity and a desire for self-determination. Armed Israeli soldiers tried and failed to quell the rebellion. Images of them trying to, turned the conflict as it was constructed by the

hegemonic discourse, on its head. Not Israeli but Palestinian security needs were highlighted as the Palestinians of the occupied territories were filmed being beaten or shot by Israeli soldiers for resisting Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Also significant was the core theme of Jewish security needs being contingent on a continued Israeli military presence in the occupied territories. As images of Israeli soldiers being taken away on stretchers were beamed across the world, another core discursive tramline to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was challenged by an internal party.

The protracted nature of the Palestinian uprising was a persistent expression of rebellion against the constraints of the hegemonic discourse in place at that time which negated a Palestinian identity and its claims to self-determination. The intifada illustrates that internal parties have a transformative capacity, located within a complex surrounding network of constraints and enablements. Before the intifada, the word 'Palestinian' as interpreted by the hegemonic discourse, was either associated with refugees or terrorists. The wider discursive context sanctioned these discourses and rendered other dissident discourses invisible. Palestinian identity, arguably until December 1987, although acknowledged by the United Nations and the European Union was still buried beneath a terrorist tag. The intifada redefined the Palestinians, not only for the international community, but significantly also for some Jews. The intifada powerfully portrayed the Palestinians of the occupied territories not as terrorists, but as a people struggling to secure its rights to self-determination, not in the whole of Israel, but in the occupied territories. This act of Palestinian rebellion also galvanised a re-definition of Jewish security needs linking them to the fulfilment of Palestinian self-determination. In so doing, it also strengthened a positive-sum construct whereby the fulfilment of Israeli security and identity needs were related to the fulfilment of Palestinian security and identity needs. In January 1988, a statement made significantly by Jewish forces for peace in the United States, linked Israeli security to Palestinian self-determination, stating,

‘Palestinian self-determination and Israeli security are inextricably bound to one another.’¹

The intifada’s success was in impinging on the surrounding discursive continuities, creating a new and powerful context which enabled, what had previously been constrained, the convention of an international peace conference to discuss the Palestinian issue. The intertwined nature of internal and external discourses is illustrated in analysis of this episode. The intifada represented a counter-discourse to the dominant narrative. However, it was the crucial response of external parties, the United Nations, the European Union and the United States, which acted as a conduit through which the internal discourse was able to have a lasting impact on the surrounding discursive continuities.

Before December 1987, the hegemonic narrative had constructed the Palestinians of the occupied territories as part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The prevailing discourse up to 1987 had been the Jordanian option. Constructed by Israel and the United States as the only viable political solution to the Palestinian issue through the joining of the Palestinians of the territories with those resident in Jordan through federation or confederation, the Jordanian option implicitly acknowledged the existence of a distinct Palestinian identity. In essence, the Jordanian option was underpinned by the demographic composition of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Since over half the Jordanian population is made up of Palestinians, this statistic was used by Israel and the United States, as a discursive building block to contend that the Palestinians of the occupied territories already had a state.

‘In the region of the Palestine mandate, you have a Palestinian-Arab state which is called Jordan and you have Israel.’²

¹ Statement released by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, War Resister’s League and the Jewish Peace Fellowship, published under the title ‘Fellowship of Reconciliation, ‘Breaking the Cycle of Violence’, Nyack, New York, 13 January 1988’, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 17, No. 3, Spring 1988), p. 173

² Interview with James Colbert, Director of Information for JINSA, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, 16 May 1997, Washington DC

This was the argument used by successive Likud and Labour governments. The Jordanian option, as late as 1982, formed a key component of the Reagan peace plan, formulated following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. However, by the Summer of 1988 when the Palestinians were still rebelling against Israeli military rule in the occupied territories, Shultz's interpretation of the Jordanian option was broader, introducing the possibility of a confederation between a Palestinian entity in the occupied territories, confederated with Jordan and possibly also with Israel.

'It just does not make any sense to me to think there could be a workable state that was like a country on the West Bank and Gaza. I think it's much more workable to think of a grouping of people that has a relationship, a confederation or an attachment to another state or states.'³

The protracted nature of the intifada was challenging set interpretations or constructions of two central themes around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, calling for Western, and primarily US recognition of a Palestinian identity and Palestinian rights to self-determination. Jordan's momentous decision to relinquish its legal claim to the West Bank of the Jordan river at the end of July 1988 however, signalled 'the death knell of the Jordan option' for all intents and purposes.⁴ Once again, an external party, Jordan responded to the intifada which had begun seven months earlier. The intifada had illustrated to King Hussein of Jordan a Palestinian identity separate from a Jordanian identity. The threat of a Palestinian overthrow of Hashemite rule in Jordan had always been present, most notably in September 1970 when King Hussein finally expelled the Palestinians from Amman. Through disengagement, Jordan in effect distanced itself from the intifada and the emphasis was once again placed on the clash of two opposing nationalisms, Palestinian and Jewish.⁵ Once King Hussein of Jordan withdrew the Hashemite Kingdom's claim to the West Bank, a political vacuum was created which had to be filled. An interval of just over three months was needed for the PLO to take steps which would respond to the Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank. The Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers in November 1988

³ The Guardian, 7 June 1988

⁴ Interview with William Quandt, 23 May 1997, Washington DC

⁵ Cody E. and Ottaway D.B., 'A Land Shultz Did Not See', International Herald Tribune, 2 March 1988

produced two documents, the Palestinian Declaration of Independence and a Political Communiqué.⁶ The United States, the United Nations and the European Union intervened in various ways in the mediation process of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By impinging on political continuities surrounding the conflict, they indirectly impinged upon Israel's actions, limiting its options vis-à-vis the Palestinian issue.

Gathering Momentum: International Legitimation of the PLO and its right to self-determination in the Occupied Territories

An American peace initiative in the Middle East following the outbreak of the intifada saw Secretary of State George Shultz trying to reassert discourses first articulated in the Camp David accords of 1978 which gave Palestinians in the occupied territories limited autonomy through self-government.⁷ The intifada however, contributed to the failure of this proposal, as a stronger linkage, exhibited through the discourse of rebellion, distinguished the Palestinians as a separate and independent people. Shultz shuttled backwards and forwards between the United States and various Middle Eastern capitals in an attempt to stop the Palestinian uprising and find a way of reaching an Israeli-Arab settlement.⁸ He failed. Shamir was Israeli Prime Minister as part of the National Unity government with Shimon Peres, as Foreign Minister. As a strong adherent of the principle of a Greater Israel which joined the West Bank to Israel, Shamir side-stepped the proposals put forward by Shultz which were based on the 'land for peace' formula.⁹ Fearing international pressure on Israel which would urge it to relinquish its hold on the occupied territories, Shamir rejected Shultz's proposals for an international conference.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Shultz tried to assuage the Palestinians of the occupied territories by repackaging old interpretations of the core themes to the conflict. However, this proved unacceptable to a

⁶ Texts of both documents can be found in Lukacs Y. (ed.), *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, a documentary record 1967-1990*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 411-420

⁷ This re-articulation of a past discourse was represented in Shultz's plan, outlined in 'Letter from Secretary of State George Shultz to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, 4 March 1988', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 103

⁸ White M., 'US officials believe Israel troubles could speed up peace talks', *The Guardian*, 2 February 1988. See also Murray I. 'US sets breakneck pace for peace talks', *The Times*, 11 February 1988

⁹ Whitley A., 'Shamir rejects US peace move for Palestinians', *Financial Times*, 15 February 1988

¹⁰ Whitley, A., 'Shultz alters strategy at start of third peace visit to Middle East', *Financial Times*, 5 April 1988

people who were rebelling against the constraints imposed upon them by those very interpretations.

The period between December 1987 and December 1988 was crucial to changing discourses around the core themes constructing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Important discursive foundation stones were set in place during this time, upon which the Declaration of Principles document would be erected in September 1993. These discursive building blocks include, Shultz's Wye Plantation speech which advocated confederation between Israel and a Palestinian entity in the occupied territories and recognised the political rights of the Palestinian people.¹¹ The US Middle East desk commissioned the Foreign Affairs journal to conduct a study assessing possible ways in which to overcome the highly problematic issue of sovereignty in the occupied territories. The centrality of the issue of 'sovereignty' to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was highlighted by the powerful discourse of the intifada which began in December 1987. The central problem for the United States government was how to bypass terms which impeded progress and find new symbols which would be politically acceptable to both internal parties, the Israelis and the Palestinians. As a senior US diplomat, serving on the Middle East desk commented,

'The question of final status, whether it was a state or something else, was very much with us throughout and we spent a lot of time thinking of alternatives to a state. We encouraged other people to think about it. If you go back to the Foreign Affairs journal, in around 1988-89, culminating a project that they did to what they called 'deconstruct' final status terminology and come up with alternative ways of having people live a sovereign existence, without calling it a state. The crossover is if you read George Shultz's speech that he gave in September 1988, right before he left office. You will see terminology in there that derives from the Foreign Affairs article. We were stimulating a project in order to see whether there were alternatives to a straight line 'state' approach.'¹²

¹¹ 'Address by Secretary of State George Shultz Before the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 16 September 1988' (commonly referred to as the Wye Plantation speech), Lukacs, op. cit., p. 111

¹² Interview with a senior US policymaker at the State Department Middle East desk who requested anonymity, 20 May 1997, Washington DC

Writing for the Foreign Affairs journal, Gottlieb's input into the peacemaking process was in 'decoupling' the PLO from the concept of Palestinian sovereignty in the occupied territories. By side-stepping the issue of sovereignty, official recognition of the PLO would no longer constitute the same kind of threat to Israel. An article by Gottlieb published in the autumn of 1989, after Shultz had given his speech, identified certain 'buzz words' which were unacceptable to the internal parties for what they implied. Gottlieb notes that,

'Throughout the process, some concepts and phrases have become symbols, code words and battle cries. The idea of 'state' for the Palestinians, the notion of 'withdrawal', the concept of 'sovereignty' and 'self-determination' and the formula 'land for peace' all belong to the family of verbal expressions; buzz words that must be de-demonised and de-mystified or simply side-stepped. Coalitions and alliances have formed around these concepts which impede the fluidity of discourse on the future of the territories. But the considerable symbolic potency of some of the more difficult concepts-such as sovereignty can be defused. This can be achieved by a careful 'deconstruction' into their discrete components.'¹³

Since economic sustainability precluded the possibility of an independent state in the occupied territories, Gottlieb proposed a half-way measure which incorporated limited independence with inter-dependency between Israel and the occupied territories through economic joint ventures. This mechanism which he called 'association through separation' attempts to reconcile the desires of both camps, whilst justifying the limitations of the proposals by drawing on economic imperatives.¹⁴ Secretary of State Shultz's September 1988 speech incorporated narratives articulated by Gottlieb in the Foreign Affairs journal. Shultz recognised that, 'sovereignty cannot be defined in absolute terms. Today, borders are porous. Openness is required for the free movement of ideas, people and goods. There

¹³ Gottlieb G., 'Israel and the Palestinians', *Foreign Affairs*, (Vol. 68, No. 4, Fall 1989), p. 112

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 121

will need to be a border demarcation, but not a wall established between peoples.’¹⁵ This echoed Gottlieb’s interpretation, where he states, ‘the term ‘sovereignty’ is a redundant notion, one that serves no function in the solution of this conflict, a notion that in truth is best side-stepped.’¹⁶ This crucially removes the obstacle which many Jews in Israel and the United States, believed threatened Israel, namely, Palestinian sovereignty or self-determination. With Gottlieb’s help, Shultz was able to acknowledge the PLO and draw it into official negotiations. He did this in the Wye Plantation speech where he articulates ‘Palestinian political rights’.¹⁷ A changed environment empowered and strengthened a discourse calling for Palestinian self-government. US narratives before 1987 advocated confederation implicitly, through opposing the creation of an *independent* Palestinian state in the occupied territories.¹⁸ This set phrase or code word, for the advocacy of confederation, the preferred US alternative to the resolution of the conflict, was also articulated in the Shultz speech.

‘The United States cannot accept ‘self-determination’ when it is a code-word for an independent Palestinian state---.’¹⁹

If we trace gradual change in the discursive environment, it seems that challenging or dissenting discourses open the floodgates to other similar discourses which jointly empower the new symbols, gradually eroding the old hegemonic discourse and replacing it with a new one. The new discursive environment constituted by political processes enabled the Shultz Wye speech. As a senior US policymaker for the Middle East acknowledged,

‘Good policy was going to have inputs from all over the place at all times. That is good policy. In practical terms, there are twelve to fourteen hours in the working day

¹⁵ ‘Speech and Question and Answer Session, the Honourable George P. Shultz, Secretary of State before the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Wye Plantation, Maryland, September 16, 1988’, published by the Department of State Press, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, USA. PR No. 199, p. 4. This speech is also published under the heading, ‘Address by Secretary of States Shultz Before the Washington Institute for Near East Policy’, Lukacs, op. cit., pp. 109-115

¹⁶ Gottlieb, op. cit., p. 119

¹⁷ ‘Address by Secretary of State George Shultz Before the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 16 September 1988’ (commonly referred to as the Wye Plantation speech), Lukacs, op. cit., p. 111

¹⁸ ‘The Reagan Peace Plan - US Involvement in Mideast Peace Effort, ‘A Moral Imperative’. President Ronald Reagan, 1 September 1982’, Lukacs, op. cit., p. 76

and you spend a large chunk of it with other people who you are working with. So when you are working in Washington on the peace process, you are working within the context of a team. You spend all of your time with these six or seven people and then maybe another fifteen or twenty who are in jobs *on the periphery but feeding in*. Part of what gets fed in are ideas, thoughts, initiatives from outside. The outside includes obviously the parties themselves, but also academia, journals --- and yes if you pick up an idea, you may never give it a footnote, you don't have to in government. You just steal it. *You just assimilate it and as ideas strike you, they become part of the landscape.*²⁰ (italics added for emphasis)

This quotation illustrates the central idea of intersecting discourses put forth in this thesis. A senior policymaker acknowledges the way in which US Middle East policy is the bi-product of the intersection of a plethora of discourses, stemming from diverse sources. This reflects the metaphor introduced in chapter two, of concentric circles, where waves from one circle feed into other circles. The membership of any one discourse, to other existing discourses is indicated in the above use of the terms 'steal' and 'assimilate', so that discourses evolve, intersect and mutate, jointly forming a constantly reinvented symbolic order which impinges upon the peacemaking discourse situated within it. An enabling environment was already in place at the time Gottlieb wrote his article which fed into the Shultz speech of September 1988. In February and March of that year, two senior Israeli politicians were already signalling a tripartite resolution between Israel, Jordan and a Palestinian entity. In February 1988, significantly two months into the intifada and seven months before the Wye speech, a recently retired Israeli Brigadier General who had served as head of the Civil Administration for the West Bank for two years, put forward the option of confederation between a Palestinian entity and Jordan.

“But I think that there is a solution’ short of an independent Palestinian Arab state which would ‘threaten Jordan more than [it would] Israel.’ A West Bank and Gaza

¹⁹ Shultz's Wye Plantation speech, op. cit., p. 7

²⁰ Interview with US policymaker who requested anonymity, 20 May 1997, Washington DC

Strip state would not be viable economically, he said. But a confederation of the territories with Jordan might accommodate the needs of all three parties.’²¹

Illustrating the momentum generated by changing discourses, reminiscent of Naomi Chazan’s analysis of the changed environment within Israel following the Camp David accords, outlined in chapter four, and also reminiscent of the metaphor of outwardly expanding circles evoked in chapter two, the intifada highlighted the need for Palestinian self-determination. The problem for Israel became one of how to reconcile Palestinian self-determination with Israeli security needs, the same question posed by the Reagan administration in the September 1982 peace plan alluded to in chapter four. The solution proposed by the Brigadier General is security achieved through interdependency, reflecting the model of the European Union. Just one month later, a secret memo drafted by the Israeli Labour Party for the PLO reinforced the narrative of confederation. It stated,

‘Israel announces its recognition of the Palestinian peoples’ right to establish an independent political framework in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank that will be within a political and economic confederation with Israel and Jordan.---The Palestinian confederation in the [West] Bank and the [Gaza] Strip will be like a state.-
--Israel decides to transfer sovereignty over the Gaza Strip to the PLO.’²²

The intifada was still ongoing at this time. As a challenging discourse to the hegemonic narrative which negated the existence of a Palestinian national identity, the Palestinian uprising, representing a sustained challenge to the dominant discourse, weakened it and empowered other dissenting discourses. The quotations above suggest that there occurred a gradual strengthening of the discourse advocating confederation as the best means of ensuring Israel’s security which was now linked to the fulfilment of Palestinian self-determination. Confederation would ensure Palestinian self-government and

²¹ Brigadier General Sneh is quoted in the *Near East Report*, in an article entitled ‘A Well-Informed Source’, 8 February 1988, p. 24

²² ‘Labour Party ‘Memorandum of Understanding’, sent to the PLO, Kuwait, 6 March 1988’, secret memorandum sent to the PLO by the Labour Party headed by Peres containing Labour’s visualisation of a settlement of the Palestinian question and asking for the PLO’s approval of this. Prepared by Arye Hess, member of the Labour Party’s Political Council and head of the Labour Party’s confederation group.’ *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 17, No. 4, Summer 1988), pp. 201-2

remove Israeli administration of the occupied territories which had sparked the large scale Palestinian rebellion. Confederation would also ensure an asymmetrical inter-dependency, between Israel and the Palestinian entity, privileging Israel and ensuring that through economic dominance, the Palestinian political structures for self-administration could also be influenced and even controlled.²³ However, a strong counter-discourse challenging confederation was being articulated, particularly by certain elements of the Jewish lobby in the United States. In May 1988, Thomas Dine, Executive Director of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), expressed his opposition to confederation, arguing that the Palestinians would never be content with part of Mandate Palestine, but would strive to eliminate Israel. He asserts,

‘Insofar as there are defined political demands [to the uprising], they boil down to two core objectives: returning the Palestinian refugees to the cities and villages in Israel from which they departed in 1948---and the immediate creation of a Palestinian state under the control of the PLO with Jerusalem as its capital. These are not demands that any realistic person would expect Israel to meet, because they mean, in plain language, the elimination of the Jewish state---.’²⁴

This view was reiterated in a Near East Report editorial.

‘Right now, Palestinian self-determination means the negation of Jewish sovereignty, the destruction of the inalienable rights of the Jewish people to self-determination and return. Until it comes to mean something different, as defined by the Arabs themselves, the [US] Administration should scotch this particular rumour before it goes any further.’²⁵

²³ Graham Usher assesses how Israel is replacing political dominance to ensure Palestinian subjugation with economic policies which aim to integrate the Palestinian and Israeli economies to create and maintain Palestinian dependency. See ‘Palestine: The Economic Fist in the Political Glove’, *Race and Class*, (Vol. 36, No. 1, July-Sept. 1994), p. 73

²⁴ Thomas Dine is quoted in ‘Dine: Unity to Meet Challenges’, *Near East Report*, 23 May 1988, p. 83

²⁵ ‘No games with self-determination’, editorial of the *Near East Report*, 6 June 1988, p. 93

This is exactly what happened in December 1988 when Yasser Arafat, aided by five American Jews, articulated his acceptance of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, renunciation of violence and Israel's right to exist. This example highlights the interacting nature of changing discourses not only between internal and external parties, but between internal parties themselves if we consider the Jewish lobby in Washington and the group of five American Jews who met Arafat in Sweden as internal parties. It is to that episode that we now turn.

Internal or External Party? Five American Jews Mediating a Peacemaking Discourse

As we saw above, Shultz, at the end of his period in office in September 1988, responding to the multiple discourses alluded to earlier in this chapter, was able to reframe the PLO within a political context of a tripartite confederation between Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. Through a gradual process of changing discourses, the PLO was no longer synonymous with Palestinian sovereignty in the whole of Israel, but was now, in large part due to the intifada, associated with political independence in the occupied territories. In order to allay Israeli suspicions and fears of the PLO, Arafat had to articulate his acquiescence to such a political solution. This would be communicated through PLO acceptance of UN resolutions 242 and 338, explicit acknowledgement of Israel's right to exist in the Middle East and a pledge to renounce terrorism. In an address to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, 13 September 1988, Arafat had for the first time, implicitly acknowledged the existence of Israel through accepting the tenets of all UN Resolutions. He stated,

'We endorse the Charter of the United Nations Organisation and all its resolutions including 242 and 338. International legitimacy is an indivisible whole and no one can choose to accept only what suits him and discard what does not.'²⁶

In addition, Arafat made an important attempt to deliver the second commitment required of him, by the United States, if the PLO was to be involved in official negotiations,

that is the renunciation of terrorism. In the Strasbourg speech, Arafat distinguished between, the fight against foreign occupation in the occupied territories, against the backdrop of the continuing intifada in those territories, and terrorism. He stated,

‘As a national liberation movement which took up arms against the oppression and illegitimate terrorism of the occupier, we have invariably, and in the clearest and strongest of terms, denounced terrorism in all its forms and from whatever source-be it by individuals, groups, or states.’ In a later passage, he adds, ‘We also reaffirm that we cling to our right to resist the occupation until Israel pulls out from our occupied territories and our Palestinian people achieve their national independence in their sovereign state---.’²⁷

This distinction made by Arafat between terrorism and the struggle for liberation in the occupied territories fuelled a virulent counter-discourse articulated by certain elements of the Jewish lobby in the United States. The editorial of the Near East Report proclaimed,

‘Accepting 242 and 338 along with Palestinian Arab claims to self-determination, a state on *at least* the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and other ‘legitimate rights’ such as repatriation inside the pre-1967 Israel, miserably fails to meet the minimum US and Israeli requirements. After more than four decades of anti-Israel hostility and bloodshed, nothing short of unequivocal recognition of Israel by the PLO and the many Arab countries still technically at war with Israel will do.’ (italics in original)²⁸

Two months later in November 1988, the Algiers statement communicating the decisions reached by the PNC, reiterated the formulations articulated in Strasbourg, but significantly declared an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories, with its capital in Jerusalem.²⁹ Importantly, Arafat had succeeded in getting the backing of the radical left wing, Habash’s PFLP and Hawatmeh’s DFLP, the second and third largest

²⁶ ‘Address of Yasser Arafat to the European Parliament, Strasbourg, 13 September, 1988’, Lukacs, op. cit., p. 407

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 410

²⁸ ‘Read Between the Lines’, editorial of the *Near East Report*, 19 September 1988

groups of the eight factions which constituted the PLO.³⁰ However, the PLO had still not explicitly recognised Israel's right to exist and reiterated its right to 'resist foreign occupation and---to struggle for independence.'³¹ Arafat had still not fulfilled US requirements for specific formulations for the renunciation of violence against civilian and military targets, which would enable direct US-PLO dialogue. In order to impede the growth of the PLO discourse which, although conciliatory, did not quite reproduce formulations desired by the US, Arafat was denied a visa to enter the US and address the United Nations General Assembly. The US was still attempting to marginalise the PLO. As PLO spokesman Bassam Abu Sharif proclaimed,

'What Israel and the Reagan administration want, is not an opening to peace, but an opening to peace that excludes the PLO and therefore a peace that rules out the Palestinian national rights for which the PLO stands.'³²

It was at this crucial stage that a group of five American Jews from the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East, intervened in order to assist Arafat in finding formulations which would satisfy US requirements for beginning a US-PLO dialogue. The International Centre for Peace in the Middle East was founded by former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban in 1982. This group, led by the lawyer, Rita Hauser and a wealthy publisher, Stanley Sheinbaum, had been in contact with the PLO for many years. As a West Bank doctor involved in the peacemaking process declared, 'this group had an interesting role in modifying the language. They were the ones trying to mediate and come up with proposals for Arafat to declare.'³³ Would this group be considered an internal party, affiliated to the PLO, because it shares the same vision of an eventual solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the PLO or is it external because its members are American or is it an internal party because its members are Jewish? This example reveals the limitations represented by the internal/external dichotomy. There are groupings which defy such

²⁹ 'The Palestinian Declaration of Independence, Algiers, 15 November 1988', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 412-3

³⁰ Wallach J. & Wallach J., 'Shultz's Secret Diplomacy', *Arafat, in the Eyes of the Beholder*, (London, Heinemann, 1990), p. 432

³¹ 'Palestine National Council, Political Communiqué, Algiers, 15 November 1988', Lukacs, op. cit., p. 420

³² Bassam Abu Sharif, 'A Message from the PLO: Give Peace a Visa', London 28 November 1988, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 18, No. 3, Spring 1989), p. 177

categorisation for both labels can be used to describe them, emphasising the multiple identities agencies have. It was Swedish Foreign Minister Sten Andersson, who had recognised the power of the Jewish lobby in the United States and the importance of its support for the mediation process. Wallach and Wallach contend that,

‘Andersson told Shultz [10 April 1988] he had tried to persuade Arafat that his real constituency are the Jews, particularly Jewish Americans who constituted a powerful lobby. Why not meet with them and tell them of your willingness to accept Israel and forswear terrorism? That, the Swede went on, detailing his earlier conversation, would ‘change the attitudes in this country and open the way for a dialogue.’³⁴

Having obtained the go-ahead from Shultz, Andersson put his plan into action. Pierre Schori, the Swedish deputy foreign minister told Andersson he had a friend in Los Angeles, Stanley Scheinbaum. Contact was established in the Spring of 1988. However, the direct input of the Jewish group was requested by the PLO, through the intermediary of the Swedish foreign ministry, several days after the Algiers declaration, 15 November 1988.³⁵ Gathered in Stockholm, the five members of the Jewish group met with three members of the PLO, Khaled Hassan, the DFLP’s Yasser Abed Rabbo and the PLO ambassador to the Netherlands at the time, (currently ambassador to London), Afif Safieh. After working on a less ambiguous declaration of the Algiers statement, Andersson contacted Shultz in Washington and showed him the new formulation. Shultz then sent back a word for word statement of what Arafat was to declare with a typed script of the US official response that would follow enabling the opening of US-PLO dialogue.³⁶ With the continued mediation of the group of five, and minor amendments to Shultz’s text, Arafat, Shultz and Andersson agreed on a set text which Arafat would deliver before the United Nations Assembly in Geneva. However, Arafat did not repeat the text word for word as unknown to Andersson and Shultz, Arafat had come up against hostility, particularly from DFLP leader, Nayaf Hawatmeh during an Executive Committee meeting in Tunis.

³³ Interview with Dr. M. Barghouti, 29 May 1997, Washington DC

³⁴ Wallach & Wallach, ‘Shultz’s Secret Diplomacy’, op. cit., p. 425

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 433

³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 438-9

Hawatmeh had threatened Arafat, 'You can't simply read from an American script. If you do, I am going to denounce you as an American stooge.'³⁷ Arafat delivered the exact wording at a news conference in Geneva in mid-December 1988. He recognised,

'the right of all parties concerned in the Middle East conflict to exist in peace and security, including as I said, the State of Palestine, Israel and other neighbours, in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338.---we totally and categorically reject all forms of terrorism, including individual, group and state terrorism.'³⁸

The intervention of the group of five American Jews was significant on two levels. First in aiding the process whereby new, less ambiguous formulations regarding the PLO's acceptance of Israel and its renunciation of violence were articulated and secondly the direct intervention and mediation of American Jews, served to weaken an American Jewish counter-discourse which feared and criticised American official recognition of the PLO. The opening of US-PLO dialogue erected a powerful and constraining discourse which Israel could not ignore. As Fuller asserts,

'To talk to the PLO is to move a long way toward recognising the legitimacy of Palestinian aspirations for a state.---with the establishment of direct talks between the US and the PLO, Israel now has, whether it wants them or not, indirect negotiations with the PLO.'³⁹

The United States' recognition of the PLO and its struggle for self-determination, forced Israel to modify its discourse surrounding the Palestinians, illustrating the structures of constraint located in political processes surrounding actors. Whereas up to this crucial point of December 1988, Israeli official discourse as we saw in earlier chapters, had consistently denied the existence of a distinct Palestinian people, the change in US

³⁷ Quoted by Wallach & Wallach, *ibid.*, p. 450

³⁸ Yasser Arafat's Geneva Press Statement, 15 December, 1988', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 434

³⁹ The RAND Corporation's Report on the Palestine Question for the Office of the US Secretary of Defence. 'Summary and Conclusions', Santa Monica, California, August 1989. 55 page report. 'The West Bank of Israel: Point of no Return?'. Report written by Graham E. Fuller. Published in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 19, No. 2, Winter 1990), p. 164

discourses, joining international recognition of the PLO, weakened continued Israeli protestations to the contrary.

External Parties: Transforming a Challenging Discourse into a Hegemonic Narrative

One month after the outbreak of the intifada in the occupied territories, in January 1988, not the UN General Assembly, but significantly the UN Security Council passed a resolution which referred to the occupied territories as ‘Palestinian’.

‘The Security Council calls upon Israel to rescind the order to deport Palestinian civilians and to ensure the safe and immediate return to *the occupied Palestinian territories* of those already deported;’ (italics added for emphasis)⁴⁰

As Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), a Palestinian negotiator in the secret Oslo channel recognised,

‘The word ‘Palestine’ or ‘Palestinians’ was one of the harshest to Israeli ears---. And as long as Palestine was imagined to be a land without a people, then the word must be erased, and anyone connected with it must also be erased.’⁴¹

The relevance of the above UN discourse associating and legitimising a Palestinian presence in the occupied territories was further strengthened in September 1988, when UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar referring to the West Bank and Gaza stated,

‘These are occupied territories for me and everybody with the exception of course, of the Israeli government. We call them Palestinians and the land Palestine.’⁴²

The intifada, followed by Jordan’s disengagement from the West Bank, and then the Gulf War, challenged the hegemonic narrative and empowered dissident discourses. This

⁴⁰ ‘Security Council Resolution 608, 14 January, 1988’, Lukacs, op. cit., p. 32

⁴¹ Abbas M., *Through Secret Channels*, (Reading, Garnet Publishing, 1995), p. 89

⁴² UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar is quoted in ‘Which Palestine?’, *Near East Report*,

new environment enabled the articulation of further dissenting discourses and the gradual replacement of one hegemonic narrative with another. The repetition of the term Palestine as a synonym for the occupied territories gathered momentum and was reiterated once again, not in a UN General Assembly resolution, but in a Security Council resolution, signalling American endorsement of such a political outcome. The United Nations Security Council evidences the incrementality underpinning discursive change in the process which, by December 1988, crucially included Jerusalem as part of the Palestinian occupied territories, the first ever inclusion of its kind. The Resolution called for,

‘The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, ---.’⁴³

This was a crucial turning point for the Israeli government. The surrounding discursive continuities had become too powerful for it to continue to challenge them. Constrained by wider political processes, it had to finally officially acknowledge the existence of a Palestinian people with rights to self-determination, symbolised by the PLO. The May 1989 election proposals which ushered in the PLO into the occupied territories may be traced back to UN Resolutions which identified the occupied territories, including Jerusalem as ‘Palestinian’. This powerful discursive construct by the international community, backed by the United States, impinged upon and constrained Israeli discourses defining the Palestinians and the PLO. The Israeli lawyer, Joel Singer, who negotiated the Declaration of Principles document, identified this UN Security Council resolution and its decisive impact in changing Israeli official discourses around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁴⁴ The concept of confederation incorporates the UN discourse quoted above. Less than one month after the UN linkage of the Palestinians to the occupied territories, Shamir’s Chief of Staff Yosef Ben-Aharon articulated the possibility of a tripartite confederation,

19 September 1988, p. 158

⁴³ Resolution 43/176 - Question of Palestine - of the 43rd. session of the UN General Assembly on the Palestine Question - Geneva, December 1988, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 18, No. 3, Spring 1989), p. 174

⁴⁴ Interview with Joel Singer, 21 May 1997, Washington DC

‘a future confederal arrangement based on ties with an Arab party east of the Jordan River and west of the river that could be acceptable after a transition period of autonomy.’⁴⁵

A cornerstone of the Oslo accords was the principle of interlink whereby a limited period of autonomy would prepare the necessary structures for a final settlement, to be negotiated. Articulated officially in January 1989, this concept would mature over the next four years and reappear in the Declaration of Principles document of September 1993. Also relevant to the study of changing discourses is the input of the Israeli Left. The discursive strand emerging from the Likud quoted above, converges with an already existing discourse stemming from Mapam, the United Workers Party whose 1988 Party platform identified ‘an Israeli-Palestinian-Jordanian confederation’ as a possible solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁴⁶ The concept of a tripartite confederation gathered momentum in January and February 1989. At a news conference in Cairo held at the end of January, a Soviet representative stated, ‘one must speak of confederation with Israel, not with Jordan only’, whilst tacit PLO approval of such an outcome was voiced by Arafat during an interview.⁴⁷ When asked, ‘Everyone talks about a confederation with Jordan, would you consider a confederation with Israel?’, his response was ‘Why not? Look at the EEC. The youth of Europe are living peacefully together, not killing each other the way their fathers did.’⁴⁸ With the convergence of internal and external narratives articulating the possibility of a tripartite confederation, the necessary enabling discursive structures were in place. The stage was set for direct PLO-Israeli negotiations. The Shamir plan put forward 14 May 1989, brought the PLO into official negotiations. Shamir’s government proposed that,

‘In order to advance the political negotiation process leading to peace, Israel proposes free and democratic elections among the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of Judea,

⁴⁵ Eldar A. article published in the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*, 6 January 1989. Translated and quoted by Gottlieb G., ‘Israel and the Palestinians’, *Foreign Affairs*, (Vol. 68, No. 4, 1989), p. 114

⁴⁶ ‘The MAPAM Party Platform, 1988, [Excerpts]’, Lukacs, op. cit., p. 279

⁴⁷ Harif Y., article published in the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*, 27 January 1989. Translated and quoted by Gottlieb G., ‘Israel and the Palestinians’, *Foreign Affairs*, op. cit., p. 114

⁴⁸ Allman AD, ‘On the Road with Arafat’, *Vanity Fair*, February 1989, p. 180. Quoted by Gottlieb G., op. cit., p. 113

Samaria and the Gaza District---. In these elections, a representative will be chosen to conduct negotiations for a transitional period of self-rule.⁴⁹

Following the Shultz Wye Plantation speech, Arafat's December 1988 Geneva declaration and the United Nations Security Council resolution identifying the occupied territories as Palestinian, in May 1989 Shamir's Likud government was constrained by powerful surrounding discourses and finally acquiesced to PLO participation in official negotiations. Elections in the occupied territories would inevitably usher in the PLO. The crucial hurdle of mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO had been overcome during the decisive months of September to December 1988, as the above section has illustrated. The negotiations which followed, first in Madrid and Washington, then in Oslo were enabled by political processes that were in place by May 1989. It is also important to allude to the very significant changes which took place between 1991, when Israeli Prime Minister Shamir clashed with George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker over loan guarantees needed to finance the absorption of Soviet Jewish immigrants. Significantly for the study of changing discourses, for the first time ever, the United States made loan guarantees to Israel contingent on Israel not spending the money to build settlements in the occupied territories.⁵⁰ Political analysts were quick to note the significance of this linkage.

'Basically, the row is about the much more fundamental issue of peace and territory, and Israel's readiness to make concessions that will allow the drive for a peace conference to end in a real change in the Middle East, rather than a short-lived ceremony and a hollow victory of prestige for the US.'⁵¹

This episode can be seen to mark an important watershed in changing discourses. The magnitude of this discursive shift was noted by Shamir who called Israel's relations with the United States at that moment 'a bad dream', whilst Israeli Foreign Minister, David Levy echoed similar sentiments of disbelief, describing the new turn of events as

⁴⁹ 'A Peace Initiative by the Government of Israel, 14 May 1989', Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 237

⁵⁰ Neff D, chapter seven, 'Settlements', *Fallen Pillars*, (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), p. 160

⁵¹ Black I., 'Israel May Back Down', the *Guardian*, (16 September 1991)

‘Kafkaesque’ and ‘surreal’.⁵² Israel had asked the United States to provide \$400 million dollars in loan guarantees to construct housing for the estimated 100,000 Jewish immigrants Israel expected from the Soviet Union over the next three years.⁵³ In order not to jeopardise the peace process in the Middle East, the American administration wanted to ensure that the funds it would secure, would not be used to build settlements in the occupied territories. Testifying before the House Subcommittee on foreign aid appropriations, Secretary of State James Baker appeared to link immigrant housing aid to a freeze on settlements in the occupied territories. He stated,

‘It’s not unreasonable for us, I don’t think, to ask for some assurances that those funds [\$400 million dollars] will not be used to create new settlements or expand old settlements in the occupied territories.’⁵⁴

Baker’s remarks caused controversy in the United States and in Israel. Just two days later, President George Bush reiterated his administration’s position and supported Baker’s comments, stating,

‘The foreign policy of the US says we do not believe there should be new settlements in the West Bank or in East Jerusalem.’⁵⁵

Just days later, Shamir’s government collapsed following a Knesset vote of no confidence. The collapse of the government was largely due to the intifada’s domestic political effect on Israel. There was a deep lack of consensus between the two parties in dealing with the Palestinians and no doubt the worsening US-Israeli relationship brought about by Shamir’s defiance of Bush’s requests over loan guarantees, created further

⁵² Diehl J., ‘Shock for Israeli Leaders: US Firmness on Loan’, International Herald Tribune, (21 September 1991)

⁵³ 1 October 1990, Palestine Chronology section in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 19, No. 2, Winter 1990), p. 200

⁵⁴ Secretary of State James Baker remarks on US aid to Israel, Washington DC, 1 March 1990, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 19, No. 4, Summer 1990), p. 176

⁵⁵ George Bush, remarks on Jewish settlements and East Jerusalem, Palm Springs, California, 3 March 1990, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 19, No. 4, Summer 1990), p. 179

tensions between the two parties.⁵⁶ However, in June 1990, Shamir was able to form a new government, this time, without the participation of the Labour Alignment, making it 'the most right-wing government in Israel's history'.⁵⁷ This period marks a watershed in discourses around the representation of Israel. Israel was publicly being seen to be challenging the United States over loan guarantees.

'We do not accept any linkage, not with the problem of settlements and not with other parties.'⁵⁸

Shamir's refusal to comply with the US's requests to respect international law led to a shift in the way in which Israel was perceived by important sectors of the general public in the United States. Highly significant was the support offered to President Bush in the columns of both the New York Times and the Washington Post. On 18 September 1991, the New York Times wrote,

'Mr. Bush is serving America's best interests, and Israel's too, by making a successful peace conference his top Middle East priority---. Using US financial leverage to nudge along a promising peace process amounts neither to duplicity nor anti-Semitism. The president deserves credit, not abuse, for spending his political capital in the cause of the Mideast peace process.'⁵⁹

The Washington Post was more directly critical of Israel.

⁵⁶ Sosebee S.J, 'The Passing of Yitzhak Rabin, whose "Iron Fist" Fuelled the Intifada', *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, (Vol. 19, No. 5, October 1990), p. 9

⁵⁷ Shlaim A., 'Prelude to the Accord: Likud, Labour and the Palestinians', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 2, Winter 1994), pp. 5-6

⁵⁸ Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, 8 September 1991, quoted in 'Words to Remember Fifteen Days in September: The Battle of the \$10 Billion', *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, (Vol. 10, No. 5, Nov. 1991), p. 11

⁵⁹ The New York Times. (18 September 1991) quoted in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, (Vol. 10, No. 5, Nov. 1991), p. 12

‘Jerusalem---simply cannot win a fight with an American president over what most Americans would see as an aid package. Israel cannot play the role of the ingrate, spurning one offer of charity and demanding something else on its own terms.’⁶⁰

Public criticism of Israel was rare, and language of this sort was almost unprecedented in the American press. Its impact on American public opinion was presumably all the greater. 1990 also saw the United Nations Security Council condemn Israel for its treatment of Palestinians in the intifada. Bush and Baker expressed their displeasure with Israel on 12 October 1990, when the United States joined in a unanimous United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Israel for ‘acts of violence’ against Palestinians. Seventeen Palestinians were killed during a confrontation between Palestinians and the IDF at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem.⁶¹ This condemnation reinforced earlier criticism of Israel in its treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Two years earlier, in March 1988, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Richard Schifter testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on International Organisations and Human Rights, stated:

‘I want to state most emphatically that these acts [the brutalisation of prisoners and the random beating of civilians] must be condemned, and we have done exactly that. We have made representations at the highest level of the Israeli government, urging that these acts of brutality or indiscipline be brought to an end and be punished.’⁶²

Situated within a discourse analytic framework, UNSCR 672 may be seen to have strengthened and internationalised an already pre-existing American narrative criticising Israel for the excessive force it was using on the Palestinians of the occupied territories. As the section above has sought to illustrate, the period 1989-91 was an important watershed

⁶⁰ Cohen R., *The Washington Post*, (18 September 1991), quoted in *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, *ibid.*

⁶¹ UNSCR 672 quoted in the *New York Times*, (14 October, 1990). Quoted by Donald Neff, chapter seven, ‘Settlements’, *Fallen Pillars*, *op. cit.*, p. 160

⁶² Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Richard Schifter, Testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on International Organisations and Human Rights, ‘Recent Disturbances in the Territories Occupied by Israel’, Washington DC, 29 March 1988, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 17, No. 4, Summer 1988), p. 198

in narratives constructing Israel. A gradual narrative shift occurred, during the course of which Israel's representation within the hegemonic discourse changed. This change had already begun in 1982 after the Sabra and Shatila camp massacres, highlighted in chapter four. By 1988, this narrative change was accelerated and reinforced by Rabin's 'iron fist' policy in the occupied territories.⁶³ A salient feature of Israel's image, arguably up to 1988, was that of a vulnerable state, threatened by its Arab adversaries. By 1991 however, Israel's image was re-structured and was now one of an aggressor, condemned by the international community, including the United States for its treatment of the Palestinians. Also highly significant is the way in which the American broad sheet newspapers responded to Shamir's defiance of Bush's requests. From being the 'good guy', supporting American interests in the Middle East, Israel was suddenly seen as obstructing the cause of peace through its obduracy vis-a vis settlements in the occupied territories. This altered narrative context, narrowed Israel's room for political manoeuvre and impacted on future prospects for mediation. The Shamir/Bush confrontation showed Israel, that the United States would not support it unconditionally and that Israel would have to conform to more powerful political forces. This was the context in which Israel found itself at the beginning of the peace process and may possibly be put forth as one factor that could explain Israel's willingness to take part in secret negotiations in 1992.

It is important to note in the study of changing discourses and the mediation process, that these changing images of Israel which impacted on the mediation process did not come about as a result of a conventional mediation initiative, an external third party bargaining with the two adversaries. Israel's image was reconstructed through its actions and narratives in a bilateral dialogue with the United States, bargaining over loan guarantees. This nonetheless, impacted on the Israeli-Palestinian mediation process. Similarly, the change in Israel's image from one highlighting its security needs to one of aggressor came about through the interventions of both the United States and the United Nations. However, they were not acting as mediators in the conventional sense. Narratives articulated in the United Nations building in New York and on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, had a powerful impact on the mediation process. But this came about in an indirect

⁶³ Sosebee S.J., 'The Passing of Yitzhak Rabin, whose 'Iron Fist' Fuelled the Intifada', *The Washington*

way, highlighting the way in which a mediation process, underpinned by changing narratives is impinged upon by a plethora of texts, articulated by multiple parties, in a variety of geographical locations.

The European Union began supporting the Palestinian struggle for self-determination before the intifada. In December 1986, it gave preferential status to products imported from the occupied territories, a status equivalent to imports from other Middle Eastern countries (i.e. at zero duty). Following this decision, discussions were undertaken with Israeli officials in order to secure that exporters from the territories could export their own products directly, without passing through the intermediary of an Israeli body (Agrexco, the main Israeli marketing body). Negotiations secured Palestinians would be allowed to export produce under their own label.⁶⁴ The importance of this act lies in the political implications which such an economic agreement holds, going to the heart of the issue of the occupied lands' political identity.⁶⁵ The linkage of the economic to the political by the European Union by March 1988, provides evidence of the broader discursive frame in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and particularly related efforts in its mediation, are situated. In March 1988, the European Parliament voted against a proposal on trade accords with Israel. The negative vote was condemnation of the lack of full implementation by Israel of the European-Israeli agreement on the export of Palestinian products, coupled with European dissatisfaction with Israeli handling of the intifada.⁶⁶ The linkage of the economic to the political is underlined by this episode and is particularly significant as economic considerations weighed heavily in Peres' decision to make peace with the PLO.⁶⁷

Report on Middle East Affairs, (Vol. 19, No. 5, October 1990), p. 9

⁶⁴ Written statement in French dated 15 December 1987. Reference no. BIC (87) 348 (Internet)

⁶⁵ Moffett G.D, 'Israel and EC dispute rights of Palestinian farmers', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 30 November 1987

⁶⁶ Alterman S., 'EC Ministers Ask European Parliament to Pass Israeli Accords', Reuters, 22 March 1988 (Internet). The first vote which blocked EEC / Israel Protocols took place on 9 March 1988, the second vote took place on 22 March 1988 and was also a vote against the implementation of these Protocols. Had they been passed, they would have secured implementation of an agreement reached in March 1986 on the favourable adaptation of trade between Israel and members of the European Community following the accession of Spain and Portugal. See 'EEC / Israel: A Pact on Palestinian Exports on the Cards', *External Relations*, no. 1361, 28 November 1987 (Internet), p. 10

⁶⁷ The importance of economic considerations which underpinned Peres' thoughts and approach to the urgency of peace with the Palestinians are highlighted particularly in Peres, S. *The New Middle East*, (New York, 1993) and also in Peres S. *Battling for Peace - Memoirs*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995), p. 356. Peres writes, 'In the past, a nation's identity was moulded from its people's special

This illustrates how the mediation process evolved and the indirect way in which non-mediators, such as the European Union, by impinging on the Israeli economy, impacted on the mediation process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A similar tactic blocked advancements in the Co-operation Agreement signed between Israel and the EU in the fields of energy and the environment. A resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 18 January 1990 called for a freeze in allocations for scientific co-operation, as a sign of the Parliament's dissatisfaction with Israeli repression in the occupied territories. Following this vote, the Commission was constrained in its actions and promises to Israeli Energy Minister Moshe Shahal.⁶⁸ By mid 1991, Marc Pierini, economic adviser to Abel Matutes, European Commissioner for Mediterranean policy, declared that preferential trade status would be denied Israel after 1992, if it failed to make peace with its Palestinian and Arab adversaries.⁶⁹ With the formation of a single European market in 1992, the pressure applied on Israel through the channel of the economic, was further strengthened with one third of Israeli exports going to the European Community. The political urgency for Israel to increase its sales to the Community was linked to the absorption of an estimated one million Soviet Jewish immigrants by 1995.⁷⁰

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 significantly altered a powerful constraining discursive continuity framing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For decades, the patron of bordering Arab states to Israel, the Cold War had extended into the Middle East, and had Israel supported by the United States, against the Arab front-line states, backed by the Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the Palestinians lost a major political and economic supporter. This was to prove a determining factor in Israel's decision to deal directly with the PLO. During an interview with Chris Mitchell, he

characteristics, the geography of its land, and the unique properties of its language and culture. Today, science has no national identity, technology no homeland, information no passport. A country's intellectual standard is more significant than its size. The productivity of its arable land counts for more than its acreage.'

⁶⁸ See 'EEC / Israel: Euro-Israeli Relations Under Strain', 24 January 1990, EU publication no. 1557 (Internet) External Relations p. 2 and 'EEC / Israel: Shadow Cast over Relationship', 27 January 1990, EU publication no. 1558, External Relations p. 7. See also Diehl J., 'EC Delegation Presses Israel on Peace Effort', The Washington Post, 24 July 1990.

⁶⁹ Olster, M. 'EC says Israel won't get 1992 trade benefits without peace', Reuters, 10 July 1991 (Internet). See also 'EEC / Israel: Linkage between economic co-operation and progress towards peace', European Report no. 1693, 13 July 1991 (Internet)

⁷⁰ Carnegie, H. 'EC links trade deal to Israeli peace progress', Financial Times, 11 July 1991

recounted the reaction of Shlomo Avnery when asked ‘Why did the Israelis decide to go to Oslo?’ Avnery is reported to have replied,

‘Well, the major thing that influenced us was the collapse of the Soviet Union. There was no longer a patron behind the Palestinians. So when we thought about sitting down at the table, we knew that we were sitting down with the Palestinians, not with the Palestinians and the Soviets behind them.’⁷¹

The surrounding social system was being challenged by internal parties, in the shape of the intifada, but also by external party discourses, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union. Another narrative, the Gulf War, itself enabled by the end of the Cold War, challenged the dominant discourse further. The launching of scud missiles into Israel by Saddam Hussein weakened the hegemonic discourse which joined the idea of Israeli control of the occupied territories with that of Israel’s security. As Shultz declared upon his arrival in Egypt in June 1988, two years before the outbreak of the Gulf War,

‘both sides ignore emerging global realities which require a new look at old concepts. Their definitions of political rights and obligations, boundaries, and sovereignty are outdated. An appreciation of new global realities can help resolve this conflict. Borders today are permeable and porous, indifferent to the ballistic missile, and indifferent to the desire of any sovereign to shut out the outside world.’⁷²

The ‘new global realities’ are changes in the surrounding hegemonic discourse. Such changes impinge upon both internal and external parties encouraging them to have ‘a new look at old concepts’ as a new constraining environment asserts itself and provides a new set of enabling and constraining mechanisms on actors located within it. The Gulf war challenged the existing hegemonic narrative and through an act of rebellion against the constraining forces of the surrounding narratives called for new interpretations. The use of long-range missiles against Israel challenged a hegemonic discursive continuity which

⁷¹ Interview with Chris Mitchell, 19 May 1997, Maryland, Virginia, USA

⁷² ‘Arrival Statements by Secretary of State George Shultz During his Visit to the Middle East, Cairo 3 June 1988; Amman, 4 June 1988; Tel Aviv, 5 June, 1988’, Lukacs, op. cit., p. 107

equated a continued Israeli military presence in the occupied territories with Israeli security. Also important to the development of a counter-discourse was the linkage made by Saddam Hussein of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza with the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.⁷³ This highlighted the double standards exercised by the international community. Saddam's occupation of Kuwaiti territory was not permissible, whereas Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza was. It was this articulation which re-directed international focus and specifically US focus, back onto the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the urgent need for its resolution. The unity which had been sought since the outbreak of the first Arab-Israeli war as a means of effectively promoting the Palestinian cause was now shattered. The Gulf War once again highlighted to the PLO, the need for unilateral action. Having backed the wrong side, there was an added urgency for the PLO, for the Arab Gulf states would no longer fund it.

The PLO, a secular democratic movement, was being challenged by Hamas, whose recourse to Islam was attractive to many, whose faith in the PLO was beginning to wane. In the occupied territories, Hamas was gaining political support from resident Palestinians who were aided in their daily lives by social services provided by Hamas. For Israel, the Gulf War illustrated that there were divisions in the Arab world and indeed that there was another focus of political attention in the Middle East other than Israel. Discursive continuities which had been largely static in the Middle East since 1948 were challenged by the Gulf War. No longer were all Arab states united against Israel. The Gulf War showed signs of fracture within this bloc as some Arab states supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, whilst others went to war against it. In his memoirs Shimon Peres highlights the changing narratives which the Gulf War induced.

'In the Middle East, the Gulf War of 1991 swept away another old-world division that had been an unchallenged fact of political life for decades. No longer were the Arab states inevitably united among themselves, and united against Israel. An Arab state had engaged in naked aggression against a sister state. An international coalition, including Arab states, had been formed to beat back the aggressor. It suddenly

⁷³ Saddam Hussein's Initiative Linking the Solution to the Gulf Crisis to Settlement of other Middle East

became clear to many in the region that the real threat to peace was not from Israel, but rather from ruthless and fanatical leaders of certain states in the region.⁷⁴

This illustrates a two-way interactive process. Internal parties have a transformative capacity if they act, which challenges the surrounding structures. Inversely, a reconstruction of framing discursive continuities can in turn impact on the parties within it. Within this changed, redefined context, the Israeli Labour government elected in June 1992 decided to react to changes in the surrounding social system. A decision to deal with the PLO was based partly on the belief by some in senior political positions, that waiting for new lines or political demarcations to set after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War would prove to Israel's disadvantage. Joel Singer, the Israeli lawyer who negotiated the Declaration of Principles document on Israel's behalf noted that:

'The window was the disappearance of the Soviet Union. A big polarised world was suddenly depolarised and the Soviet Union's clients suddenly were left without a shepherd. They were looking around saying, 'What will we do next?' And until the situation would solidify again and lock into a stagnation again, there was suddenly a window where you could shape things.'⁷⁵

The United States also responded to new emerging issues. The Gulf War had once again highlighted the untenability of the status quo. A renewed effort for peace, that is to say, an American acknowledgement that there was a need for a reinterpretation of some of the core themes constituting the Israeli-Palestinian issue in the Middle East was promised in President Bush's, 6 March 1991 speech. The centrality of the Palestinian issue to the stability of the Middle East had been highlighted in the Gulf War, as it had been in previous Arab-Israeli wars, particularly the 1973 Yom Kippur War which demonstrated at the time, how easily the Superpowers could be drawn into confrontation through the Arab-Israeli war. The difference between 1973 and 1991 was that the discursive continuities constituting the surrounding social system were altered through an interactive process of

Disputes, Baghdad, 12 August 1990, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 20, No. 2, Winter 1991), p. 179

⁷⁴ Peres S., *Battling for Peace - Memoirs*, op. cit., p. 319

⁷⁵ Interview with Joel Singer, 21 May 1997, Washington DC

internal and external changing narratives. The intifada, through a protracted demonstration of non-conformity demonstrated to the world that the Arab-Israeli conflict at its core, was an inter-communal confrontation between Jews and Palestine Arabs. A Palestinian people voiced its existence and sought self-determination in the occupied territories. Jewish security needs were not met, but threatened by continued occupation of the territories. A positive-sum construct was becoming salient whereby Israeli and Palestinian security and identity needs were emerging as mutually constitutive.

The Final Phase: 1991-1993

The intifada played a crucial role in challenging set narratives around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As Minister of Defence, Yitzhak Rabin's iron fist policy of "breaking bones" in the occupied territories brought official criticism for the first time from the United States about Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights and from the European Union Parliament which was talking about the imposition of sanctions. This was the backdrop to the convention of the International Peace Conference at the end of the Gulf War. Analysis of the Letters of Assurances provided by Secretary of State Baker to the Israelis and the Palestinians in October 1991, reveals the extent to which the content and form of the letters is a re-articulation of past discourses or existing layers, 'there were many phrases that were almost taken verbatim and shifted from one document to the other.'⁷⁶ In a similar way to Shultz, this is a deliberate effort on the part of the Baker Middle East team who conceived the Letters of Assurances as a necessary discursive support structure for the Israelis and the Palestinians, to provide the necessary framework to carry through the mediation initiative with particular focus on points which had proved obstructive in the past.

'I can tell you from personal recollection that what we learned, and lessons that we derived from that earlier experience [Camp David] were very much with us throughout that period [Baker peace initiative in the Middle East]. If they weren't with some of my colleagues, that is what I would bring to the table. We would write Baker memos on what we had learnt in the earlier period and how it applied now;

⁷⁶ Interview with US policymaker, 20 May 1997, Washington DC

where the traps would be, that we had to take into account what we had done before. Much of what went into the Letters of Assurances that we negotiated reflected lessons that we had learned in earlier periods. So for the US mediator as well, continuity and this kind of straight line historically were very important.’⁷⁷

By repackaging old interpretations of the conflict, the Baker team believed they were maintaining the status quo. However, viewed through the lens of changing discourses, the changes introduced by the United States responded to the Palestinian rebellion, altering the framework against which it rebelled. In a letter of assurance written to the Palestinians in October 1991, Baker states:

‘The United States also believes that this process should create a new relationship of mutuality where Palestinians and Israelis can respect one another’s security, identity, and political rights. We believe Palestinians should gain control over political, economic and other decisions that affect their lives and fate.’⁷⁸

Although a letter of assurance is not legally binding, nonetheless, it is still important for the study of changing discourses which focuses more on the legitimising power attributed to a text by its author, in this case, the very powerful author, the United States government. In stark contrast to the negotiations leading to the Camp David accords where there is no mention of ‘mutuality’ between Palestinians and Israelis, by October 1991, the United States calls for both internal parties to the conflict to recognise each other’s ‘security, identity and political rights’. Although Baker falls short of promising Palestinian self-determination which includes sovereign rights, he does however introduce a reinterpretation of the core themes to the conflict. Mutual or joint security now replaces Israeli security needs, mutual recognition of identity calls for an Israeli recognition of a Palestinian identity and the articulation of political rights, paves the way for possible future Palestinian self-determination. The mutuality which Baker claims must underpin all of the

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Quote taken from ‘US Letter of Assurances to the Palestinians, 18 October 1991’, *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, A Documentary Record*, (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993,1994), p. 5

above issues reinforces a positive-sum construct already articulated by the European Union at various moments during the 1970's and 1980's including the Venice Declaration, as we saw in chapter four. A zero-sum outcome signalled through territorial partition, is now overlaid with a positive-sum scenario. The Gulf War as an external discourse impinged upon changing structures which enabled the above narratives and so did the internal discourse of the intifada. For only two months after the beginning of the Palestinian uprising, Baker's predecessor, Shultz articulated a similar narrative.

'First, Palestinians and Israelis must deal differently with one another. Palestinians must achieve control over political and economic decisions that affect their lives. Palestinians must be active participants in negotiations to determine their future. Legitimate Palestinian rights can be achieved in a manner which protects Israeli security. Israeli security and Palestinian security are necessary conditions for a better future for Palestinians, as well as for Israelis.'⁷⁹

In summation, changes around the core discursive tramlines constituting the conflict had already taken place by the end of 1991. Significantly, as we saw above, US articulated changes, building on existing texts within the discursive realm, appeared in a letter from the US Secretary of State to the Palestinians. The reinterpretation of four of the five core issues changed the conflict from;

1. Arab-Israeli to Israeli-Palestinian; 'Palestinians and Israelis must deal differently with one another.'
2. Jewish security to joint security; 'Israeli security and Palestinian security are necessary conditions for a better future for Palestinians, as well as for Israelis.'
3. negation of a Palestinian identity, to recognition of a distinct Palestinian identity; 'Palestinians must be active participants in negotiations to determine their future.'
4. zero-sum to positive-sum; 'Legitimate Palestinian rights can be achieved in a manner which protects Israeli security. Israeli security and Palestinian security are necessary conditions for a better future for Palestinians, as well as for Israelis.'

⁷⁹ Quote taken from 'A Statement for Palestinians,' Secretary of State George Shultz, East Jerusalem.

The fifth discursive tramline, which I argued in chapter two was a central theme to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian autonomy as opposed to self-determination is not explicitly changed in either the Shultz or Baker letters. However, as we shall see later in this chapter, change around the four other themes creates a discursive environment which enables a redefinition from Palestinian autonomy to self-determination. Following swiftly on from the end of the Gulf War, a momentum for change had been generated, and the international community, led by the United States was anxious to build on it. With great pomp and ceremony, the Madrid conference was convened. There were to be a series of bilateral negotiations between Israel and each of its bordering states, Syria, Lebanon and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. However negotiations would take place separately between Israel and each of the delegations, Jordanian and Palestinian. Due to the political context, whose contours had been so dramatically changed in the interval between the Shultz initiative of 1988 and October 1991, the Palestinians represented by the PLO, were gradually gaining international legitimacy.⁸⁰ Although Shamir had stipulated that no member of the Palestinian team could be a member of the PLO, and had to be resident in the occupied territories, it was no secret that the Palestinian delegation was receiving instructions from the PLO headquarters in Tunis and in turn faxing reports back to Tunis, outlined in chapter three. As Shimon Peres asserts,

‘Nominally, the Palestinian team did not include PLO members. In practice, several negotiators were past members of the PLO, and the entire delegation took its orders from PLO headquarters in Tunis.’⁸¹

Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi, chief Palestinian negotiator at the Madrid and Washington rounds concurs, stating,

26 February, 1988’, Lukacs, op. cit., p. 100

⁸⁰ The United States had effectively made the PLO an illegitimate, terrorist organisation in the Spring of 1987. Bill 2211 passed by the House of Representatives on 29 April 1987 was formulated to ‘provide penalties for aiding the Palestine Liberation Organisation’. See the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 17, No. 1, Autumn 1987, Issue 65), p. 210. Senate Bill 1203 passed two weeks later on 14 May 1987 made ‘unlawful the establishment or maintenance within the United States of an office of the PLO.’ *ibid.*, p. 211

⁸¹ Peres, *Battling for Peace*, op. cit., p. 321

‘Although Israel insisted that the Palestinian delegation should be composed of Palestinians from the occupied territories excluding the Diaspora and Jerusalem, and Israel did not want to give any role to the PLO, still, when we were asked in Washington at the beginning of the negotiations, ‘Who are you accountable to?’, I said, ‘To our political leadership, the PLO.’ I didn’t make any secret about this. And they said, ‘If there is an agreement, who will deliver on your side?’ I said, ‘The PLO.’’⁸²

Negotiations in the Oslo Channel were 'mediated' by Norway. They began in January 1993, at a time when negotiations in Washington DC were still underway. Norway’s non-interventionist, facilitative role as third party stood in sharp contrast to the mediation the United States was pursuing in the Washington negotiations. For Israel, Norwegian facilitation was regarded as neutral. Warren Eisenberg of B’nai B’rith notes,

‘The Norwegians didn’t have some of the baggage for example that the Swedes had. There was always an assumption that there was a kind of detestation of the Israelis by Olav Palma and by certain people in Swedish circles. But the Norwegians didn’t have this.’⁸³

The Norwegian intervention was also acceptable to the PLO, as a relationship had been cultivated over a period of time between the two, through the work of FAFO, the Norwegian acronym for the Oslo-based Institute for Applied Social Sciences. Terje Larsen through FAFO, had headed an economic study on Palestinian living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza.⁸⁴ Mitchell underlines the importance of this relationship.

‘It strikes me that the reason the Norwegians could get involved in the Oslo crisis was because of FAFO. They’d actually been working in the Gaza Strip for ages. That

⁸² Interview with Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi, 30 May 1997, Washington DC

⁸³ Interview with Mr. Warren Eisenberg, representative of the B’nai B’rith organisation in Washington DC, 21 May 1997

⁸⁴ Makovsky D., *Making Peace with the PLO*, (Colorado, Westview Press, 1996), p. 13

wasn't something that would be open to an organisation which hadn't built up this rapport with the Palestinians.'⁸⁵

The link with the Norwegian government was secured through the acquaintance of Beilin with Terje Larsen who headed FAFO. The link with the Norwegian Foreign Ministry was facilitated by Terje Larsen's wife, Mona Juul who was assistant to the Foreign Minister of Norway and a specialist in Middle East affairs. The closeness of Norway's academic and political communities, as well as the familial ties which were present, namely through Marianne Heiberg's association with FAFO, whilst being married to the Norwegian Foreign Minister Holst, gave the Norwegian mediating team the attributes of being official and non-official.⁸⁶ At the grass roots, working level, the individuals involved were the husband and wife team, an academic, Terje Larsen and a Norwegian civil servant, Mona Juul. As a result, links to the Norwegian Foreign Ministry were maintained throughout the process. This proved particularly useful as Holst was able to intervene both with Arafat, crucially in July 1993 and with the Israeli Foreign Minister Peres, to provide information and encouragement when it was needed. Norway's Foreign Minister also ensured that key figures in the United States State Department were kept informed of progress being made.⁸⁷

The venue of the negotiations which for each meeting was changed, in order to guard against arousing suspicion, was always an informal setting, either a country guest house or a private home of one of the Norwegian mediators. This was a purposeful device on the part of the Norwegians designed to provide inducements which would nurture a casual atmosphere in which the negotiators would feel at ease. The Norwegian mediators were valued by the negotiators for maintaining secrecy around the meetings, essential for their continuation. They proved successful in finding the right locations and in playing the role of hosts as opposed to mediators. They were absent from negotiations and would leave the negotiators in a room by themselves returning to offer refreshments or at mealtimes. As Joel Singer, the lawyer for the Israeli negotiating team commented,

⁸⁵ Interview with Chris Mitchell, 19 May 1997. Maryland, Virginia, USA

⁸⁶ Makovsky *op. cit.*, p. 21

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 26-7

‘The Norwegian side were not present in the room where we negotiated. They had not seen our draft documents. They didn’t know what we were doing, except for a very general understanding. They were very helpful in a non-involved manner by providing recommendations, by providing food, entertainment, protection, transportation. A cheerful face whenever we ran into real problems sometimes was very helpful. Just, you know, someone who can tell jokes and say well, it’s not the end of the world. Let’s go and eat something and you can resume your discussions later. It’s helpful without being intrusive. ----The two sides just used the accommodations because they couldn’t meet in Israel and they couldn’t meet in Tunis at the time, so they needed a platform. You know just a room, table, chairs and someone to bring food. And it happened in Norway. It could have been a rock in the Mediterranean, like a little island that is inhabitable. If someone put there, you know, a tent, a refrigerator with soft drinks and some food, it would have been okay.’⁸⁸

Norway’s intervention, in direct contrast to United States mediation in the official negotiations, offered to facilitate negotiations rather than be more directly involved in framing the outcome. Norway, unlike the United States, was regarded by both parties as neutral and non-threatening. This stood in sharp contrast to the problematic relationship posed by the United States as mediator to both parties. As Ambassador Samuel Lewis reveals,

‘Both sides always regard the US ambivalently as a mediator. Both have concluded over and over again that there isn’t any real alternative to the US, but for different reasons, both sides are very frustrated with having to use the US. Palestinians, because we’re clearly an ally of Israel, so that makes us suspect. And the Israelis, because they depend so much upon the United States in so many different ways, that they feel vulnerable to American pressure, even when we’re not applying any.’⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Interview with Mr. Singer, 21 May 1997, Washington DC. This view of the Norwegian role in the Oslo negotiations is shared by Chris Mitchell who states, ‘I don’t wish to be rude to them [Norwegians], but they really didn’t do very much at all.’ Interview with Chris Mitchell, 19 May 1997. See also Makovsky, *op. cit.* who concurs, p. 22

⁸⁹ Interview with Ambassador Samuel Lewis, American ambassador to Israel between 1977-81, 13 May 1997, Washington DC

The Norwegian channel offered both parties elements absent from the Madrid and Washington negotiations. In addition, a major attraction of the Oslo channel to Arafat, was in providing him with an inlet into official direct negotiations with Israel, where he risked being sidelined in the Washington set-up. As chief Palestinian negotiator in the Madrid and Washington negotiations, Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi confirms,

‘Arafat’s intent was that he wanted to go inside [the official negotiations], at any price, and so he made all sacrifices to go inside and be in control of the Palestinian community and to be the sole decision maker.’⁹⁰

Although the PLO was asserting its influence and controlling negotiations, politically, the PLO perceived itself marginalised in favour of Palestinians of the occupied territories. Even the Palestinian delegation was not independent, but part of the Jordanian delegation, an act which symbolically portrayed the Jordanian option. This point is important in the context of accounting for the development of the Oslo channel. As one senior American diplomat stated, ‘They [the PLO] weren’t part of Washington. So it was not so much that they assessed Washington to be a failure, this was a way to get themselves into the game, directly rather than indirectly.’⁹¹ The Oslo channel was attractive to the PLO because it allowed Arafat to re-assert his position at the apex of Palestinian politics, and deal directly with the Israelis, whereas in Washington, he was forced to act clandestinely through a Palestinian delegation that was part of a Jordanian delegation. For the Israeli side, partaking in the Oslo channel provided the newly elected Labour government with the opportunity to react to Arafat’s December 1988 declaration in which the PLO accepted UN resolutions 242 and 338, and therefore Israel’s existence in the region, and renounced terrorism. This declaration stands as a major landmark, as was noted earlier in this chapter, for it signalled an unambiguous shift by the PLO whereby it accepted the state of Israel and a two-state solution, ‘these people are no longer talking about destroying Israel proper--- it was no longer an argument over everything.’⁹² At the time of the decisive PLO declaration

⁹⁰ Interview with Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi, 30 May 1997, Washington DC

⁹¹ Interview with US policymaker, 20 May 1997, Washington DC

⁹² Interview with Mr. Joel Singer, lawyer for the Israeli team in Oslo, 21 May 1997, Washington DC

in December 1988, Likud was in power with Shamir as Prime Minister as part of a National Unity government. He dismissed the PLO declaration and categorically refused to negotiate with the PLO. This example illustrates the importance of the surrounding discursive continuities in enabling a peacemaking discourse. Between 1977 to 1992, with the exception of a two-year period when Labour was in government as part of a National Unity government, there was a straight Likud premiership. As a result, possibilities which were being created which could have been carried further, were circumvented as 'there was no place to house them in the Israeli political system.'⁹³ Even after the election of a Labour government in the Summer of 1992, the Israeli delegates negotiating in Washington were not replaced, so that little if any change occurred in Washington, which reflected the new change in government in Israel. The Oslo channel provided Labour with 'a reason to change the policy and it happened in Oslo.'⁹⁴

Stimulated in large part by the intransigence of both parties in the bilateral negotiations, a situation exacerbated by being under the constant glaring spotlights of the media in Washington, the secret negotiations which began in Oslo provided a contrast in environment and negotiating style, where an investigative mode of dialogue could occur.⁹⁵ This was a calculated decision made by the Norwegian mediators. As Larsen asserts,

'We were choosing a model opposite to the one in Washington, very small delegations, a very informal atmosphere, to build confidence. They were actually living in the same house, living very closely together.'⁹⁶

From the outset, the negotiators on the Palestinian side involved in the Oslo Channel were official members of the PLO. Abu Ala was head of the PLO economics section and Hassan Asfour was a member of a Palestinian Communist organisation affiliated to the PLO. The third participant was Mohammad Abu Khosh. The three negotiators on the Palestinian side were met by a team of two Israeli academics, Ron Pundak and Yair

⁹³ Interview with US policymaker, 20 May 1997, Washington DC

⁹⁴ Interview with Mr. Joel Singer, 21 May 1997, Washington DC

⁹⁵ 'Professors Clinch Deal', *The Guardian*, 18 September 1993. See also Makovsky, op. cit., p. 130

Hirschfeld. Although more media attention was given to their scholastic backgrounds, another part of their identity was their membership of the Israeli Labour Party. The link to the Israeli government prior to the intervention of the officials was maintained by the Deputy Labour Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin who had worked closely with Peres. It was Beilin who was largely responsible for setting up the Oslo channel.⁹⁷ The asymmetry in composition, in the earlier stages of negotiations, related to the lack of official government members on the Israeli side. By May 1993 however, as negotiations progressed, the Palestinian delegation requested proof of Israeli governmental involvement.

‘In May of 1993 after five months of discussions, the PLO virtually told the two Israeli professors--- ‘We understand that you are not representing the government of Israel. So either the government of Israel sends someone official to talk with us, or we stop this nonsense because it’s leading nowhere.’ And this is why I and Uri Savir got involved.’⁹⁸

The two academics were joined by an Israeli government official, Uri Savir, Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and shortly afterwards by Joel Singer, an international lawyer who had been responsible for negotiating Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai as well as the Israeli disengagement treaty from Lebanon following the 1982 Israeli invasion. As a highly experienced and trusted lawyer, he was asked to accompany Savir to Oslo. The period May-June 1993 was an important one. A change occurred in the Israeli team which replaced the two academics with high profile personalities associated with Peres in the case of Savir and with Rabin in the case of Singer.

‘I worked with Rabin for many, many years. Rabin knew me very well and Rabin didn’t trust Peres or all of his group. He hated them, but he knew me very well.’⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Larsen quoted by Hoffman D. ‘Norwegians Played a Discreet Role in Facilitating Talks’, *International Herald Tribune*, 1 September 1993

⁹⁷ Shlaim A., ‘The Oslo Accord’, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 3, Spring 1994), p. 29

⁹⁸ Interview with Mr. Joel Singer, 21 May 1997, Washington DC

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

During this period an important reversal takes place. The Israeli government and the PLO had intended the Oslo Channel to feed into the Washington negotiations. Ambassador Lewis posits that the initial design was

‘to establish a secret channel to the Palestinians, to complement the regular channel *not to replace* it but to *complement* it.’ (italics added for emphasis)¹⁰⁰

Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi similarly expresses his surprise at the way in which the secret Oslo Channel overtook official negotiations taking place in Washington DC.

‘The negotiating delegation in Washington knew, that secret contacts were going on, but our conclusion was that these would be dedicated to helping the negotiating delegation [in Washington DC], to get information that would be helpful to official negotiations. We never imagined that there was going to be an agreement that is taken behind closed doors, while there was an official delegation conducting negotiations with the Israelis.’¹⁰¹

By 1991, the political environment was such that it empowered discourses supporting a Palestinian identity and rights to self-determination. However, in fulfilment of Israeli demands, Palestinian representation in the negotiations taking place in Washington would be as part of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, constraining the outcome of negotiations to the Jordanian option. There was a disjuncture between the old and the new. The Washington negotiations did not reflect the significant changes which had taken place around the conflict. In other words, they were still drawing on hegemonic structures which had since been overtaken and replaced by new interpretations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli negotiating team in Washington would not go beyond the terms of the Camp David accords. This stalemate enabled and encouraged progress in the Oslo channel, highlighting the situated nature of changing discourses, contained within broader political processes. The involvement of Savir and Singer, changed the nature of the Oslo

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Ambassador Lewis, American ambassador to Israel 1977-85, 13 May 1997, Washington DC

¹⁰¹ Interview with Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi, 30 May 1997, Washington DC

negotiations from an academic exercise to one with Israeli governmental involvement. The initial intervention of the two academics in the Oslo channel was an exploratory exercise. By May 1993 however, the Oslo channel was relegated greater importance by Israel because of the positive response given by the Palestinian negotiators. Would this have happened if the PLO had been allowed to participate in the Washington negotiations? Arafat felt threatened and it was this that induced the PLO to act in the way it did in Oslo. Changing discourses it seems, come about not only as a result of an interaction between internal and external discourses but also as a result of political interactions within internal parties. Another incident also illustrates how internal interactions impinge on changing narratives. This time it was within the Israeli camp. One particular incident halted official negotiations in Washington. Israel deported over 400 Hamas activists in December 1992 to Lebanon. When the Lebanese government refused to allow them entry into the country, they were left in no-man's land, between Israel and Lebanon. Living in tents, they attracted media attention and their deportation became an issue of contention for the Palestinian team negotiating in Washington. Official governmental interest in the Oslo channel would appear to have been induced by this incident. As Singer recounts,

‘The official negotiations in Washington were suspended. Neither Peres nor Rabin liked the situation, therefore Peres thought well, here we have a contact. The contact was the PLO. Maybe we can use this contact to send messages, receive messages, explore. It's a contact. While the Washington negotiations continue and will always continue, we can use this back channel to check things. This is why he suggested that he send Uri Savir to Oslo to sniff around and see what's happening.’¹⁰²

The replacement of the two Israeli academics negotiating in Oslo, with official negotiators representing the Israeli government, introduced significant substantive changes to the document that had already been negotiated. Whereas concessions had been made by the Palestinians whilst negotiating with Pundak and Hirschfeld, upon the arrival of the two Israeli officials, negotiations began afresh, using the negotiated working document as a point of departure, rather than the point of arrival, which it had been considered to be by the

¹⁰² Interview with Mr. Joel Singer, 21 May 1997, Washington DC

Palestinians. This meant that the Palestinian side, in order to sustain negotiations, was forced to make more and more concessions to the Israeli side. As Singer reflects,

‘When we [Singer and Savir] got involved at the end of May [1993], we took over the negotiations and in a way, we commenced the real negotiations, because we provided governmental involvement. The Prime Minister of Israel was not involved before that.’¹⁰³

The final points of the agreement were negotiated in a telephone conversation between the Israeli lawyer, Joel Singer, in Stockholm (with Shimon Peres present in the room) and Arafat in Tunis, mediated by Norwegian Foreign Minister Holst on the evening of 18 August 1993.¹⁰⁴ Aspects of jurisdiction, Jerusalem and security, primarily the issue of control of border crossings between the West Bank and Jordan, had yet to be resolved. After a seven-hour conversation, the two sides reached agreement. Having begun as an investigative secret meeting between two Israeli academics and three PLO officials, the Declaration of Principles document negotiated through the Oslo Channel, enabled by wider surrounding political processes, overtook official negotiations in Washington DC and was officially signed, 13 September 1993.

Conclusion

The Shultz peacemaking initiative in 1988 illustrates the structures of enablement and constraint which surround mediation processes and how mediating narratives articulated in the past can influence peacemaking efforts and prospects for mediation. Both the United States and Israel privileged an outcome to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict put forth in the Camp David accords of 1978. However, changing discourses between 1978-88 constrained such an outcome to the conflict. In June 1980 the Venice Declaration had reiterated ‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people’ and their right to ‘self-determination’. The United Nations, as we saw in chapter four, had also articulated similar discourses. This narrative was reinforced through the prolonged Palestinian uprising which

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Makovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 70

began in December 1987. In September 1988, the Wye Plantation speech signalled a shift in American foreign policy formulations towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, introducing a new outcome to the conflict which could be sought. With the help of an academic, Secretary of State Shultz was able to articulate for the first time ever, the 'political rights' of the Palestinian people. This construction separated Palestinian sovereignty from Palestinian political rights in the occupied territories. This marks a discursive watershed transforming the sort of outcome to the conflict which could be sought, from autonomy to the establishment of an independent Palestinian political framework in the occupied territories. The input of an academic into this narrative process of change reveals the overlap between internal and external parties in the mediation process and the analytical difficulties involved in ascribing differential influence in the construction of discursive tramlines. The overlap between a Foreign Affairs article and the Shultz Wye Plantation speech also reveals an important aspect of the relationship between discourse and power. Although an academic formulated the new concepts defining Palestinian political independence, they only became part of the dominant narrative when they were articulated by the American Secretary of State.

The intervention of five American Jews into the mediation process also problematises the internal/external divide in the study of mediation. Assessment of changing narratives between November and December 1988 also reveals the involvement of the Swedish Foreign Ministry in proposing and facilitating the involvement of American Jews in the Israeli-Palestinian mediation process. The intervention of the five American Jews in helping Arafat articulate his acceptance of UN resolutions 242 and 338, renunciation of violence and Israel's right to exist, enabled the opening of a US-PLO dialogue. As I showed in this chapter, this dialogue served to legitimise the PLO and what it symbolised - Palestinian rights to self-determination. It also meant that Israel could no longer ignore the PLO. Unlike Chris Mitchell's list of 13 roles to be performed solely by external parties in the mediation process, outlined in chapter one, this episode reveals that changing discourses can be mediated by parties who can be labelled as both internal and external, depending on the criteria for selection used. This episode also reveals that the triadic mediating forum prescribed in both Track one and two is not always necessary. A

bilateral dialogue between an internal (or an external) party and only one of the adversaries can also impinge on the mediation process.

The International Peace Conference which began in October 1991 points to the importance of regional developments such as the intifada, the Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank and the Gulf War and their impact on changing discourses in the Israeli-Palestinian mediation process. The conference was convened after the Gulf War emphasised the importance of resolving the Israeli-Arab conflict to peace in the Middle East. However, the United States as mediator was perceived by both the Palestinian and Israeli delegates, for different reasons, as impeding the process of changing discourses. This made the Oslo channel more attractive. Although the parties to negotiations and the issues discussed were the same in both fora, Washington and Oslo, the mediator, Norway in the Oslo channel had a very different relationship both to the parties and to negotiations. Terje Larsen and Mona Juul did not have a direct input into the negotiations, as they would leave the room before negotiations began. However, by leaving such unequal parties to themselves, they did impinge upon negotiations, privileging Israel, as the stronger party. This interpretation of the mediation process and the impact of the Norwegian mediators on changing discourses would have remained outside the remit of analysis in conventional approaches to mediation.

Analysis of the mediation process between 1987-93 revealed that external parties played an important role in changing discourses, but significantly, did not have to be mediators. Analysis also revealed the transformative capacity which internal parties possess. The Palestinians of the occupied territories played a crucial role in challenging the hegemonic discourse through the protracted uprising from 1987-91. This sustained action of non-conformity by the Palestinians of the occupied territories, asserting a distinct Palestinian identity generated further momentum for change and galvanised external party intervention from the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Norway.

Chapter six offers a textual analysis of the five core themes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as they appear in the Declaration of Principles. It also assesses the role of external

parties in enabling these constructs. By September 1993, change around central themes to the conflict had already been articulated, most notably by the United Nations, the European Union, the PLO, the Palestinians of the occupied territories and the United States. However, the importance of the Declaration of Principles lies in it elevating these changed narratives onto a higher, international discursive plane, incorporating changes into a Western hegemonic discourse. The Declaration of Principles, as we shall see in chapter six is an eclectic text, incorporating extracts from previous texts, the Camp David accords and the US Letters of Assurance of 1991 in particular. This illustrates the multi-layered, inter-textual underpinnings of changing discourses and highlights the interplay between internal and external discourses in this incremental process. Israel, situated within powerful surrounding narrative structures, by 1991-2 was articulating a familiar discourse, one which had been legitimised and supported by other similar discourses in the past, particularly those of the United States. By 1992 however, those same Israeli discourses had become dissenting narratives, altered by changes which had occurred within the discursive realm. Israel's recalcitrance to change around the core themes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was no longer sustainable.

CHAPTER SIX

The Declaration of Principles: Continuity and Change

Introduction

The Declaration of Principles (DOP) document was the culmination of all mediation processes before it. As such it is an eclectic text which draws on many different narratives, particularly the Camp David Accords of 1978 and the Letters of Assurances drafted by the United States in the lead up to the Madrid and Washington rounds of the international peace process which began in October 1991. There are discernible discourses of continuity and change in the DOP. In this chapter, I will focus on the mediating processes which took place between 1991-93. I will argue that the Declaration of Principles was the culmination of negotiations undertaken between the Israeli government and officials from the PLO in the secret channel opened in Oslo, but was also the product of an interactive process which was impinged upon by proposals advanced during official negotiations in Washington which fed into Oslo. In fact the very reverse of what was intended happened. The crossover had initially been conceived by both parties to be the other way round. Oslo was supposed to have fed into the Washington negotiations. The difficulties and constraints encountered by both Israelis and Palestinians in Washington DC provided an enabling framework within which the Oslo negotiations were situated.

I will also assess the roles of the third parties in Washington DC and in Oslo. I will argue that they were both part of the same process with Norway's facilitation of negotiations in Oslo complementing the US's involved role in the Washington negotiations. The Madrid and Washington rounds contain many 'mini' mediation processes within them. Not only were the negotiations protracted, spread over twenty months, but there were also key changes during that time. American Secretary of State James Baker, left his post in August 1992, to run Bush's electoral campaign. A new Israeli Labour government was

elected on 23 June 1992, 'probably the most dovish government in the country's history', replacing 'the most right-wing government in Israel's history.'¹ Faisal Husseini was allowed to join the Palestinian delegation in Washington in April 1993 once talks resumed, after a four month hiatus due to Rabin's expulsion of 400 Hamas supporters from the occupied territories in December 1992. Also important to the study of changing discourses and the role of external parties therein, research has revealed that Secretary of State James Baker who was largely credited with bringing the parties together, used a framework to guide negotiations which was produced by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, an offshoot of the powerful American Israel Public Affairs Committee.² The aim in this chapter is to investigate mediation processes that took place which resulted in the Declaration of Principles. What emerges is an interplay between the Washington rounds and the secret Oslo channel, illustrating that they were not running parallel to each other, but that they were converging, intersecting at key moments.

Feeding into the Mediation Process: A pro-Israel think tank and the US government

Two independent sources make reference to a linkage between a policy paper produced by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and how this was used as the framework for the Madrid and Washington negotiations by United States Secretary of State James Baker.³ The lengthy report calls for American inaction, allowing a slow 'ripening' process to develop which would, the report concludes, gradually build a foundation for direct negotiations between the protagonists.

'Given the conditions in the region, the reality is that US diplomacy cannot produce an immediate breakthrough to negotiations. But that does not mean Washington should be passive or indifferent. It means instead that traditional diplomacy, which reflects the natural desire for Camp David-style negotiations or Kissinger-style shuttles, must

¹ Shlaim A., 'Prelude to the Accord: Likud, Labour and the Palestinians', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 2, Winter 1994), pp. 5-6

² Christison K., 'Splitting the Difference: The Palestinian-Israeli Policy of James Baker', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 24, No. 1, Autumn 1994), pp. 39 and 41

give way to a different kind of activism, one that restores the original meaning to the words "peace process" as an evolution of conditions that changes the political environment in the region and ultimately makes negotiations possible.⁴

Several of the reports' authors received high-level appointments in the new Bush administration. Dennis Ross, the report's principal author and a Bush campaign aide was appointed director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff and soon became Baker's chief aide on Middle East matters. Ross brought in Aaron David Miller and Daniel Kurtzer into the Middle East team.⁵ This illustrates that a party can have an input into the mediation process without necessarily being labelled a 'mediator'. It was in Building for Peace that a sequential approach to negotiations was suggested, deferring difficult issues to be resolved to future negotiations.

'The difference in this approach is that it seeks to lay the political groundwork for formal negotiations by getting the initial, least controversial steps in the transitional process underway.'⁶

This view is reinforced elsewhere in the document.

'A strategy that seeks to work around these obstacles and build a foundation for eventual negotiations will require not only persistence, but also patience. It requires American policy-makers to view the task of Middle East peacemaking in a new way, not as simply a set of high-level negotiations, but also as a series of pre-negotiating steps aimed at removing the obstacles to a more formal diplomatic process.--Only an ongoing process that the parties enter of their own accord, which offers short-term benefits and future promise without immediately entailing major risks is likely to have

³ *ibid.*, p. 41. Nabil Shaath, the head of the co-ordinating committee of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks in Washington, makes the same claim in an interview. See 'The Oslo Agreement, an Interview with Nabil Shaath', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 1, Autumn 1993), p. 5.

⁴ *Building for Peace, an American Strategy for the Middle East*, (Washington DC, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1988), p. 26

⁵ Christison. *op. cit.*, p. 41

⁶ *Building for Peace, Part One: US Policy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 'Developing an American Policy'*, *op. cit.*, p. 40

a chance of success; only a process that conditions the environment by enhancing mutual confidence will create circumstances in which formal negotiations can eventually occur.⁷

Not only did the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, not a mediator, but a think-tank, have an input into the Bush administration's Middle East policy planning. It would appear also to have impacted on Clinton administration when he became President in January 1993. Donald Neff reveals that in 1992, the Washington Institute commissioned a report Enduring Partnership, 'a highly pro-Israel report calling for a "US-Israel partnership" in the post-cold war era.'⁸ Authors of the report included individuals who were appointed to senior posts within the Clinton administration. They included Secretary of Defence Les Aspin, Director of Central Intelligence R. James Woolsey, US Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright and the head of the National Security Council W. Anthony Lake and his chief deputy, Samuel Berger. Other contributors to the report were Leon Fuerth, assistant to Vice-President Gore on security affairs, Clark Murdock, assistant to the secretary of defense and Walter Slocombe, principal deputy under-secretary of defense. Samuel Lewis head of the State Department's policy planning staff, Dennis Ross, the chief US negotiator in the Arab-Israeli peace talks and Martin Indyk, head of the Middle East desk at the National Security Council also participated. Although the report was published after Clinton appointed his team, the commission's work, according to Neff, had been completed by early 1993. A footnote in the report, on the participants, states that those who joined Clinton's administration had terminated their membership 'and do not, therefore, endorse the report.'⁹ The report, reinforcing some of the proposals advanced in the 1988 report, Building for Peace, called for closer and deeper ties between the United States and Israel in the post-cold war period. It supported continued American financial support of Israel, urged the US to increase satellite reconnaissance data with Israel and made a special plea for Israel to maintain its nuclear monopoly in the Middle East.¹⁰

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 47-8

⁸ Neff D., 'The Clinton Administration and UN Resolution 242', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 2, Winter 1994), p. 23

⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 22-3

The Clinton administration 'had turned out to be more hospitable to Israel's basic policies than any administration before it.'¹¹ Since 1967, the land for peace formula first put forward by the United Nations Security Council after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war had been used as a framework in all mediation processes addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, under the Clinton administration's mediation of the conflict in Washington in May and June 1991, there appeared to be a change in this consistent US interpretation of the UN resolution. In two draft papers submitted for negotiation on 14 May and 30 June 1993, the United States failed to describe the territories as 'occupied'. It made no mention of Israeli occupation, withdrawal, redeployment or an exchange of land for peace.¹² Neff concludes,

'It is thus no surprise that the Palestinians in 1993 had to flee the embrace of Clinton's administration to find an accommodation with Israel-not through Washington but via Norway. The Clinton administration, it had turned out, was more hard-line than the Israeli Labour government.'¹³

The Background to the Oslo Channel: the impact of regional developments on the mediation process

It is important to underline the importance of the propitious local, regional and international framework which had emerged during the five years prior to 1993. As Joel Singer, the Israeli lawyer who negotiated the Oslo agreement asserts,

'I felt the time was ripe to settle the problem. The world has changed. It's not the same world. It's no longer 1948. It's no longer 1965. It's not 1973 and it's not even 1982 or 1983. The PLO has changed. Israel has changed. The world has changed. The Soviet Union is gone. I was influenced seeing Egypt, Syria, Turkey, the United

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 23

¹¹ Neff, 'The Clinton Administration and UN Resolution 242', *op. cit.*, p. 20

¹² *ibid.*, p. 21

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 28

States, Saudi Arabia fighting or at least co-operating against Iraq. And the feeling was, this is a new world.'¹⁴

This section will situate the Oslo process within a historical context. The Palestinian uprising which began in December 1987 in the Gaza Strip and spread to the West Bank challenged the status quo and therefore the set discourses which constructed the conflict. The intifada articulated the rebellion of a Palestinian people who sought to rid themselves of Israeli military rule which had been governing their lives since 1967, in a very powerful and sustained manner. The image of the intifada as a confrontation between the Israeli army and Palestinian civilians, men, women and children hurling stones at armed soldiers, exhibited dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute that were arguably new and shocking to a Western audience which was being bombarded with these images by the world media. The intifada succeeded in demonstrating to the West that a Palestinian people did exist and that it wanted to rid itself of Israeli military rule and govern itself. This conflict by its very asymmetry presented a challenge to the Israeli government which it had not faced before. Defence Minister Rabin at the time advocated a policy of violence whereby the Palestinians would be beaten into submission. At a press conference, held before the world's media, Rabin declared:

'It is our intention to wound as many of them [Palestinian demonstrators in the occupied territories] as possible.'¹⁵

This policy however back-fired attracting domestic and international condemnation.¹⁶ The status quo had indeed been challenged. Images of the intifada generated debate around the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and in so doing challenged set discourses around the five themes constituting the conflict. The end of the Cold War in

¹⁴ Interview with Mr. Joel Singer, lawyer for the Israeli government who negotiated the Declaration of Principles agreement, 21 May 1997, Washington DC

¹⁵ Editorial by Michael Wall, 'More than Just a Cynical Gesture', *Middle East International*, (7 Oct. 1988, No. 335), p. 2

¹⁶ Bar-On M., 'Israeli Reactions to the Palestinian Uprising', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 17, No. 4, Summer 1988), p. 50. See also Pressberg G., 'The Uprising: Causes and Consequences' who writes, 'the beatings policy backfired: it not only failed to bring an end to the uprising, but also provoked the wrath of

1989 also signalled change. A number of Arab states which had been Soviet satellites in the Middle East were suddenly without a patron to fund them. The threat presented to Israel by its neighbours had dramatically decreased overnight. The Gulf War also served to shake the foundations which held the discourses around the five themes in place. Inter-Arab fighting removed Israel as the centre of Arab attention. Arab states were confronting an *Arab* aggressor in the shape of Saddam Hussein. By linking Iraqi occupation of Kuwait to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Palestinian problem was pushed to the top of the international agenda. President Bush, in a bid to secure Arab support in his fight against Saddam, promised to convene an international conference once the war was over, to address the matter.¹⁷ This was the immediate background which led to dialogue between Israel and Palestinians.

The Madrid conference was set up immediately after the Gulf War in October 1991. Israel however, under Likud Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, categorically refused to attend a conference which included the PLO. Arafat's support of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War against oil rich states that had funded the PLO, meant that after the Gulf War, the PLO found itself in increasing financial difficulties and was in danger of being marginalised. An added threat was presented to both the PLO and to Israel by the Islamic resistance movement Hamas' rising popularity, especially in the poor Muslim quarters of the occupied territories. It was vital that Arafat re-establish his political credibility on the international stage and the Madrid Conference was to be the vehicle. However, Shamir would only agree to a joint delegation of Jordanians and non-PLO Palestinians from the occupied territories, thus putting forward the Jordanian option as a solution to negotiations which had not yet begun. Amidst intensive media coverage of the conference first in Madrid and then in Washington, every action and every syllable uttered by either side was dissected and analysed for possible meanings and implications. Such extensive media coverage made negotiators cautious and stalled progress. Significantly, from the early stages of the conference it became apparent that the Palestinian members of the joint Jordanian-

the international community as well as many Israelis because of its widespread severity.' *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 17, No. 3, Spring 1988), p. 47

¹⁷ 'President George Bush, Address to Joint Session of Congress on the Middle East, Washington DC. 6 March 1991, (excerpts)', *the Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 20, No. 4, Summer 1991), pp. 180-1

Palestinian delegation were supporters of the PLO and that they were being directed by Arafat through fax and telephone communication. As Uri Savir, an official Israeli negotiator in the Oslo channel notes in his memoirs,

‘The problem in Washington was that Faisal Husseini, the West Bank leader, and the rest of his delegation lacked a mandate to negotiate. Every point we raised with them had to be referred back to the PLO leadership. Though we would never admit to it openly, we were engaged in a charade. In Washington, we were actually negotiating with Yasser Arafat by fax.’¹⁸

The Palestinians of the occupied territories’ allegiance to the PLO and their refusal to negotiate under a banner other than that of the PLO made a mockery of Israeli claims to be excluding the PLO from the international conference. The Palestinians refused the Jordanian option which was being offered to them by Israel implicitly once again and repeated their claims to self-determination. The basis of the international peace conference was UN resolution 242 which called for the exchange of ‘land for peace’. Shamir however, did not accept this as a premise for negotiations.¹⁹

In June 1992, Rabin won the elections promising to move from peace talks to peacemaking within six to nine months of being elected. However, Rabin did not replace the head of the Israeli delegation to the talks in Washington, Eliakim Rubinstein. At the opening of the sixth round of negotiations in Washington DC, Rabin maintained the negotiating line followed by his predecessor. He offered the Palestinians autonomy and continued to shun the PLO, preferring to negotiate with the Palestinians from the occupied territories who he considered to be more moderate and pragmatic.²⁰ Rabin, after consultation with the Israeli negotiator with the Syrian delegation in Washington DC, Itamar Rabinovich, knew that peace with Syria could be achieved upon Israeli withdrawal

¹⁸ Savir U., ‘A First Encounter’, chapter one, *The Process*, (New York, Random House, 1998), p. 5

¹⁹ Mark Tessler notes that ‘resolution 242 belongs to the conceptual world of Labour and is substantially at variance with Likud’s approach to the Palestinian problem.’ Chapter seven, ‘Israeli Politics and the Palestinian Problem after Camp David’, in Mosely Lesch A. & Tessler M., *Israel, Egypt and the Palestinians from Camp David to Intifada*, (Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1989). p. 158

from the Golan Heights and the dismantling of Jewish settlements there. Israel however, could negotiate an interim peace with the PLO which would entail limited territorial withdrawal from the occupied territories and no dismantling of Jewish settlements. He opted for a deal with the PLO.²¹ Once it became clear to Rabin that all the negotiators from the occupied territories, including Faisal Husseini were allied to the PLO, it was futile to continue negotiating with the PLO via the negotiators at Washington DC. The Israeli Defense Force's chief of military intelligence told Rabin that Arafat's weakened political standing following his backing of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War would constrain his negotiating position. Arafat was becoming an increasingly attractive interlocutor for Israel as there was growing support for the Islamic movements Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the occupied territories.²² Rabin was being urged by the army chiefs and internal security chiefs that time was running out. Arafat was willing to negotiate a deal with Israel whereas the Islamic groups would not. All these factors, combined with reports that progress was being made in the Oslo Channel encouraged Rabin to turn towards the secret negotiations.

The Oslo Channel

What became known as the Oslo channel began as an exercise designed to encourage dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. A law in Israel prohibited meetings between Israelis and members of the PLO. Such a meeting would therefore have to be clandestine. The secret channel was established during the last six months of 1992. In the summer of 1992, a Norwegian social scientist Terje Larsen, who headed FAFO (the Norwegian acronym for the Oslo-based Institute for Applied Social Sciences), a major European peace research institute, was conducting a study on Palestinian living conditions in the occupied territories. He and Israel's Labour deputy foreign minister at the time, Yossi Beilin an advocate of peace between Israel and the Palestinians, got together and decided to initiate secret talks between two Israeli academics, Ron Pundak and Yair Hirschfeld and three senior members of the PLO. The first meeting took place in December 1992. It was not until the spring of the following year that the Israeli government decided

²⁰ Shlaim A., 'The Oslo Accord', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 3, Spring 1994), p. 28

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*, p. 32

to substitute the two academics with Israeli government officials. The Oslo channel had some attributes of track two. The involvement of academics in the secret Oslo negotiations, at least in the initial stages before they were replaced by government officials in the spring of 1993, encourages a comparison with academic workshops. There were other parallels, the unofficial, secret settings, for example. But there are certain features of the Oslo negotiations which were not typical of workshops. The Palestinian negotiators were senior figures within the PLO. Also, the role of the external party. The Norwegian intermediaries were not present during negotiations whereas in workshop settings, there is usually a qualified panel on hand to guide the participants. It is also the case that academics were involved in the official negotiations in Washington DC for example, the Palestinian negotiator Dr. Hanan Ashrawi who is also a politician. Study of mediation as a process of changing discourses reveals the limited utility of "labelling" or fixing identity, since identity is in most cases multi-faceted.

The most senior figure of the three Palestinians was fifty-six year old Ahmad Qurei, also known as Abu Ala, who was the PLO finance minister. He had been working behind the scenes in the Madrid and Washington rounds, guiding Palestinian involvement in the Multilateral talks. Hassan Asfour was a Left wing radical who had been a Communist before joining George Habash's PFLP and becoming an advisor to Arafat's close associate Mahmoud Abbas also known as Abu Mazen. Abu Mazen has been described as 'the father of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue', using his office in Tunis as a mini-think tank and to meet members of the Israeli Left.²³ Abu Mazen was monitoring the secret talks from Tunis. The third Palestinian negotiator was Maher al-Kurd, an economic advisor to Arafat. The aim of the secret channel was to draft a joint informal document laying out basic principles which would guide future peacemaking initiatives between the PLO and Israel. In sharp contrast to the legalistic approach being adopted in the on-going Washington rounds, Abu Ala adopted a flexible approach to the negotiations which he suggested should progress from debating easy issues to debating the more difficult issues which had to be resolved between Israel and the PLO. This approach he believed, would gradually develop trust between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators and generate momentum for further debate. Uri Savir,

the official Israeli negotiator who replaced the two academics in May 1993 suggests that the contrast in negotiating style between Oslo and Washington was intended by Arafat to indicate that the Washington talks would lead nowhere, but that in Oslo where the PLO was officially represented, Arafat might be prepared to compromise.²⁴

The Oslo channel had many attributes associated with track two or unofficial diplomacy. Yet there remained a close connection with the official negotiations which were taking place in Washington. Both processes were controlled by Arafat. The participation of official figures in the Oslo channel from the outset, directly in the case of the PLO and indirectly for the first five months in the case of Israel, is a feature which is not typical of track two. The facilitative approach used by Larsen, the informal settings in the Norwegian countryside and the clandestine nature of the meetings in comfortable country-houses all fit track two prescriptions as highlighted in chapter one. Meetings were planned to the minutest details by the Norwegians. These sessions were usually held a few hours' drive away from Oslo. The aim as Larsen conceived it, was to provide a comfortable, informal environment in which the negotiators would feel able to be creative and imaginative in their discussions. This format stood in sharp contrast to that being adopted in the Washington rounds. It is important to assess Norway's role as mediator. Norway was acceptable to both the PLO and the Israelis as an intermediary because unlike the United States, it was perceived by both parties to be neutral. The Oslo secret channel, although carried out informally, was planned and carried out with the knowledge and aid of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. Although Larsen was not a government official, his wife Mona Juul was working as an assistant to the Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst, whilst Holst's wife Marianne Heiberg was Larsen's associate at FAFO. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry was involved in the Oslo channel from the outset, although often working behind the scenes, leaving the actual mediation to Larsen. The Norwegian government ensured that senior US officials were notified of the existence of the Oslo channel and provided them with regular updates.

²³ Rabie M., 'Euphoria of the Intifada', chapter three, *US-PLO Dialogue, Secret Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution*, (Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 1995), p. 19

²⁴ Savir, 'A First Encounter', op. cit., p. 4

What had begun as unofficial, investigatory meetings, one of many taking place at that time, soon developed into official negotiations between senior members of the PLO and the Israeli government. The channel was set up by Larsen and Yossi Beilin, a senior figure within the Israeli Labour party, who kept Shimon Peres, the Israeli Foreign Minister informed of progress. Prime Minister Rabin was informed of the secret channel once it became clear that the PLO was represented and that it was showing signs of compromise. Rabin was reportedly sceptical at first, but gradually became convinced when he saw a change in the PLO's position.²⁵ By the end of February 1993, the negotiators had drawn up a draft agreement which introduced the concept of Gaza and Jericho first. Palestinian self-governing powers would begin there. By late April 1993, the Palestinian negotiators demanded assurance from Israel of its commitment to the negotiations by sending a high-ranking official to Norway. Uri Savir, Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and Joel Singer, a trusted lawyer who had worked for the government before, were sent by Peres to Oslo. This marked a crucial turning point in the trajectory that led to the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993, for a symmetry of sorts was established, as negotiations were now between officials on both sides. Between May and August, the draft document was heavily re-worked in the presence of the Israeli lawyer Joel Singer. By the end of August, this new document was ready to be initialled. The negotiations came to a climax on 17 August 1993 in an eight hour telephone conversation carried out between Holst in Sweden and Abu Ala receiving instructions from Arafat beside him in Tunis. Holst was acting on behalf of the Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres with him in the same room. Also present was the Israeli lawyer Joel Singer.²⁶ In the end each side held out for the issues which were most important to it. For the Israelis, satisfactory security measures had to be in place before the agreement could be signed, whilst the PLO needed details of the nature of the powers it would gain from the Gaza/Jericho First agreement. However, there remained the crucial issue of mutual recognition which meant more in fundamental terms to both parties than the negotiated agreement itself.²⁷ At a secret meeting at the Bristol hotel in Paris, the negotiators met once again to agree on the final wording of the

²⁵ Savir, *op. cit.*, p. 25

²⁶ Corbin J., *Gaza First*, (London, Bloomsbury, 1994), pp. 153-9

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 182

secret document.²⁸ Negotiations continued until the very last minute partly as a tactic used to induce maximum change in the opponent. On 20 August 1993, the agreement was initialled at a secret ceremony. Peres signed on behalf of the Israeli government and Abu Ala for the PLO. It had taken nine months for an agreement to be negotiated between the Israelis and the PLO.

When details of the agreement were made public, elements within both Palestinian and Israeli constituencies responded with outrage, accusing the PLO and the Rabin government respectively of betrayal. After a lengthy debate spread over three days, the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, approved the accord by 61 votes, 50 against and 9 abstentions. The margin of victory was greater than expected, providing a welcome boost to Rabin's peace process.²⁹ In the Palestinian camp, the PLO was split with the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) led by George Habash, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) led by Nayef Hawatmeh, accusing Arafat of abandoning the Palestinian cause's long-held principles in order to ensure his own political survival.³⁰ However, Arafat was able to secure the support of a majority of the eighteen-member Palestine Executive Committee after much political wrangling which led to the resignation of four of Arafat's political colleagues and the opposition of Faruq Qaddumi, the PLO Foreign Minister. The main criticism made by opponents of the accord was that it did not carry the promise, let alone a guarantee of the eventual creation of an independent Palestinian state.³¹ A week after the signing of the DOP, 19 Foreign Ministers of the Arab League met in Cairo. Arafat was greeted with a cool reception. Some member states, especially Syria, Jordan and Lebanon were dismayed by Arafat's unilateral accord. This they argued, violated Arab pledges to co-ordinate their negotiating strategies. Arafat retorted that the Washington negotiations had lasted close to two years and had come to a

²⁸ The meeting at the Bristol hotel is recorded in an article which appeared in *Le Monde*, (11 Sept., 1993) and also in Corbin J., 'Log Cabin Logistics Reveal Kindred Spirits in Old Foes', *The Times*, (15 Sept. 1993)

²⁹ Shlaim, 'The Oslo Accord', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, op. cit., p. 34

³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 34-5

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 35

dead end. Arafat also stressed that the DOP was the first step in a process that would eventually lead to a comprehensive peace deal in the Middle East.³²

The Norwegians as External Party

The intervention of a social scientist, Terje Larsen to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip through conducting research into living conditions in the occupied territories and to influential figures in Israel's shadow cabinet, such as Yossi Beilin, facilitated the setting up of a secret channel. By setting up what was initially a fact-finding forum, Norway's role was truly "external". The protagonists were left alone during negotiations. The Norwegian government, once the channel was set up, simply took care of practical matters, booking flights, arranging accommodation and providing the negotiators with food and refreshment when it was needed. It would be easy to dismiss Norway's role as simply one of "organiser". However, Norway's success lies in building on what had been begun in the Washington rounds. The parties who were invited were chosen and were representatives of the same Israeli and Palestinian bodies in Washington DC, the Israeli government and the PLO. Norway picked up threads that were spun in Washington DC. Although the Palestinians were represented in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in Washington DC, the Palestinian negotiators made it known that the PLO was controlling negotiations by fax.³³

By providing a forum away from the intrusive gaze of the media, the Norwegians allowed representatives of the Israeli government and representatives of the PLO, different representatives of the *same players* negotiating in the official Washington rounds, the space and the privacy to refine issues that had already been raised in Washington DC. Significantly, there was a major change around the role of the external party in both forums. Whereas the United States was an active participant in negotiations, and can as such be regarded as an internal party, the Norwegians were absent from negotiations, leaving the internal parties to their own devices. The Norwegian government was more of a host and a friend to both parties, offering encouragement when it was needed and seeing to the

³² *ibid.*

practical needs of the negotiators. Unlike the United States, as a relatively small Scandinavian state, Norway was not regarded with suspicion by either party. Although Norway's role was political, in the sense that it wanted to see a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it was not involved in formulating proposals as the United States was, in negotiations taking place in Washington DC, nor would it play a role in implementing the modalities of any agreement reached. The United States had played its part in getting the protagonists to arrive at a rough outline of a possible interim arrangement. Possibly as a result of being under the scrutiny of the media, possibly also as a result of the type of intervention the United States was offering, the negotiations in Washington were not advancing. It is interesting to note that the Oslo channel was opened when negotiations in Washington were stalled in December 1992 when Hamas activists were deported by the Israeli government to no-man's land between Israel and Lebanon.

In a conflict in which the power differential is skewed in favour of one of the protagonists, is it fair for an external party to leave representatives of both camps to hammer out a deal by themselves? Would this not mean that the weaker party would be at the mercy of the stronger party? There is a great imbalance between the Israelis and Palestinians. For a start, the Israelis have a state and as such have a legitimacy which the Palestinians do not have, not being a member of the international club of states. In terms of resources, the Israelis are heavily subsidised by the United States. Given this power differential between the protagonists, why did they both agree to take part in the secret Oslo negotiations? They both felt that they stood to gain from it. Palestinians and Israelis felt that the United States as mediator in Washington DC was setting parameters that both were finding increasingly difficult to stay within. Israel was loathe to be made to adhere to international law, namely United Nations resolutions 242 and 338, and others such as resolution 43/176 of December 1988 which called the occupied territories Palestinian.³⁴ Israel had always rejected them on the basis that Israel would determine its own internal matters and act to ensure its own security. As for the Palestinians, research suggests that

³³ Savir U., chapter one, 'A First Encounter', *The Process*, op. cit., p. 5

³⁴ Resolution 43/176 - Question of Palestine - of the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly on the Palestine Question - Geneva, December 1988, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 18, No. 3, Spring 1989, Issue 71), p. 174

the Oslo channel provided Arafat with an inlet into negotiations. He could show the Israelis, by controlling the course of negotiations in Washington DC, that he and he alone could deliver. If the Israelis wanted a deal, they would have to negotiate with him. Although the negotiators at Washington DC declared their allegiance to the PLO from the outset, Arafat it would appear, still did not trust them. Having been outside Palestine for so many years, Arafat may well have felt threatened by an indigenous leadership. The leader of the Palestinian delegation negotiating in Washington DC, Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi believes that history will not judge Arafat well. For one of his greatest errors according to Abdul-Shafi was that he did not trust PLO negotiators at Washington.³⁵ It is also important to note that the Oslo channel was initially seen by both Israelis and Palestinians as a forum where negotiations could take place which would feed into the official negotiations in Washington DC. The Oslo channel however, interacting with the official negotiations in Washington DC, generated a momentum of its own which eventually overtook and replaced the official negotiations.

Washington and Oslo: continuity and change around the core issues to the conflict

1. The conflict as Israeli-Palestinian

The very fact that the Oslo agreement is negotiated and signed between Israeli government officials and the PLO points to the transformation of the conflict from being Arab-Israeli to Palestinian-Israeli. In 1978 President Sadat of Egypt had sought to represent the Palestinians and in so doing marginalised the PLO. The Oslo agreement identified a Palestinian people who were no longer represented as an Arab subset as they had been in the Camp David accords. The preamble to the Oslo agreement illustrates this important change.

‘The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO team (in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Conference) (the ‘Palestinian delegation’), representing the Palestinian people, agree that it is time to put an end to

³⁵ Interview with Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi, Washington DC, 30 May 1997, Washington DC

decades of confrontation and conflict, recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process.’³⁶

The Israeli government and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation who had been locked in a bloody and protracted conflict for over half a century had reached a decisive watershed, they were going to acknowledge each other’s existence and strive to live together in peace. All Israeli governments before September 1993 had rejected the PLO and had attempted to replace it with a local, indigenous Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories. An Israeli official acknowledgement of the PLO in the autumn of 1993 finally transformed the conflict from Arab-Israeli to one between Israel and a Palestinian nation. All previous constructions which had tried to erase the PLO were now overtaken by this new discursive construct. In the Camp David accords, Begin offered the inhabitants of the occupied territories limited administrative autonomy. Shlaim notes that 'autonomy as conceived by Likud applies only to the people of the occupied territories and not to the land. Israel retains its claim to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza Strip under this plan.'³⁷ The American ambassador to Israel at the time, Ambassador Lewis recalls that the definition of the term ‘autonomy’ as it was used in the Camp David accords,

‘was deliberately ambiguous. Begin who invented the idea, was clearly talking about autonomy of people, but retaining sovereignty, Israeli sovereignty over the land. ‘Autonomy’ implies a good deal more self-rule than just ‘self-rule’. So really autonomy should be a more attractive term for Palestinians, but it wasn’t. And I suppose that’s because Begin talked so much about individuals all the time. So the words become useful in the political warfare back and forth.’³⁸

³⁶ Declaration of Principles, *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, A Documentary Record*, (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1994), p. 117

³⁷ Shlaim, 'Likud, Labour and the Palestinians', op. cit., p. 7

³⁸ Interview with Ambassador Lewis, American ambassador to Israel from May 1977 to May 1985. Interview conducted 13 May 1997, Washington DC

It is important to note that whereas in 1978 the PLO rejected the Camp David accords, in the May 1993 document, the Palestinian delegation uses the same term to describe the Palestinian authority as that used in the Camp David accords, with one significant addition, the term 'Palestinian', to arrive at the construction, 'Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority' PISGA for short.³⁹ The Palestinians had tabled PISGA for the interim period of self-government back in February 1992, at the fourth round of talks with the Israelis. Israel, under Shamir's Likud government had offered a counter proposal for 'interim self-government arrangements'. Behind the two names, Shlaim observes, 'lurked irreconcilable positions on the nature, scope and purpose of the "interim self-government"'.⁴⁰ Israel's proposal applied only to people, not to territory and as such was a direct replica of the offer made to the Palestinians in the Camp David accords of 1978. The Palestinians on the other hand wanted to end the occupation and set about laying the groundwork for a Palestinian state.

Analysis of key texts of the Washington rounds, particularly those articulated in May 1993, and the Declaration of Principles document, reveals that the conflict was acknowledged by both parties not as Arab-Israeli, but as Israeli-Palestinian. A significant difference however pertains to the role of the PLO. Whereas in the Washington rounds the PLO was never officially acknowledged by either the United States or Israel, the PLO was explicitly acknowledged as Israel's negotiating partner in the Declaration of Principles. The opening paragraph of the DOP refers to 'the PLO team'.⁴¹ However, as Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi pointed out, the Palestinian negotiating team in Washington had from the outset declared its allegiance to the PLO.⁴² Indeed at the end of May 1993, in its 'Ten-Point Statement on the Peace Process', the Palestinian delegation stated,

'The PLO has selected and appointed the delegation and granted it the legitimacy it requires to carry out its tasks. The PLO also has sustained Palestinian participation in spite of tremendous difficulties. All decision-making and policy decisions are taken by

³⁹ 'Palestinian Delegation, 'Draft Proposal for a Declaration of Principles'. Tunis, 9 May 1993',

The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, op. cit., p. 98

⁴⁰ Shlaim, 'Likud, Labour and the Palestinians'. op. cit., p. 10

⁴¹ Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 117

the PLO. All the delegation's expenses are being met by the PLO. The US has accepted these realities and deals with them indirectly. It is time for a direct and honest approach which would redress a situation which has adversely affected the peace talks and US-Palestinian relations.⁴³

Dr. Abdul-Shafi believes that the PLO negotiated a poorer deal for the Palestinians in the Declaration of Principles than the deal that was being negotiated in Washington DC, essentially because it did not trust the delegates from the occupied territories enough to believe that they would not betray the PLO.⁴⁴

2. From zero-sum to zero-sum with positive-sum overtones

Although the zero-sum interpretation of the conflict was still present in the DOP, it was now overlaid with a positive-sum outcome. The process of clandestine negotiations taking place through the Oslo channel itself offered a renewed interpretation of the conflict. By bringing about direct negotiations between senior representatives of the PLO and the Israeli Labour government (May 1993 onwards), a Norwegian external party facilitated a renewed interpretation of the conflict. According to John Burton's prescriptions on track two diplomacy outlined in chapter one, a Norwegian intervention in this instance was able to move the conflict away from zero-sum issues such as territorial distribution, to what Burton would perhaps contentiously see as positive-sum issues. These include recognition of equal claims to identity, security and recognition of control over future prospects. In the secret negotiations between the PLO and the Israeli government in Oslo, there occurred a mutual recognition of identity by virtue of negotiating with each other, as well as a mutual recognition of rights and security needs, taking the conflict back to its inter-communal origins. In the preamble to the agreement, both sides

⁴² Interview with Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi, 30 May 1997, Washington DC

⁴³ 'Palestinian Delegation, "Ten-Point Statement on the Peace Process," Washington DC, 28 May 1993'.

The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, op. cit., p. 104

⁴⁴ Interview with Dr. Haidar Abdul-Shafi, 30 May 1997, Washington DC

'recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security---'.⁴⁵

It is important to stress that the gradual emphasis of the positive-sum component of the conflict was spelt out not only in the actual text of the DOP, but significantly for the study of changing discourses, was also signalled in the process itself. This change was therefore occurring not only inside, but also outside of the negotiations themselves. The Declaration of Principles document maintains elements of the zero-sum construction of the conflict, whilst introducing positive-sum contours into official Israeli discourse.⁴⁶ Land for peace, spelling a division of the land that was Palestine, is a zero-sum outcome. However, Israel's acceptance of Palestinian needs of identity and security introduces a positive-sum outcome. Israeli and Palestinian security and identity needs were mutually enhancing according to the Declaration of Principles document, spelling a positive-sum construction. The opening paragraph of the Declaration of Principles states:

'The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO team (in the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the Middle East Peace Conference) (the "Palestinian delegation"), representing the Palestinian people, agree that it is time to put an end to decades of confrontation and conflict, recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights, and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security and achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process.'⁴⁷

The positive-sum formula came in the preamble to the Oslo agreement with both parties agreeing to 'recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights and strive to live in peaceful coexistence---'.⁴⁸ Israeli re-interpretation of the conflict, identifying the

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ The distinction between zero-sum and positive-sum was outlined in chapter one, the theory chapter. Essentially a zero-sum formula suggests a win-loose perception by one of the protagonists or both, that is to say that one party's gain, is the other's loss. A positive-sum equation suggests a win-win outcome. John Burton addresses this distinction in 'The Settlement of Disputes', chapter five of *Deviance, Terrorism and War*, (Oxford, Martin Robertson, 1979), p. 112

⁴⁷ Declaration of Principles, *op. cit.*, p. 117

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

Palestinians and not the Arabs as the ‘enemy’, came when the Oslo secret channel opened negotiations between Israel and official member of the PLO in May 1993. It is also important to note that by 1993 when this Israeli reinterpretation occurred, there was a gap between international discourses defining the PLO and Israeli rejection of it. This discursive disjuncture made continued Israeli negation of a Palestinian people more difficult to sustain. By 1993 the intifada had amplified international legitimacy of the PLO. Acknowledgement of the PLO paved the way for Israeli acceptance of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Before 1993 Israel had rejected such an outcome. This is illustrated in the Camp David accords where negotiations and not the outcome of negotiations were to be based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338. Quandt concedes,

‘I got the job of coming up with the language that would paper it over. So if you read the language, it’s terrible. It says two contradictory things. It says, ‘the negotiations will be *based* on ---. It doesn’t mean anything. So on that basis, Begin was able to say, ‘Oh fine, we agree to it’ because it only says that the *negotiations* will be ‘*based* on’. It doesn’t say which negotiations will be based on 242 and the Egyptians could say, ‘You see, 242 is mentioned in the context of the final status negotiations, so that means the Israelis agree to withdraw.’⁴⁹

As late as May 1993 the official Israeli delegation negotiating in Washington still maintained that the negotiations, not the settlement should be based on UNSCR 242.⁵⁰ This was linked to a continued Israeli rejection of the PLO in the official Madrid and Washington rounds. Unlike previous Israeli formulations, the Oslo agreement contained a clear and unambiguous Israeli pledge to base the outcome of negotiations on these resolutions.

‘It is understood that the interim arrangements are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.’⁵¹

⁴⁹ Interview with William Quandt, 23 May 1997, Washington DC

⁵⁰ ‘Israeli Delegation, Draft of ‘Agreed Statement of Principles’, Washington DC, 6 May 1993’, *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement*, op. cit., p. 96

The problem of two contending national claims to the same piece of land culminated in 1993 with a Palestinian acceptance of Israel in return for Israeli official acknowledgement of a Palestinian national movement and governance of West Bank and Gaza strip territory. Israel by September 1993 accepted UN resolution 242 as the basis of agreement reached, signalling a zero-sum outcome.⁵² Back in December 1992, six months after the election of a Labour government, the Israeli negotiating team's attitude to 242 was the same as it had been under Shamir's Likud government. Arafat had complained at the time,

'So far, Rabin is refusing, like Shamir, to accept that 242 is applicable to Palestinian land. He says we can discuss it later. It seems he doesn't want to accept that these lands are occupied. He's undermining the basis of the peace process.'⁵³

December 1992 was a turning point for Israel's reinterpretation of the conflict and particularly in its reappraisal of the way it was going to deal with the PLO. Israel's expulsion of over 400 Hamas activists into Lebanon highlighted the rising threat which Islamic movements presented to Israel's security. The international community's response to Israel's actions, issuing a Security Council resolution as we saw in chapter five which identified the occupied territories including East Jerusalem as Palestinian territories impacted on Israel. Israel surmised that to officially recognise the PLO was the lesser of two evils and so the zero-sum component of the conflict anchored in UN resolutions 242 and 338 was joined with Israeli-Palestinian mutual recognition of identity and security needs.

3. The conflict as a discourse on joint security

Israeli security has been a very powerful and salient discursive theme constituting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and as such was left to final status negotiations. In the Oslo agreement, security is addressed in a rather fragmented, disjointed way in articles 8 and 9

⁵¹ Declaration of Principles, article 1, 'Aim of the Negotiations', op. cit., p. 117

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ Interview with Ian Black, The Guardian, (7 December 1992). Quoted by Shlaim, 'Likud, Labour and the Palestinians', op. cit., p. 15

and then later in articles 13, 14 as well as in annex 2 and in the Agreed Minutes to the DOP. Israeli military forces are to be withdrawn from 'the Gaza Strip and Jericho area' whilst other forces are to be re-deployed 'outside populated areas'.⁵⁴ The precise areas which are to be under Palestinian jurisdiction are not identified in the agreement. It is also left unclear where Israeli forces will be re-deployed to, areas within or outside Israeli jurisdiction. Israel secures its unrestricted access to areas under Palestinian jurisdiction in two ways. Firstly by stating that Israelis and settlements in Palestinian jurisdiction will still be governed by Israeli law and secondly by allowing Israelis including the army, free access to the network of roads that link the fragmented areas which will fall under Palestinian jurisdiction. The structure of the agreement is confused with some constructions incoherent and others grammatically incorrect. For example, the article on the remit of Palestinian jurisdiction (placed in the minutes rather than in article 4 entitled 'jurisdiction') states:

'It is understood that jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory, except for issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations: Jerusalem, settlements, military locations and Israelis.'⁵⁵

It is clearly stated in article 17 of the DOP that 'all protocols annexed to this Declaration of Principles and Agreed Minutes pertaining thereto shall be regarded as an integral part hereof'. This clause makes it even more difficult to account for the fragmented way in which the issue of security is addressed in the DOP.⁵⁶ Although a discourse articulating Palestinian security concerns had for so long been absent, such a discourse began to emerge in 1982 in the aftermath of the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian camp massacres and was strengthened by the intifada during which time unrestrained Israeli violence was used against the Palestinian protesters in the occupied territories. However, it is significant to note that issues of security in the DOP relate predominantly to Israel, with Palestinian security needs being addressed in a cursory manner, referring only to the

⁵⁴ Declaration of Principles, article 5, 'Transitional Period and Permanent Status Negotiations', and article 13, 'Redeployment of Israeli Forces', op. cit., pp. 118 and 120 respectively.

⁵⁵ 'Agreed Minutes to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements', Part B., article 4. Declaration of Principles document, op. cit., p. 126. See 'Agreed Minutes' Part B., annex 2 for the clause on Israeli access to roads within the West Bank and Gaza Strip, p. 127

⁵⁶ 'Miscellaneous Provisions', article 17, Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 121

creation of a Palestinian police force, when arguably their security needs would be greater. A significant risk was presented to the Palestinians by having settlers resident within Palestinian areas of governance unaccountable to the Palestinian authority. They were also potentially at risk being adjacent to one of the most powerful states in the region, Israel in possession of conventional as well as non-conventional weapons. The intifada, it should be remembered was still on going at the time and the violence with which Israeli troops were reacting was still fresh in Palestinian minds.⁵⁷ Indeed the Israeli desire to stop the Palestinian rebellion which was attracting negative publicity for Israel was a primary force behind engaging in the negotiations which culminated in the Oslo agreement. This claim is supported by formulations in the preamble to the agreement and in Arafat's letter to Prime Minister Rabin, dated 9 September recognising Israel, in which he refers to the inauguration of 'a new epoch of peaceful coexistence, free from violence and all other acts which endanger the peace and stability', namely the intifada.⁵⁸

It would appear that by September 1993, conventional military and territorial definitions of security were supplemented by security as economic prosperity for Israel and the Palestinians of the occupied territories. An assessment of passages addressing security concerns in the Oslo document reveals a significant re-interpretation of the concept of Israeli security. The DOP indicates an eventual union of the two geographic entities through economic ties which would prove mutually beneficial. The implied, but never stated confederation, addresses new discursive formations articulated particularly in the period 1987-92. The violent Palestinian rebellion in the occupied territories which began in 1987 made continued occupation of the territories a hazard for Israeli forces and also highlighted to Israel the importance of the Palestinians to the Israeli economy. David McDowall notes:

'A particularly important element was in the socio-economic field. For a long time it had been recognised that the Palestinian consumer market and labour force were both

⁵⁷ 'Public Order and Security', article 8, Declaration of Principles. *op. cit.*, p. 119

⁵⁸ Letter from PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement*, *op. cit.*, p. 128

highly profitable to Israel. There was now a concerted attempt [during the intifada] to withdraw custom, labour and the payment of taxes.’⁵⁹

The end of the Cold War weakened Arab states hostile to Israel as the Soviet Union could no longer provide them with arms and funds. The Gulf War demonstrated the power of long range missiles which could cross state boundaries. Advances in military technology reconstructed the value of continued Israeli occupation of the territories and weakened Israeli arguments claiming that the occupied territories were necessary to Israel’s security providing a buffer zone against an Arab attack of Israeli cities and towns. An increasingly inter-dependent world economy re-defined security for Israel as Shimon Peres noted:

‘These are the elements of contemporary power. The scale has tipped in the direction of economics rather than military might---. At this stage of the game, objects that may be subject to a military take-over are no longer of value.’⁶⁰

Support for Hamas came mainly from the poor sectors of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank pointing to a link between poverty and recourse to violence. Israeli security was no longer necessarily contingent on Israeli occupation of bordering territory but was now reconstructed, linking it to economic prosperity. Such a reinterpretation accounts for the emphasis placed on joint co-operation and co-ordination between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and other Middle Eastern states in the Declaration of Principles.⁶¹

Israeli security is dealt with in broadly the same terms in both the documents that were being negotiated in Washington DC in May 1993 and the Declaration of Principles. Israeli security concerns appear to be dealt with at the expense of Palestinian security needs.

⁵⁹ McDowall D., ‘Resistance and the Intifada’, *The Palestinians the Road to Nationhood*, (London, Minority Rights Group, 1994), p. 101

⁶⁰ Peres S. *The New Middle East*, (New York, 1993) quoted in Taylor M., ‘The Economics of Defeat’, in Hammami R. and Usher G. (eds.) *Palestine: Diplomacies of Defeat*, (Nottingham, Institute of Race Relations, 1995) p. 99

⁶¹ In the DOP, the area presented in most detail is that of Israeli/Palestinian co-operation in joint economic initiatives. This is found in article 6 part 2, article 7 part 4, article 11, article 12, article 16, and particularly in annexes 2 part 3f., 3 and 4 which are an integral part of the DOP. Key terms such as ‘co-operation’ and ‘co-ordination’, are used in reference to areas embracing all aspects of the economic, from tourism to joint industry and significantly, to the field of ‘communication and media.’ The Declaration of Principles.

As the weaker party in the negotiations, the Palestinians in both forums could propose alternatives, but were powerless to translate proposals into anything more permanent or substantial. Israeli security needs have always been a major consideration for Israelis themselves and also for successive American administrations. Proposals addressing Israeli security needs both in the Washington negotiations and in the Oslo negotiations can be seen to follow a pattern proposed by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy published in a 1988 report entitled Building for Peace. The report states,

'Building for peace, the basic strategy recommended in this report, is likely to succeed, however, only if the next president is prepared to pursue an initiative in the Arab-Israeli arena that does not initially follow the traditional diplomatic route of attempting to bring the parties to the negotiating table in short order. It will only be successful if he remains conscious of the need to maintain Israel's superiority and the inter-Arab balance of power in favour of the parties of moderation and reconciliation.'⁶²

In the Declaration of Principles, the elected Palestinian authority is to have internal responsibility for maintaining civil order whilst Israel would be responsible for Israeli settlers within the territories allocated for Palestinian civil control. Although there is mention of 'mutual dignity and security', the emphasis remains on Israeli security.⁶³ Article eight under the heading 'Public Order and Security' states that,

'Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order.'⁶⁴

By stipulating that settlers within the Palestinian autonomous territories would not be answerable to the Palestinian authorities, this in effect allows the Israeli police open

op. cit. pp. 118-126

⁶² *Building for Peace, an American Strategy for the Middle East*, (Washington DC, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1988), Introduction, p. 5

⁶³ Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 117

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 119

access to the Palestinian autonomous territories and in so doing threatens Palestinian security. The above cited clause is reinforced in Annex 2 to Article 17 of the DOP which states that the agreement for withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho,

'---will include, among other things:

Structure, powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority in these areas except external security, settlements, Israelis, foreign relations, and other mutually agreed matters.⁶⁵

The importance which the Israeli negotiators attached to this clause is indicated by the fact that the same clause is stressed once again in the last annex in the 'Agreed Minutes to the DOP' which are cited as an integral part of the DOP. Annex 2 states,

'It is understood that, subsequent to the Israeli withdrawal Israel will continue to be responsible for external security, and for internal security and public order of settlements and Israelis. Israeli military forces and civilians may continue to use roads frequently within the Gaza Strip and Jericho area.'⁶⁶

In the draft of the 'Agreed Statement of Principles' negotiated in Washington DC in May 1993, the Israeli delegation had formulated a similar clause to the one incorporated into the DOP negotiated in the Oslo secret channel. It states,

'During the interim self-government arrangements period, a major change will occur in the existing situation in the territories, by transferring to the Palestinians the vast majority of the functions of the civil administration, which will be dissolved. Israel will maintain responsibility for the overall security of the territories; Israel will also be responsible for the Israelis there.'⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 122

⁶⁶ Annex 2 to Article 10 of the 'Agreed Minutes to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements' which are themselves 'regarded as an integral part hereof' (p. 121). *Declaration of Principles*, *op. cit.*, p. 127

⁶⁷ 'Israeli Delegation, Draft of "Agreed Statement of Principles," Washington DC, 6 May 1993'. *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement*, *op. cit.*, p. 96

This suggests an interplay between texts negotiated by Israeli and Palestinian officials in Washington DC and in the Oslo channel. Analysis of key documents suggests that there was a consistency of approach to the issue of Israeli security by Israeli negotiators in the Oslo channel and in the official negotiations held in Washington DC. As for the Palestinian proposals, they remain constrained and in some ways stunted by the great power differential between the negotiating parties. The United States' mediation in the Washington rounds echoed Israeli proposals, suggesting a bias intervention which served to reinforce the proposals of the stronger party, leaving the weaker party, the Palestinians powerless to implement alternatives. In the Oslo forum, Norway's intervention brought the PLO into direct negotiations with the Israeli government, but it remained outside of negotiations, so that the power imbalance remained unchecked by an external party. In fact, by its very absence, Norway implicitly endorsed discourses articulating and privileging Israeli security concerns, enabling their legitimisation through the DOP.

4. The conflict as a discourse on Palestinian identity

The nucleus of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute related to the distinction between Palestinian and Arab. Were the Palestinian people part of a wider Arab whole as successive Likud and Labour Israeli governments had insisted over the years or were they a nation? Israeli official recognition of the PLO would carry with it an Israeli recognition of Palestinian rights to self-determination. Uri Savir, head of the Israeli Foreign Service in 1993 and negotiator in the Oslo Channel emphasised the importance of mutual recognition.

‘Mutual recognition is more important than the DOP because it is the centre of the conflict. It turns the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an existential to a political conflict.’⁶⁸

The PLO had officially recognised Israel's right to exist in November 1988. However, Israel reserved its official acknowledgement of the PLO until *after* the Declaration of Principles had been negotiated between the Israeli Labour government, led

by Rabin and the PLO. The agreement was initialled at a secret ceremony held in Oslo on 20 August 1993.⁶⁹ The letters of mutual recognition were exchanged on 9 September 1993, four days before the official DOP signing ceremony. By not recognising the PLO before or during the negotiations, Israel was able to negotiate from a position of greater political advantage where the discrepancy in power between the negotiators was used to induce greater concessions from the PLO negotiating team. The PLO finally uses the phraseology stipulated by Israel and 'recognises the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security' whilst Prime Minister Rabin's letter containing Israel's official recognition of the PLO is made in one sentence and is made contingent on the PLO's above quoted declaration.⁷⁰ Rabin writes,

'In response to your letter of Sept. 9, 1993, I wish to confirm to you that *in light of the PLO commitments included in your letter* the Government of Israel has decided to recognise the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process.'⁷¹ (italics added for emphasis)

It is important to stress that although the PLO was a powerful international and political symbol of a Palestinian national identity, the intifada had created another expression of a Palestinian identity and also opened up a space for other groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad which were now challenging the PLO for leadership of the political struggle for Palestinian self-determination. Whereas the PLO was prepared to negotiate a settlement with Israel, agreeing to the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as Palestinian sovereign territories, the Islamic groups refused to negotiate with Israel and sought a Palestinian Islamic state in the whole of Mandate Palestine. It is interesting to analyse the way in which Palestinian identity was dealt with by the mediators and by Israel in the Washington and Oslo negotiations.

⁶⁸ Savir is quoted by Makovsky D., *Making Peace with the PLO*, (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1996), pp. 69-70

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 72

⁷⁰ 'PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin' . *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement*, op. cit., p. 128

The intifada had set the scene for the international peace conference which began in Madrid in the autumn of 1991. The existence of a Palestinian identity was no longer in question. This was one major achievement of the intifada. A Western recognition of a Palestinian identity was therefore secured outside a negotiating forum and in the absence of an external party. At the international peace conference, Israel under a right-wing leadership until June 1992, attempted to side step this feature. Shamir categorically refused to negotiate with a Palestinian delegation and insisted on a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, signalling the Likud government's favoured outcome to negotiations, the Jordanian option. The Jordanian option had been the preferred outcome to the conflict favoured by the United States up until the summer of 1988. However, after the intifada and Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank, even the United States had had to redefine its foreign policy vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as we saw in chapter five, in light of these developments. Israel however refused to react to these changes. The Jordanian option had once been a legitimate and dominant discourse. By 1991 however, it had become a marginalised, dissenting discourse, overtaken by other events. Israel was now standing alone, a lone voice, constrained by what had by 1991 become the wilderness of the international arena.

As alluded to briefly in the section above on the conflict as Arab-Israeli, both the DOP and the draft statements that were negotiated by the official negotiating teams in Washington DC acknowledged the existence of a Palestinian people. The crucial difference between the official negotiations in Washington DC in May 1993 and the DOP relates to the PLO. Whereas, as we saw in the section above, the Palestinian negotiating team in Washington DC in May 1993 was self-confessedly affiliated to the PLO, the Israeli negotiators and the United States continued to ignore this fact. In a Ten-Point statement issued by the Palestinian team in Washington DC at the end of May 1993, the team articulated its frustration. It stated,

⁷¹ 'Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat', *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement*, op. cit., p. 129

'All decision-making and policy decisions are taken by the PLO. All the delegation's expenses are being met by the PLO. The US has accepted these realities and deals with them indirectly. It is time for a direct and honest approach which would redress a situation which has adversely affected the peace talks and US-Palestinian relations. It is inexplicable to us that the US as a cosponsor and full partner addresses the leaderships of all parties involved in the negotiations with the exception of the Palestinian side. Such an attitude is neither fair, practical nor constructive.'⁷²

By negotiating a secret deal with the Israelis through the Oslo channel, Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO was able to show that he was in control of negotiations and that the Israelis would have to negotiate with him if they wanted a deal. The DOP explicitly refers to 'the PLO team' and in so doing the Rabin government was the first Israeli government ever to officially recognise the existence of a Palestinian people and crucially the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination, a struggle which the PLO symbolised.⁷³

5. From Palestinian autonomy to self-determination

It is important to note that nowhere in the Declaration of Principles document are the Palestinians promised self-determination. Many Palestinians, led by the PLO, were quick to claim that the structures set up for the interim period would eventually lead to Palestinian statehood. This is in itself very significant, since it reflects the concept of discursive tramlines which I am using in this study, that is to say, that symbols or interpretative schemes lay down tramlines which direct future discourses.

Self-determination has always been understood to mean statehood. The concept of autonomy was first articulated by Prime Minister Begin in 1977 as a means of bypassing Palestinian claims to self-determination. The concept of autonomy remained the blueprint

⁷² 'Palestinian Delegation, "Ten-Point Statement on the Peace Process", Washington DC, 28 May 1993'. *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement*, op. cit., p. 104

⁷³ Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 117

upon which future negotiations were based until May 1993.⁷⁴ Change around this issue only occurred officially between May and August 1993. On the Palestinian side however, acceptance of a two-state solution began in the early 1970's, expressed first in implicit but gradually explicit discursive constructs. In November and December 1988 the PLO renounced violence and articulated its acceptance of Israel and a two-state solution.⁷⁵

In the Declaration of Principles, Israel finally recognised the PLO and in so doing accepted the Palestinian people's 'legitimate and political rights'.⁷⁶ The Oslo agreement proposed the establishment of an elected Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority or the Council for an interim period of five years. Final status negotiations were scheduled to begin no later than the third year after the Council had been elected. Significantly, nowhere in the agreement is self-determination mentioned, however there are clear indications that that is what is envisaged in the long term. For example, official acknowledgement of the PLO would imply acceptance of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, since the PLO symbolised this struggle. Secondly, for the first time ever, Israel agreed that 'the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. This change is very important for it impinges on the construction 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people' present in both the Camp David accords and in the Declaration of Principles. When it was used in the Camp David accords, Begin accepted its inclusion because he believed it was nullified by a continued Israeli military presence in the occupied territories and by 'people' he had only meant the Palestinians of the occupied territories.⁷⁷ These two qualifications were no longer present in the Declaration of Principles. Israel had accepted the PLO and there was to be withdrawal and redeployment of Israeli forces from areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A Palestinian Council was to be elected to replace the Israeli Civilian Administration in the

⁷⁴ 'Israeli Delegation, Draft of 'Agreed Statement of Principles', Washington DC, 6 May 1993', op. cit., p. 96

⁷⁵ The Palestinian Declaration of Independence, 15 November 1988, and Yasser Arafat's Geneva Press Statement, 15 December 1988, Lukacs Y., *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, a Documentary Record*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 411 and 434 respectively.

⁷⁶ Declaration of Principles, preamble, op. cit., p. 117

⁷⁷ Smith C.D, 'Lebanon, the West Bank and the Camp David Accords, 1977-84: The Palestinian Equation in the Arab-Israeli Conflict', chapter nine, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 255

occupied territories. However, significantly the Israeli Military Authority which governed the occupied territories was not to be dissolved but 'withdrawn'.⁷⁸

The powers accorded to the Palestinian Council in the interim agreement to cover five years may be described as powers of local government, 'education and culture, health and social welfare, direct taxation and tourism.'⁷⁹ In spite of provisions for extensive Israeli/Palestinian economic co-operation, key functions associated with the administration of a state are left in Israel's control. Annex 2 states,

'The above agreement will include, among other things structure, powers and responsibilities of the Palestinian authority in these areas except external security, settlements, Israelis, foreign relations, and other mutually agreed matters.'⁸⁰

The structure of the Declaration of Principles interim agreement links the interim agreement to final status negotiations. Such a connection appears to draw on a similar epistemology to that of changing discourses whereby discursive structures set tramlines which direct future discourses. In a bid to curtail such an outcome, article 5 declares that:

'The two parties agree that the outcome of the permanent status negotiations should not be prejudiced or pre-empted by agreements reached for the interim period.'⁸¹

Nowhere in either the DOP or draft documents used in the official negotiations in Washington DC is there any mention of Palestinian self-determination. In the DOP, the Palestinian team was able to negotiate the transfer tasks of civil administration from an Israeli governing body to an elected Palestinian Council or Interim Self-Government Authority to govern

⁷⁸ 'Interim Agreement', article 7, Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 119

⁷⁹ 'Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities', article 6, Declaration of Principles. op. cit., p. 118

⁸⁰ Annex 2, Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 122

⁸¹ 'Transitional Period and Permanent Status Negotiations', article 5, Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 118

'the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.'⁸²

There is consistency in the text of the DOP and in the Israeli Draft Statement agreed in Washington DC in May 1993. The May document states that the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority (PISGA) which is referred to as the Palestinian Executive Council (PEC)

'will assume, executive and judicial powers (by independent judicial organs) per the agreement. The PEC will be vested with legislative powers within the responsibilities transferred to it, subject to agreed principles and to mutual confirmation concerning compatibility with the agreement.' However, 'overall security will remain under Israel's responsibility.'⁸³

The PEC's jurisdiction is left vague as it is in the DOP as we shall see below. The Israeli delegation's May 1993 states:

'The authority of the PEC will apply within the territories, as appropriate, in accordance with its agreed operational-functional powers and responsibilities, to be further elaborated in the negotiations.'⁸⁴

Analysis of the DOP reveals consistency in the way in which the Israeli delegation in Washington DC dealt with the nature of a Palestinian authority and its jurisdiction. In the interim self-government arrangements, Israel would transfer civil administration of Palestinian populations within the occupied territories. Whereas in the May 1993 document, the vague term 'the territories' was adopted, by September 1993, an equally vague and ambiguous construct is used. Article 4 of the DOP states:

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ 'Israeli Delegation, Draft of "Agreed Statement of Principles", Washington DC, 6 May 1993'.

op. cit., p. 97

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

'Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory---'.⁸⁵

As alluded to above, this could mean Palestinian administration of one village, a dozen villages or fifty villages. Given the power differential or asymmetry between the protagonists, this construction favours the stronger party. If Israel decided to transfer civil administration to the Palestinians in only one village in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it would technically be fulfilling its obligations under the Declaration of Principles. It is important to remember that this is only applicable to the interim phase of five years. A significant difference between the May and September documents relates to UNSCR 242 and 338. Whereas in the May document only the negotiations were to be based on these two resolutions, reminiscent of the phraseology in the Camp David accords, the Palestinian negotiating team in Oslo were able to secure that 'a permanent settlement [would be] based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338'.⁸⁶ Final status negotiations were to begin at the beginning of the third year of the five-year interim self-government period and conclude within two years. During this time, some of the most difficult issues to resolve were to be discussed, 'Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and co-operation with other neighbours, and other issues of common interest'.⁸⁷ The underlying mechanism of interlink whereby the interim period would pave the way for the final status negotiations allowed for an optimistic interpretation of the DOP linking civil administration of 'West Bank and Gaza Strip territory' to eventual Palestinian self-determination.

This assumption, never explicitly articulated in the Washington negotiations or the Declaration of Principles document relates to what this study of changing discourses focuses on; that is, that there exists an interplay between the environment and players within that environment. The DOP may be interpreted as promising Palestinian self-determination if one accepts this premise. The DOP contained an official Israeli acknowledgement of the PLO and implicitly of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination coupled with an acceptance that a permanent settlement of the dispute should be based on UNSCR 242 and

⁸⁵ Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 118

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 117. See also the Israeli Delegation Draft of May 1993, op. cit., p. 96

⁸⁷ Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 118

338. These discourses reinforced an existing narrative defining the conflict, which acknowledged the existence of a Palestinian people, its right to self-determination and the occupied territories as *Palestinian* occupied territories.⁸⁸

Conclusion

‘The main difficulty I was told, listen, you see this dish with meat and potatoes? This is rotten. It was left out of the fridge for three days. Make it better. So I had to take all the ingredients. I had to work with existing ingredients. This is a disgusting example, but I was taking expressions that existed and playing with them. Adding a few words here, a few words there, moving them.--- So I had the cubes, but I built a different tower with them.’⁸⁹

The success of the Declaration of Principles lies in a dual tactic, exclusion of problematic words and the inclusion of broad proposals to which both parties could subscribe. The deferral of key issues to final status negotiations enabled an Israeli-Palestinian agreement which in turn created an environment of trust, laying down the tracks for future negotiations to discuss the highly sensitive issues of ‘Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and co-operation with other neighbours, and other issues of common interest.’⁹⁰ This strategy relies on the *process element of mediation* whereby deferral of key issues generates momentum for continued dialogue between the protagonists. The latitude provided by ambiguous phraseology in the Declaration of Principles enabled both parties to sell the deal to their respective constituencies. As Eugene Bird asserts,

⁸⁸ The occupied territories were first recognised by the United Nations as Palestinian territories in December 1988. Resolution 43/176 -Question of Palestine- of the 43rd session of the UN General Assembly on the Palestine Question - Geneva, December 1988, the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 18, No. 3, Spring 1989, Issue 71), p. 174

⁸⁹ Interview with Mr. Joel Singer, the Israeli lawyer negotiating the Declaration of Principles document in Oslo. Interview conducted 21 May 1997, Washington DC

⁹⁰ Declaration of Principles, op. cit., p. 118

‘This thing is nothing but a labyrinth. You can do anything you want with the Declaration of Principles.--- You can say it says this or you can say it says that, or you can get contradictory interpretations on almost all points.’⁹¹

Interpretations change as the relationship between the protagonists changes over time. Language, it is contended in this thesis does not reflect reality, but constructs reality. This chapter has sought to illustrate that central themes which constructed the conflict were re-defined by September 1993. It is important to stress that the Declaration of Principles sets out a timetable for future negotiations. It does not signal the final outcome. The accord stipulates that there is to be a testing out period to see whether mutual co-existence in adjacent territories is viable. The agreement covers an interim period of five years during which time further negotiations would take place in order to arrive at a final settlement. Israeli recognition of a Palestinian identity was no longer perceived by Israel as threatening its legitimacy in the region.⁹² In the Declaration of Principles, the conflict was no longer,

1. Israeli-Arab but Israeli-*Palestinian*
2. solely zero-sum, but was now joined by a *positive-sum* construction of the conflict
3. a discourse on Israeli security but a discourse on *joint security*
4. a discourse on the negation of a Palestinian identity. A *Palestinian identity* was finally acknowledged by Israel.
5. a discourse on autonomy, but was now about *Palestinian self-determination*.

⁹¹ Interview with Mr. Eugene Bird, president of the Council for the National Interest based in Washington DC. Mr. Bird served in the US Foreign Service 1952-75. Interview conducted 8 May 1997, Washington DC

⁹² Both Golda Meir and Menachim Begin, Israeli Prime Ministers in the late 1960's and 1970's recognised the potential threat to Israel of officially acknowledging the existence of a Palestinian people, for such an acknowledgement they feared would delegitimise the Zionist project in Palestine in the international political arena. This was alluded to in chapter two. Not only a Palestinian people, but also the PLO, the symbol of the Palestinian peoples' struggle for self-determination was officially recognised by Rabin's government in the 1993 Declaration of Principles document.

The Declaration of Principles is an eclectic text, drawing from and building on multitude of texts which preceded it. The mediation process is less about conflict resolution as such and more about the transformation of conflict through changing discourses. An agreement reached between two parties with such different expectations and objectives, must necessarily be articulated in such a way as to enable more than one reading or interpretation of the text. The process of change may be described as one of 'negotiating narratives'.⁹³

⁹³ Michels J. 'National Vision and the Negotiation of Narratives: The Oslo Agreement', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 24, No. 1, Autumn 1994). p. 28

CONCLUSION

For many, the DOP was a sell out of the Palestinian cause. Edward Said and Norman Finkelstein were two critics of the agreement. Said called the DOP 'an instrument of Palestinian surrender, a Palestinian Versailles.'¹ Finkelstein saw in the negotiated interim agreement, a fulfilment and legitimisation of the Allon plan formulated by the Labour party soon after the 1967 war. The Allon plan called for 'Israel's retention of nearly half of the West Bank with the areas of "dense Arab settlement" granted an ersatz autonomy.'² An Israeli encirclement of Palestinian towns and villages would prevent their geographic expansion and cut them off from each other, thus removing the possibility of Palestinian self-determination. Finkelstein contends:

'Oslo marked the triumph of Israel's encirclement strategy. Current Labour Party leader Ehud Barak recently observed, "Yitzhak Rabin was thinking in terms of the Allon Plan till the day he died." Belief that Oslo signalled Israel's commitment to leave the occupied territories betrays a fundamental misapprehension. In every instance where Israel has truly withdrawn from conquered land, it was due to the effective application of force.'³

Six years after the Declaration of Principles was signed, the five-year interim period has elapsed and final status negotiations have not been completed. Netanyahu's obduracy vis-à-vis the peace process prevented the progress envisaged by his Labour predecessors Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres. To date, the Palestinian Authority is only in control of a total of 9.1% of the West Bank, known as area A. It exercises civil control over Palestinians and shares security control with Israel in a further 20.7%, known as area B, whilst 70.2% of the

¹ Said E., 'Palestinian Versailles', *Progressive*, (December 1993), p. 22. Quoted by Michels J., 'National Vision and the Negotiation of Narratives: The Oslo Agreement', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 24, No. 1, Autumn 1994), p. 28

² Finkelstein N., 'Oslo: The Last Stage of Conquest', (LAW Conference Paper, New York City, June 1998). p. 7

³ *ibid.*, p. 9

West Bank is still under Israeli security and civil control.⁴ Pessimistic and critical reactions to the Declaration of Principles would appear to be vindicated. However, if one assesses the DOP through a discourse analytic framework, fresh insights are gained which privilege the Palestinian cause. One of the main features of the document is that it reflects the significant power asymmetry between the Israelis and Palestinians. However, the very fact that an Israeli government acknowledged the existence of a unified 'Palestinian people', as Michels notes, 'here a singular subject, unified grammatically as it were'⁵, not only impinges on present narratives, but also on past interpretations of the conflict, challenging interpretations of history which were premised on the negation of a Palestinian people.

'Since the narration of events presupposes a structure of beginning, middle and end, changes in the narrative present (the middle) can force a reconsideration of the narrative past (the beginning).'⁶

The recent Berlin declaration issued by the European Union, can be situated along a new tramline which was paved by many discourses, including the Declaration of Principles. Indeed the Oslo agreement is mentioned explicitly in this document with the European Union member states calling upon the parties in the Israeli-Arab dispute to

'reaffirm their commitments to the basic principles established within the framework of Madrid, Oslo and subsequent agreements, in accordance with UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338.'⁷

The Berlin declaration not only recognised the 'unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination including the option of a state', but also significantly puts this within a time

⁴ 'The West Bank after the first stage of Israeli redeployment according to the Wye Memorandum, November 1998', *Report on Israeli Settlement in the Occupied Territories*, A Bimonthly Publication of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, edited by Geoffrey Aronson. (Vol. 9, No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1999), p. 3

⁵ Michels, *op. cit.*, p. 32

⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 32-3

⁷ The Berlin declaration on the Middle East Peace Process, European Council, Berlin 24-5 March 1999, (internet).

frame of one year.⁸ This important document highlights the inter-textual or multi-layered component which underpins discursive change.

The Declaration of Principles document can be judged differently depending on how it is 'read' or assessed. It is true to say that it is a highly ambiguous text which as Edward Said noted defied interpretation, calling it 'an interpreter's nightmare, a patchwork of --- deliberate ambiguities and obfuscations.'⁹ However, as Michels argues, this is a vital component of any agreement between two parties who envisage different outcomes.

'The intention of diplomatic agreement is precisely to allow conflicting interpretations, and conflicting narratives, to coexist.'¹⁰

A Brief Recapitulation

The application of discourse analysis to the study of conflict resolution as an interactive, highly political process, challenged the narrow approach adopted by much of the conventional mediation literature. Firstly, the input of *internal as well as external* agents was included in the investigation of the mediation process. Secondly, the application of a discourse analytic framework to the study of mediation does not eschew notions of track one and track two, but focuses on the way in which such processes impinge upon the narrative construction of the conflict they are addressing. The focus of research is shifted. By utilising this new 'lens', different components of the mediation process are sharpened. This in turn re-directs research leading to different questions being posed. For example, the main area of focus for track one as we saw in chapter one is on the role of the third party and his or her ability, using positive or negative inducements (carrots and sticks) to bring about a change in the protagonists' behaviour. Research using this 'lens' focuses on the role of power and tactics of coercion. In a similar way to track one, track two shares a preoccupation with changing the protagonists' violent behaviour towards each other.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Said E., 'Rally and Resist for Palestinian Independence', *The Nation*, (14 February 1994), p. 190. Quoted by Michels J., 'National Vision and the Negotiation of Narratives: The Oslo Agreement', *op. cit.*, p. 30

¹⁰ Michels, *ibid.*, p. 30

Advocates of track two however reject the carrot and stick approach in favour of an analytical approach in which the protagonists are encouraged to change their way of thinking about the adversary. A discourse analytic approach would assess the way in which track one and track two initiatives impacted not on the protagonists', but on the narrative construction of the conflict as represented by the hegemonic discourse. This is a significantly different way of understanding what mediation entails. By assessing the mediation process from a different epistemological base, that of discourse analysis, a different set of questions arise.

1. How do surrounding narratives constrain/enable actors situated within such structures?
2. How do protagonists impact on the processes they are situated within?
3. In what ways can different parties impact on narrative structures constructing the conflict?
4. What are the differences in the ways protagonists in an asymmetrical relationship of power relate to the dominant narrative?
5. How can protagonists work with other parties to change discourses?
6. How does a marginal, dissenting discourse become a challenging discourse and then a dominant discourse?

In this thesis, I attempted to investigate the role of external parties in the narrative construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The aim was to illustrate the utility of situating mediation within a discourse analytic framework. Situated within an epistemological framework which ascribes *constitutive as opposed to reflective* powers to discourses, research carried out in this thesis revealed that the mediation process incorporates a plethora of interpretations emerging from multiple agencies. Within such a framework, mediation is no longer to be understood as an act external to the conflict, but is now a constitutive part of it, in the sense that it impinges upon its discursive construction. David Campbell in his study of the narrative construction of the Bosnian conflict notes the way in which an intervention by an external party necessarily impinges on the discursive construction of the conflict.

‘Intervening necessarily involves a questioning of that which is established, and that questioning betrays a concern or dissatisfaction with what is settled and creates the conditions of possibility for the formulation of alternatives.’¹¹

Mediation, I argued, was a highly political, interactive, discursive and situated process which may involve a number of agents, both internal and external to the conflict, who may not all necessarily be identified as ‘mediators’ in the conventional sense, but are all mediators in the sense attributed to this term in this study, as *mediators of texts constituting the conflict*. Research undertaken in this thesis sought to relocate the spotlight onto the constructive role of discourses. The focus throughout was on the interactive and constitutive process between the text and the various parties who intervene in the conflict.

The structure of this thesis was organised around chronological lines in order to highlight the multi-layered nature of discourses. Chapter one situated discourse analysis within a theoretical context. Chapter two offered an overview of the conflict, introducing the reader to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and locating five major themes which emerged around the conflict. Chapter three located the five analytical themes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, identified in chapter two, in the pre-1948 period, that is before the creation of the state of Israel. The discursive tramlines of the conflict were laid during this period and were to prove very difficult to change. Chapters four and five, by adopting changing discourses as an analytical tool to guide research, continued analysis of discursive change around the five core themes to the conflict culminating with the Declaration of Principles in 1993. Chapter six offered a textual analysis of the Declaration of Principles and mediation processes which led to it, highlighting continuities and changes.

The original contribution of this study to the body of existing knowledge lies in advancing the idea of mediation as changing discourses. Mediation I argued, was a situated discursive process which draws upon a pre-existing set of discourses around the issues and parties in the conflict and in turn generates a renewed interpretation of the conflict through

¹¹ Campbell D., chapter one, ‘Ethics, Politics and Responsibility: the Bosnian Challenge’, *National Deconstruction, Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 4

its very intervention. Within such a framework, both the environment and actors within it - who are not all 'mediators' in the conventional sense, but are mediators of texts - are implicated in the mediation process. The metaphor used in the introduction was that of water being poured into a glass bottle and assuming the shape of that bottle. The fluid mediation process takes on the shape of the bottle into which it is poured, the shape of the environment defined by structures of enablement and constraint. However, this thesis illustrated that discursive formations generated by the mediation process itself, in certain instances altered the shape of the structures in place, much in the same way as the freezing of the water in the bottle would expand and shatter the structure into which it had initially been poured.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: insights gained by applying discourse analysis to the mediation process

The contention made in this thesis is that conventional mediation literature has not paid enough attention to the ways in which *discursive representations of a conflict impact upon the mediation process*. They do so in the following ways:

1. How a mediator defines a conflict, issues, parties to the conflict, relations between the parties and significant outsiders.
2. How a mediator interacts with the conflict, the content of proposals and how the facilitation of communication is carried out.
3. What sources of influence are used in order to achieve an outcome.

Let us reconsider the period 1897-1993 focusing on these areas in particular. If we consider the period prior to 1948 which was assessed in chapter three, the conflict which emerged between Palestinians and Jews in mandate Palestine was inter-communal. Britain as the Mandate power at the time, found itself towards the end of its Mandate, constrained by the very structures which it had erected, most notably in the Balfour Declaration of 1917

and the British Mandate of 1922 which, according to the Israeli Proclamation of Independence, 'gave explicit international recognition to the historic connection of the Jewish people with Palestine and their right to reconstitute their National Home.'¹²

The British Foreign office reacted to the conflict differently, as time progressed and the inter-communal conflict persisted and intensified. It first responded to Zionist concerns and then, towards the very end of its Mandate, addressed Palestinian concerns, putting a ceiling on the number of Jews to enter Palestine in the MacDonald White Paper. During this early period as we saw in chapter three, the parties were defined by Britain as the colonial power, as the Jewish and Palestinian communities in Mandate Palestine. The issues addressed, related first to numbers of Jews coming into Palestine and to the fulfilment of identity needs which were translated by Britain into territorial division of the land, first proposed in 1937 by Lord Peel.

Before the intervention of the United Nations in 1947, it was Britain as colonial power who was responsible for enabling and facilitating Jewish immigration into Palestine. The inter-communal strife which followed was as a direct result of this. A perceived demographic change in Palestine created fear and apprehension amongst the Palestinians and led to clashes between Jews and Palestinians. The linkage between the fulfilment of identity needs and territoriality can be traced back to Zionist tenets. In the Israeli Proclamation of Independence of 14 May 1948, the Provisional State Council (the forerunner of the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament) declared:

'The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed.--- Exiled from the Land of Israel the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all the countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom.

Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood. In recent decades, they returned in their masses.'¹³

¹² State of Israel Proclamation of Independence, Laqueur W. and Rubin B. (eds.), *The Israel-Arab Reader*, a

The phenomenon labelled Orientalism which was outlined in chapter two, facilitated Britain's espousal of the Zionist cause in the first half of the twentieth century. As Said notes, 'Orientalism was a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient.'¹⁴ The way in which this over-arching, largely literary Western narrative constructing the Orient portrayed the Arabs, enabled the Jewish settler movement to take root in Palestine. Britain's standing as a powerful colonial power within the international political arena enabled it to carry out its policies in Palestine. Giving the Jews a homeland in Palestine fitted in with the wider colonialist discourse of the time, providing a Western outpost in the Middle East. Speaking before the 1937 Peel Commission in favour of Zionist settlement in Palestine, Winston Churchill compared the Palestinians to a dog in a manger.

'I do not agree that the dog in a manger has the final right to the manger, even though he may have lain there for a very long time. I do not admit that right. I do not admit, for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to these people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race, or at any rate, a more worldly-wise race, to put it that way, has come in and taken their place.'¹⁵

Finkelstein notes that the conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine has been largely due to changed Western notions of that which is deemed acceptable. Whereas the colonialist enterprise during the nineteenth century was acceptable, colonialism gradually became unacceptable in the twentieth century. Finkelstein quotes Walter Laqueur who writes:

"'The tragedy of Zionism,' Walter Laqueur suggests, was 'that it appeared on the international scene when there were no longer empty spaces on the world map.' This

Documentary History of the Middle East, (Canada, Pelican Books, 1984), p. 126

¹³ State of Israel Proclamation of Independence, Laqueur W. and Rubin B. (eds.), *The Israel-Arab Reader*, op. cit., p. 125

¹⁴ Scott J., 'A Palestinian Confronts Time', *The New York Times*, (19 September 1998)

¹⁵ Ponting C., *Churchill*, (London, 1994), p. 254. Quoted by Finkelstein N. in 'Olso: The Last Stage of Conquest', (LAW Conference Paper, New York City, June 1998), p. 3

is not quite right. The tragedy -- if tragedy it was -- was that in the early twentieth century it was no longer permissible to **create** spaces on the world map: extermination ceased to be an option of conquest. The Zionist movement accordingly fixed its sights on expulsion -- or, to use the euphemism of that era, "population transfer." (bold in original)¹⁶

By bringing wider narratives, such as colonialism in this instance, into the study of the mediation process, the spotlight is shifted to become more inclusive. Situating mediation within a discourse analytic framework highlights the way in which various narratives impinge upon mediation, a process which is not confined to a triadic meeting in which an external party seeks to bring about change in the protagonists' behavioural patterns as in track one and track two stipulations.

At the end of the Second World War, an Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry was set up to resolve the Jewish refugee problem in the former axis countries. The end of the Second World War, the horrors of the Holocaust, President Truman's electoral considerations as well as the continuing Palestinian-Jewish inter-communal conflict, all impacted on the mediation process. Whereas British proposals made in 1946 reinforced similar proposals made in 1937, the intervention of the United States and a shift in the balance-of-power by 1945 in its favour, brought about changes privileging the Zionist enterprise in Palestine. Swayed by a strong vocal advocacy amongst American Jews for Jewish immigration into Palestine, as was alluded to in chapter three, coupled with Western sympathy for the Jewish people given their suffering during the war, Truman, in spite of British objections, was behind the commission of enquiry's recommendations to admit 100,000 Jews into Palestine with provisions for further Jewish immigration. This illustrates the way in which surrounding narratives impact on the mediation process. Issues of Jewish security overshadowed Palestinian calls for the right to self-determination and a halt to Jewish immigration into Palestine. The Israel Proclamation of Independence published 14 May 1948 alludes to this linkage.

¹⁶ Laqueur W., *A History of Zionism*, (New York: 1976), p. 597. Quoted by Finkelstein. op. cit., p. 5

'The recent holocaust, which engulfed millions of Jews in Europe, proved anew the need to solve the problem of the homelessness and lack of independence of the Jewish people by means of the re-establishment of the Jewish State, which would open the gates to all Jews and endow the Jewish people with equality of status among the family of nations.'¹⁷

The United Nations' role as mediator in 1947 was constrained by existing discourses. The strength of the United States at the end of the Second World War was demonstrated in its coercion of six states into voting in favour of the UN General Assembly resolution 181 calling for the partition of Mandate Palestine.¹⁸ Although the Palestinians vehemently opposed partition, Israel declared its independence 14 May 1948. A Jewish state would now ensure unlimited immigration. Jewish statehood also changed the nature of the conflict. What had been an inter-communal conflict between the Jews and Palestinians in Mandate Palestine was now transformed into an inter-state conflict between Israel and the Arabs. The Palestinians were overshadowed to such an extent, as to allow Golda Meir's famous statement in 1969 that 'There are no Palestinians'.¹⁹ 1947-49 therefore was a crucial moment of change. With the invasion of five Arab armies in 1948, the conflict was transformed, at least within the Western political arena, from a Palestinian-Jewish conflict to an inter-state Arab-Israeli conflict. A preoccupation with Jewish immigration into Palestine and territorial divisions of the land were now replaced by a new set of issues. The protagonists had changed. States were now the players and the Palestinians marginalised. They now featured only as 'refugees'. Well over half of the Palestinian people fled their homes and became refugees and the area under Israeli control grew to just under 80% of Palestine.²⁰ The legal and international status of the Palestinians changed within a very short space of time. The Palestinian people were now territorially and politically excluded from Palestine, whereas the Jews who had immigrated into Palestine were legitimised internationally through their membership of the club of states. The United Nations mediated the armistice agreements

¹⁷ State of Israel Proclamation of Independence, op. cit., p. 126

¹⁸ Gee J., chapter one 'Independence and Catastrophe', *Unequal Conflict*, (London, Pluto, 1998), p. 53

¹⁹ Shlaim A., 'Prelude to the Accord: Likud, Labour and the Palestinians', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (Vol. 23, No. 2, Winter 1994), p. 6

of the first Arab-Israeli wars and significantly, the Palestinians were left outside of the negotiating forum.

As we saw in chapter four, 1948-87 was a period of great change within the international political arena. Many of these changes impacted on the portrayal of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its main protagonists. Arab dissatisfaction with the international community's handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulted in the outbreak of an Arab-Israeli war on average once every decade. The 1956 Suez War illustrated the international dimension of the Middle East conflict, whilst the 1967 war, with hindsight, can be seen as a significant landmark in the evolution of the conflict. The sweeping Israeli victory against an allied Arab army resulted in Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the Sinai, the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem and a further wave of Palestinian refugees. The response of the United Nations, responding to new narratives generated by the war, was to reinforce the Palestinians as 'refugees', the conflict as Arab-Israeli and the formula for its resolution as 'land for peace', codified in UN Security Council resolution 242. With no change coming about through diplomatic channels in peacetime, a pattern emerges whereby change occurs in the aftermath of violent conflict when the international community is forced to react to a war situation in the Middle East.

The Arab failure to champion the Palestinian cause encouraged the growth of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Although originally created by the Arab League as a means of controlling the Palestinians, the PLO, under the leadership of Yasser Arafat provided an international focus, highlighting the plight of the Palestinians and their struggle for self-determination. It is important to stress the divergence between Arab and Western perceptions of the Palestinians and their cause. The existence of a Palestinian people has never been questioned by other Arabs. The struggle for acknowledgement and legitimisation of a Palestinian people was waged to convince a Western audience. Golda Meir's claim that the Palestinians did not exist, presented the Palestinians, as Edward Said notes, with 'the slightly preposterous challenge of

²⁰ See, chapter one, 'Independence and Catastrophe', *Unequal Conflict*, op. cit., pp. 56-7

disproving her'.²¹ The 1973 Arab-Israeli war saw yet another Arab defeat and underscored Israel's strength in the region, supported by the United States. UN Security Council resolution 338 reinforced the 'land for peace' formula proposed in 1967. What began as an inter-communal conflict between Jews and Palestinians in Palestine, was now an inter-state conflict between Israel and bordering Arab states. The international community, dominated by Western powers through the set-up of the United Nations, can be seen to repeatedly react to the immediate changes, such as the occupation of territory. The United Nations in its reactive role, never attempted to formally question why Arab states were resorting to war. It only sought to re-establish the status quo and secure a cessation of hostilities. This shortsighted approach ensured that the conflict became protracted.

The 1973 war demonstrated Egypt's military strength and the risk which its geo-strategic location represented to Israel. It was politically expedient for Israel to neutralise it through a peace treaty. Sadat recognised that Israel, backed by the United States was here to stay and that war was very costly to Egypt's economy, bearing as it did the brunt of Arab military costs, being one of the largest and most powerful Arab states. The Camp David accords, brokered by the United States reflected these wider concerns. Israel agreed to give back the Sinai, in exchange for peace, albeit a cold peace with Egypt. The Camp David accords also dealt with the Palestinian question. They were promised autonomy in the West Bank. They would be able to rule themselves, but the land would remain in Israeli control in accordance with the Likud's vision of a Greater Israel, Eretz Israel. The PLO bitterly rejected the deal it offered them and denounced Egypt for its betrayal of the Palestinian cause. Situated within a discourse analytic framework, the Camp David accords are a significant watershed in the conflict. For the first time, a right-wing Likud government, under Menachem Begin recognised 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements' and also demarcated the West Bank as a distinct Palestinian area. The Camp David accords are also important for the reactions which they engendered, primarily from the European Union in the Venice Declaration of June 1980 in which the members of the European

²¹ Scott J. 'A Palestinian Confronts Time', The New York Times, (19 September 1998)

Union reinforced the construction used in the Camp David accords, 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people'.²² The international legitimisation of a Palestinian people, first by the United Nations in 1973 as we saw in chapter four, and then by the European Union, constructed powerful surrounding discursive structures which could not be ignored by future mediation processes.

The 1982 invasion of Lebanon named 'Peace for Galilee' was an Israeli attempt to pursue and eradicate the PLO whose guerilla bases were in Lebanon. In so doing, Israel in effect contributed to the redefinition of the conflict not as Arab-Israeli, but as Israeli-Palestinian. This example illustrates that it is not only external parties who define parties to a conflict, but also the protagonists themselves. The mediators often respond to narratives already articulated. It is also significant that the Israeli government saw in the PLO the symbol of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. Israel's contravention of international law by invading the sovereign territory of another state, Lebanon, was justified in the West by an existing narrative which portrayed the Jews as 'civilised'. I quoted Edward Said in chapter four who wrote:

'Since Israel is in effect a civilised, democratic country constitutively incapable of barbaric practices against Palestinians and other non-Jews, its invasion of Lebanon was *ipso facto* justified.'²³

This once again highlights the applicability to the mediation process of structures of enablement and constraint represented by existing surrounding narratives. It was only after the Palestinian camp massacres of Sabra and Shatila in September 1982 that the absent narrative defining Palestinian security needs emerged and Israel's image in the West 'as a civilised country incapable of barbaric practices', was questioned. The United States responded to the Palestinian camp massacres with the Reagan plan which rearticulated the 'land for peace' formula, but significantly omitted any reference to the

²² Point no. 4 of the Venice Declaration, 13 June 1980, Lukacs Y. (ed.), *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. A Documentary Record*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 18

²³ Quoted by Said E. in chapter four, 'Permission to Narrate', *The Politics of Dispossession*, (London, Vintage, 1995), p. 248

existence of a Palestinian people or its legitimate rights. This was a challenge to surrounding narrative structures articulated by the United Nations and the European Union, but by virtue of its political strength within the international arena, the United States was able to ignore certain discursive continuities which it did not like.

The period 1987-93 highlights mediation as a gradual, interactive process. This period sees the reiteration and reinforcement of themes central to the conflict, themes that had already been articulated prior to 1987 by external as well as internal parties. By the time the Palestinian uprising began in December 1987, the existence of a Palestinian people and their right to self-determination had already been recognised by the UN and EU, but it had not yet filtered through to become part of the hegemonic discourse constituting the conflict. It is important to stress the changes which occurred in discursive structures which surrounded and impacted upon the representations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The protracted nature of the Palestinian rebellion against Israeli military rule in the West Bank and Gaza resulted in Jordan officially relinquishing its claim to the West Bank in the summer of 1988. Shortly thereafter, in September 1988, American Secretary of State Shultz advocated confederation between Israel and a Palestinian entity in the occupied territories and significantly recognised the political rights of the Palestinian people in the Wye Plantation speech. The PLO was no longer synonymous with Palestinian sovereignty in the whole of Palestine/Israel, but was now, in large part due to the intifada, associated with political independence in the occupied territories. Significantly, Shultz's speech, as we saw in chapter five, incorporated narratives articulated by a Foreign Affairs journalist who was commissioned by the State Department to conduct a study to assess possible ways in which to overcome the highly problematic issue of Palestinian sovereignty in the occupied territories. Also significant in December 1988, Arafat, with the assistance of five American Jews from the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East, articulated his acceptance of UN resolutions 242 and 338, a precondition for the opening of US-PLO negotiations. The intervention of the group of five American Jews is highly significant for the study of changing discourses, and once again problematises the internal/external divide.

The period between December 1987 and May 1989 is a crucial one in the study of changing discourses and mediation leading to the Declaration of Principles document of 1993. As we saw in chapter five, much of what appeared in the DOP was a refinement of that which had been articulated by May 1989. As we saw above, by December 1988, Arafat had succeeded in opening dialogue channels with the United States. Also in December 1988 as we saw in chapter five, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution calling the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, occupied Palestinian territories. This was the first time that the UN had ever called East Jerusalem Palestinian. This proved to be a crucial turning point for the Israeli government. The intifada had set a series of reactive discourses in motion, narratives which gathered momentum and filtered through to the dominant discourse. The Palestinian uprising, by challenging the status quo or set, dominant narratives, can be seen to have opened up a possibility for a new form of intertextuality. The uprising up of the Palestinian community in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip signalled the emergence of a whole new text. It was not an entirely new discourse, but was one built on pre-existing narratives or texts of Palestinian history, articulating a Palestinian identity and the struggle for self-determination. The intifada grabbed the attention of a Western audience, showing them that a Palestinian people existed and was demanding the right to self-determination. As one Palestinian commented:

'Abu 'Ammar [Arafat's nom de guerre] succeeded in bringing our struggle to world attention in the 1960's and 1970's. In the 1980's, we in the territories have had to bring it back to the world's attention.'²⁴

By December 1988, exactly one year since the Palestinian uprising had begun, the PLO, thanks to the intervention of five American Jews, had succeeded in constraining Israeli discourses which negated the existence of the PLO. This was achieved by having negotiations with the US. The surrounding narrative structures had become too powerful for Israel to continue ignoring them. In May 1989, Israel's Likud government finally acquiesced to PLO participation in official negotiations which the United States was trying to get underway. Elections were held in the occupied territories as a means of bringing the

²⁴ Pressberg G., 'The Uprising: Causes and Consequences', the *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

PLO into negotiations in a seemingly legitimate way. The negotiations which followed, first in Washington, then in the Oslo secret channel were enabled in large part by political processes that were in place by May 1989.

Further change came in 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold, events which had a decisive impact on the protagonists. The Palestinians lost a powerful backer overnight, whilst Israel felt less threatened by the Palestinians in the absence of the Soviet Union. The Gulf War was another impinging discourse which impacted on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait shone the spotlight on the Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the double standards which the international community was guilty of, asking for Iraq's immediate withdrawal from Kuwait. Also significant was the fracture of the Arab coalition which had threatened Israel. The Arabs were divided between those who backed Saddam and those who opposed him. All these events created a new surrounding framework in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was located. President Bush spoke of a 'New World Order' at the end of the Gulf war and convened an international peace conference to address the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As was highlighted in chapter six, the structure of the Madrid and Washington peace negotiations was set, not by the United States government, but by a powerful pro-Israel think-tank based in Washington, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, WINEP. This overlap highlights the multi-tiered nature of the mediation process which draws multiple parties into the mediation process. It also questions the utility of the internal /external divide as it would appear that a fluid, highly inter-active process is at play. The international peace conference convened by the international community in the autumn of 1991 at the end of the Gulf war, sought a comprehensive peace settlement to the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Not only were the Arab states invited, but a PLO delegation was also to attend. As we saw in chapter five, Shamir refused to negotiate with a Palestinian delegation that was separate from a Jordanian delegation. A joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation would pre-determine negotiations by signalling a

Jordanian-Palestinian confederation and therefore negating the possibility of a Palestinian state. Shamir also refused to negotiate with Arafat or any other PLO leader based in Tunis, or by residents of East Jerusalem. Only local leaders from the West Bank and Gaza, in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation would be acceptable. As Avi Shlaim notes, 'it was one of those rare international disputes in which one party chose not only its own team for the match but also that of the other party.'²⁵ The basis for the bilateral negotiations between Israel and each of the Arab states was UN Security Council resolution 242 calling for 'land for peace'. However, the exchange of land for peace was against Likud's Greater Israel ideology. Shamir stalled negotiations at every turn. This it turned out, was done on purpose. His plan all along, he later revealed, was to buy as much time as possible and meanwhile accelerate the building of settlements in the occupied territories so as to create facts on the ground which would make the separation of the occupied territories from Israel unworkable. The Likud ideology of Greater Israel would be assured. In an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* just days after his defeat in the June 1992 elections, Shamir confessed his strategy.

'I would have carried out autonomy talks for ten years and meanwhile we would have reached half a million people in Judea and Samaria.'²⁶

As we saw in chapter five, the changes exhibited in the Declaration of Principles document of September 1993, had already taken place by October 1991 and were too powerful even for Shamir to suppress or try and ignore. These changes can be seen in a letter of assurances sent to the Palestinian delegation by Secretary of State Baker. The reinterpretation of four of the five core issues changed the conflict from:

1. Arab-Israeli to Israeli-Palestinian; 'Palestinians and Israelis must deal differently with one another.'
2. Jewish security to joint security; 'Israeli security and Palestinian security are necessary conditions for a better future for Palestinians, as well as for Israelis.'

²⁵ Shlaim, 'Prelude to the Accord', op. cit., p. 8

²⁶ Interview with Joseph Harif in *Ma'ariv*, (26 June 1992). Quoted by Shlaim A., 'Prelude to the Accord: Likud, Labour and the Palestinians', op. cit., p. 10

3. negation of a Palestinian identity, to recognition of a distinct Palestinian identity: 'Palestinians must be active participants in negotiations to determine their future.'
4. zero-sum to positive-sum; 'Legitimate Palestinian rights can be achieved in a manner which protects Israeli security. Israeli security and Palestinian security are necessary conditions for a better future for Palestinians, as well as for Israelis.'²⁷

The fifth core theme to the conflict, Palestinian self-determination as opposed to autonomy, is not explicitly changed in Baker's October 1991 letter to the Palestinian delegation. However, change around the four other themes creates the necessary environment which enables a re-definition of Palestinian autonomy to self-determination. If the changes had occurred even before the official Washington negotiations began, how did the twenty-four tortuous rounds and the secret Oslo channel contribute to the mediation process? The answer is that it took two years, from October 1991 to September 1993 to get Israel to accept these significant transformative discourses which impacted on the conflict and Israeli-Palestinian relations. Analysis of changing narratives during this latter period once again underscores the importance of changes to surrounding discursive structures and their impact on representations of the conflict.

The secret negotiations which began in Oslo in January 1993 were very much a continuation of narratives articulated in the official negotiations in Washington DC. The issues discussed were the same and so were the parties negotiating. In both instances, it was the PLO and the Israeli government.²⁸ The crucial difference between the two processes running simultaneously in Washington DC and in Oslo, relates to the role of mediator. In the official negotiations in Washington DC, the United States was a key player, drafting proposals and negotiating with the protagonists. In the Oslo channel, although the Norwegians were facilitating, they always remained outside the room when the two parties were negotiating, as we saw in chapter six. What is also vital to the understanding of the mediation process as it unfolded between October 1991 and August

²⁷ US Letter of Assurances to the Palestinians, 18 October 1991, *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, A Documentary Record*, (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993,1994). p. 5

1993, is the inclusion of changes taking place outside of the negotiating forums, which impacted on the mediation process. There was a change of American administration and a change of Israeli government. In both cases, different parties came into power. Rabin as leader of the Labour party replaced Shamir in June 1992 whilst the pro-Israel Clinton administration replaced the Republican Bush administration in January 1993.

The inducement for the PLO to engage in secret negotiations lies in the status of the PLO in Washington. The PLO was part of a joint delegation with Jordan. Although controlling negotiations, the PLO and Arafat in particular, was politically marginalised in favour of Palestinians of the occupied territories. Oslo was attractive to the Israelis because they were dealing with the PLO anyway in Washington whether they liked it or not and Oslo allowed them to deal with Arafat in a more direct way without the involvement of outside parties. Oslo enabled the Labour government to change the direction of the negotiations. It had not changed the official Israeli negotiators in Washington who had been appointed by Likud. Now it could respond to the PLO's conciliatory discourse of December 1988 when Arafat had renounced terrorism and accepted Israel's existence in the region. A gradual erosion of the dominant discourse demonising the PLO forced the Israeli Labour government to reformulate the way it was going to deal with Arafat.

Assessment of changing narratives around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has so far revealed the importance of the way in which representation of a conflict impacts on the mediation process. This 'outside-in' approach highlights the impact that surrounding circumstances have on the main protagonists themselves and on the conflict. Situating the mediation process within a discourse analytic framework reveals not only the impact of external parties on the mediation process, but also the knock-on effect external parties have on internal party actions. It is this two-way relationship, whereby external parties play an active transformative function in responding to internal party action and vice-versa, which is the new or original contribution to knowledge put forth in this thesis.

²⁸ It is arguable whether the two Israeli academics Yair Hirschfeld and Ron Pundak can be regarded as non-governmental negotiators. They were certainly non-official, but they were both members of the Labour party and were in close consultation with Yossi Beilin, a powerful figure within the Labour Party.

Narratives evolve, intersect and change, jointly forming a constantly reinvented symbolic order which impinges on the peacemaking process situated within it. This important facet of the mediation process is not assessed by the conventional mediation literature.

This study has also highlighted the constraints imposed on research by the clear divisions implied by the internal /external divide. As we saw above, this distinction is challenged in at least three instances, in:

1. September 1988 and the Shultz Wye plantation speech
2. November-December 1988 when a group of five American Jews played a facilitating role in getting Arafat to declare his acceptance of UN resolutions 242 and 338
3. October 1991 when Baker used ideas developed in a report produced by a pro-Israel think tank based in Washington, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) to structure the Madrid/Washington negotiations, both in form and content.

This complex relationship between internal and external players and their contribution to changing discourses is an area that remains for others to look at.

Implications for the Field of Mediation

Research carried out in this thesis has uncovered certain elements underpinning changing discourses and the peacemaking process. These can be distilled into three main points.

1. The discursive process involves a multitude of agents both external parties and internal parties.
2. External and internal parties draw on and impinge upon interpretative structures which construct the conflict.
3. The multi-layered, discursive process of reinterpretation constitutive of changing narratives is contingent upon past and present discursive representations.

The application of discourse analysis to the study of mediation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict revealed new insights into the dynamics underpinning the mediation process which had been obscured by the narrow, exclusive perspective imposed by much of the conventional mediation literature. Study of the mediation process situated within a discourse analytic framework revealed that the peacemaking process is impinged upon by a plethora of agents who may not all be identified as 'mediators'. This would suggest the need for a re-appraisal of the mediation process which would place greater emphasis on the study of discourses constitutive of the conflict, as was undertaken in this study, rather than focusing on the 'role' played by a host of actors. Research findings would appear to suggest that peacemaking is about discursively challenging representations of the conflict. As Edward Said recognised:

'This was the world of power and representations, a world that came into being as a series of decisions made by writers, politicians, philosophers to adumbrate one reality and at the same time efface others.'²⁹

Research also revealed the multi-faceted nature of identity and the constraints imposed by ascribing internal/external labels to parties who impinge on the construction of a conflict. Such labels become redundant within such a context. This was illustrated in chapter five in the example of discursive overlap between a Foreign Affairs researcher and Shultz in Wye Plantation speech. These research findings challenge the simplistic, uni-dimensional labelling represented by the internal/external divide. Constructions of identity are highly complex and transcend such categorisation. For example were the five American Jews who mediated Arafat's articulation of the PLO's acceptance of Israel and the renunciation of terrorism internal or external parties? One could make an argument for both, but does such a distinction contribute to our understanding of the mediation process? Perhaps what is required is focus on the narratives themselves and the complex dynamics that underpin discursive change. As David Campbell notes, there is a need

²⁹ Scott J., 'A Palestinian Confronts Time', The New York Times, Arts and Ideas section. (19 September 1998)

‘to direct our attention away from a preoccupation with a search for *the* cause or origin of something, and focus instead on the political consequences and effects of particular representations and how they came to be.’³⁰ (italics in original)

Mediation is not a process extraneous to the conflict, but becomes an inherent part of it, in as much as it either challenges or supports existing discursive structures defining the conflict. Discourses are not structured within a vacuum but are necessarily contingent upon their conditions of emergence, that is the surrounding socio-political context in which they are located. The insights outlined above, analysed further, possibly by choosing another case study, could have far-reaching implications for the study and practice of mediation. Portrayed through a series of inter-linked narrative constructs, to address a conflict would be to impinge upon any component discursive strand of the conflict. Constituted by structures of enablement and constraint, it is these structures which have to be addressed by the peacemaking process. Situated within a discourse analytic framework, the mediation process would appear to be one of conflict transformation, involving a gradual process of inter-textual, political, re-interpretation of the hegemonic discourse constituting the conflict.

The Mediation Process: Track one, Track two and Discourse Analysis

I have attempted to highlight moments of change around the five core themes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by looking at the main mediation interventions in the conflict up to 1993. What becomes apparent is the gradual, interactive and highly political process which underpins discursive change. Multiple agencies are involved who are not all necessarily mediators in the conventional sense of the word, but are however all mediators of texts.

A significant difference between the hypothesis put forward in this thesis and conventional forms of mediation which I looked at in chapter one, relates to the role of words and to the role of mediator or third party. This thesis illustrates that words do not mirror reality, but construct it. Within a discourse analytic framework, conflict is a situated

³⁰ Campbell D., *National Deconstruction, Violence, Identity and Justice in Bosnia*,

social manifestation which is defined by broader socio-political structures and is itself implicated in the continuity of these narratives. Discourse analysis relates narrative to an enabling or constraining context in which various agencies impinge upon the construction of the conflict, privileging one interpretation over others at various moments in time. Within such a conceptual framework, the task of the mediator is no longer solely focused on influencing the protagonists, but now also impinges and is impinged upon by wider institutional and discursive continuities in which the conflict is embedded. Traditionally, influence, as we saw in chapter one with reference to Touval, is talked about in terms of power politics with weapons and financial aid promised to the parties at war, in exchange for a change in their behavioural patterns leading to conflict settlement.³¹ States are the major players and power rests with governments. A third party typically mediates within a contained, triadic, power bargaining process with the negotiators, as Bercovitch suggests, interacting very little with each other, but appealing to the third party.³² The third party applies manipulative tactics to re-establish order within the international system. In the main, conventional mediation literature regards the third party as neutral, although this view has been challenged as we saw in chapter one, by Thomas Princen and Vivienne Jabri who argue that a third party always exercises some kind of influence on the disputants by their mere intervention and can never be neutral.³³ Conflict resolution was born in response to the perceived shortcomings of conflict settlement.

Situated within a pluralist or world-society paradigm, the theory of conflict resolution or track two, was developed in the 1960s at the University of London by John Burton in response to the perceived shortcomings of conflict settlement. Burton distinguished between conflict settlement and conflict resolution and believed that conflict settlement was doomed to fail as conflict would resume because the protagonists were

(Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988) p. 5

³¹ Touval S., *The Peace Brokers*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 326

³² Bercovitch J., *Social Conflicts and Third Parties*, (Colorado, Westview Press, 1984), p. 2

³³ Princen T., *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992), chapter two, p. 31 and the conclusion p. 214. Jabri V., 'Agency, Structure, and the Question of Power in Conflict Resolution', *Paradigms, the Kent Journal of International Relations*, (Vol. 9, No. 2, Winter 1995), pp. 65-7

coerced into accepting what is essentially an unacceptable outcome to the conflict³⁴ “Conflict resolution” adopts a non-directive approach to mediation where a panel of facilitators meet with the protagonists and get them to go beyond the expressed issues which led to conflict to arrive at the underpinning grievances which are related to human needs such as identity and security concerns. Unlike conflict settlement, conflict resolution attempts to address the relationship between the protagonists with facilitators asking the protagonists to express the way they perceive themselves, their adversaries and the conflict. In both approaches, the focal or immediate conflict is the main focus of attention, however, with conflict resolution approaches, there is an attempt to uncover how the protagonists perceive or interpret the conflict situation, an important consideration in the application of discourse analysis to the study of mediation. Advocates of conflict resolution see the fulfilment of human needs as the way to resolve conflict. Underpinning both conflict settlement and conflict resolution approaches to mediation is a preoccupation with the immediate conflict and ways in which to arrive at a cessation of hostilities either through coercion or the fulfilment of human needs.

Chris Mitchell as was highlighted in chapter one, found it useful to conceptualise mediation as a process and in so doing acknowledged the continuity which exists between successive mediation interventions. However, there is still an absence of consideration of broader processes or interpretative schemes which impact on the narrative construction of a conflict and in turn on how a mediation initiative interacts with existing continuities. The application of discourse analysis as a conceptual framework through which to study the process of mediation would not eschew processes of track one and track two, but interpret their impact on the wider mediation process, constituted by changing narratives. Both track one and track two take into account pre-existing socio-political continuities in different ways. Track one through considerations of power and track two through processes which aim to get the protagonists to perceive the enemy, the conflict and possible outcomes to the conflict in new ways. Discourse analysis as a methodology, assesses the ways in which

³⁴ Burton J., chapter two, ‘The Language of Conflict Resolution’, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook*, (New York, University Press of America, 1987), p. 7. See also A.J.R Groom, ‘Problem Solving in International Relations’, Azar E. and Burton J. (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution*, (Sussex, Wheatsheaf, 1986), p. 86

TABLE 1

	Balfour Declaration 1917 ¹	Peel Report 1937 ²	1939 White Paper ³	1946 Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry ⁴	1947 UN Partition Plan ⁵	1967 UNSCR 242 ⁶
The conflict as Arab-Israeli		'an irrepresible conflict has arisen between two national communities' (p. 57)	'Arabs of Palestine--- and the Jewish Agency' (p. 64)	'the legitimate national aspirations of Jews and Arabs can be reconciled.'	'Independent Arab and Jewish States--- shall come into existence in Palestine' (p. 115)	'guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every state in the area' (p. 365)
The conflict as zero-sum	'the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people' (p. 18)	'[against] the forcible conversion of Palestine into a Jewish State against the will of the Arabs.' (p. 57)	'partition---has been found to be impracticable.' (p. 65)	'That Palestine shall be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state.' (p. 88)		'Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories of recent conflict.' (p. 365)
The conflict as a discourse on Jewish/Israeli security needs				'the Jewish victims of Nazi and Fascist persecution;' (p. 85)		
The conflict as the negation of a Palestinian identity	'existing non-Jewish communities' (p. 18)	national community (p. 57)	'the Arabs of Palestine' (p. 64)	'Its [Palestine's] Arab population ---rightly look upon Palestine as their homeland.' (p. 89)		'the refugee problem' (p. 365)
The conflict as a discourse on Palestinian autonomy as opposed to self-determination	'the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine' (p. 18)	'national self-determination' (p. 57)	'an independent Palestine state in which the two peoples---Arabs and Jews share authority in government' (p. 68)	'It is neither just nor practicable that Palestine should become either an Arab state,---or a Jewish state' (p. 89)		

¹ The Balfour Declaration. (2 Nov. 1917), *The Israel-Arab Reader*, Laqueur W. & Rubin B. (eds.), (London, Penguin, 1984), pp. 17-8

² From the Report of the Palestine Royal Commission, (Peel Commission), (July 1937), Laqueur & Rubin, *ibid.*, pp. 56-8

³ The White Paper, (17 May 1939), *ibid.*, pp. 64-76

⁴ The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, (1 May 1946), *ibid.*, pp. 85-94

⁵ UN Resolution on the Future Government of Palestine (Partition Resolution) (29 Nov. 1947), *ibid.*, pp. 113-124

⁶ Security Council Resolution on 242. (22 November, 1967), pp. 362-5

TABLE 2

	1978 Camp David Accords ⁷	1980 Venice Declaration ⁸	1982 Reagan Plan ⁹	1988 Shultz Wye Plantation speech ¹⁰	The Madrid Process, May 1993 ¹¹	The Declaration of Principles, Sep. 1993 ¹²
The conflict as Arab-Israeli	'the resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.' (p. 611)	'the Palestinian problem' (p. 622)	'the Arab-Israeli conflict' (p. 661)	'comprehensive peace requires peace between Israelis and Palestinians.' (p. 223)	'negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians' (p. 96)	'The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO team' (p. 117)
The conflict as zero-sum	'negotiations relating to the West Bank and Gaza' (p. 611)	'the need for Israel to put an end to the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967' (p. 622)	'The Camp David agreement remains the foundation of our policy.' (p. 659) 'UNSCR 242 remains wholly valid as the foundation stone of America's Middle East peace effort' (p. 661)	'Our approach seeks a comprehensive and durable settlement, grounded in United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.' (p. 225)	'a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on resolutions 242 and 338' (p. 96) 'Israel and the PEC [Palestinian Executive Council] will establish agreed arrangements for cooperation and coordination in areas of mutual concern, to benefit both sides and respond to their common needs.' (p. 97)	'recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security' (p. 117) 'the negotiations on the permanent status will lead to the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338' (p. 117)
The conflict as a discourse on Jewish/Israeli security needs	'their [states'] right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force.' (p. 610)	'the right to existence and to security of all the states in the region, including Israel' (p. 621)	'Israel's legitimate security concerns' (p. 659)	'The existence, security, and well-being of Israel are the first principles of any settlement.' (p. 224)	'Overall security will remain under Israel's responsibility. Security needs of both sides will be taken into consideration.' (p. 97)	'Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order.' (p. 119)

⁷ Camp David Frameworks for Peace (17 September 1978), Laqueur & Rubin, op. cit., pp. 609-615

⁸ European Council: Venice Declaration (13 June 1980), *ibid.*, pp. 621-2

⁹ President Ronald Reagan: The Reagan Plan. (1 September 1982), *ibid.*, pp. 656-663

¹⁰ Secretary of State George P. Shultz. 'The Reagan Administration's Approach to Middle East Peacemaking', Washington DC, (16 September 1988), the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, (commonly referred to as the Wye Plantation speech), (Vol. 18, No. 2, Winter 1989), pp. 223-228.

¹¹ Israeli Delegation, Draft of 'Agreed Statement of Principles', Washington DC, (6 May 1993), *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, A Documentary Record*, (Washington DC, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1994), pp. 96-8

¹² Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. Washington DC, (13 September 1993), *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Agreement, ibid.*, pp. 117-127

	1978 Camp David Accords	1980 Venice Declaration	1982 Reagan Plan	1988 Shultz Wye Plantation speech	The Madrid Process, May 1993	The Declaration of Principles, Sep. 1993
The conflict as the negation of a Palestinian identity	‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.’ (p. 612)	‘the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.’ (p. 621)	‘the Palestinian people’ (p. 659)	‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people-including political rights-must also be addressed.’ (p. 227)	‘the Palestinians’ (p. 96)	‘the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements.’ (p. 118)
The conflict as a discourse on Palestinian autonomy as opposed to self-determination	‘full autonomy to the inhabitants’ (p. 611)	‘The Palestinian people--- must be placed in a position--- to exercise fully its right to self-determination.’ (p. 622)	‘the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza will have full autonomy over their own affairs.’ (pp. 660-1)	‘sovereignty cannot be defined in absolute terms. Today, borders are porous. Openness is required for the free movement of ideas, people and goods.’ (p. 225)	‘interim self-government arrangements’ (p. 96)	‘Jurisdiction of the Council will cover West Bank and Gaza Strip territory.’ (p. 118))

various narratives impinged upon by a multitude of actors and processes, including tracks one and two, impact on changing discourses and the mediation process. Discourse analysis, within such a framework may be regarded as a filter through which various inputs and processes are interpreted.

Using Discourse Analysis to Explain Changing Discourses: Assessing the Information represented in Tables 1 & 2

Research carried out in this thesis reveals that influence is more subtle and appears through the capacity to change discourses around a conflict. What is neglected in conventional approaches to mediation, is the impact which historical representations of the conflict have on the mediation initiative, representing structures of enablement or constraint.

There are clear boundaries, according to the realist paradigm, between internal and external players. The James Wall model alluded to in chapter one depicts this demarcation in the 'mediated negotiation system'. Research findings represented in this thesis challenge this stark division and suggest a more subtle and complex process to explain change. Situating the mediation process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within a discourse analytic framework has revealed that

- not only people, but also texts have the power to change,
- the internal/external divide is blurred and
- interventions, external and internal, are constrained or enabled by existing structures or narratives which construct the conflict.

A discourse analytic approach to mediation challenges traditional approaches to the study of mediation by attributing transformative powers to texts and not only to people. The language produced within a triadic mediating forum is interpreted differently by proponents of discourse analysis. It does not reflect as in track one, but constructs a new interpretation of events, the conflict and/or the protagonists. This discourse interacts with a wider narrative, reproducing pre-existing continuities or challenging them. If we turn to the

table, we see differences around the narrative construction of the conflict. By plotting mediation interventions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict chronologically and focusing on how these various interventions construct the five central themes to the conflict, tables one and two reveal key moments of discursive change around the conflict.

In 1917, Britain was not yet colonial power in Palestine and yet Lord Balfour in a letter that has subsequently become known as the Balfour Declaration, created the possibility of 'the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.' This illustrates how texts can bring about change and this text was able to do so because it was drafted by a powerful colonial power, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur Balfour. Through one text, a people were negated, referred to negatively as the 'existing non-Jewish communities'. The accelerated Jewish immigration into Palestine which this letter encouraged, may now be seen, with the benefit of hindsight to have set two peoples on a collision course the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine. Inter-communal clashes in the 1920's and the Palestinian rebellion in the late 1930's which lasted three years from 1936-9 brought about a redefinition of the Palestinians. This episode illustrates the way in which internal parties play a part in changing discourses. In his report, Lord Peel recognised a conflict between 'two national communities' and identified the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. This text illustrates the interaction between internal and external players in the process of discursive change. Not only 'mediators' in the conventional sense in which the word is used, impinge upon the narrative construction of the conflict, but also colonial powers and internal parties. All these parties contribute to the conflict, identifying the parties to the conflict and the relationship between them. Third parties are not external to the conflict or neutral as in track one, but become an integral and constitutive part of it.

The recognition of the British government of 'two national communities' paved the way for the UN Partition Plan of 1947. Lord Peel's report also highlighted a shift in the British government's position. Whereas in 1917, Lord Balfour had offered the Jews a homeland in Palestine, Lord Peel challenged the 'forcible conversion of Palestine into a Jewish State against the will of the Arabs.' Britain's intervention as a colonial power in 1917 set the Jews and Palestinians on a collision course. The two promises that Britain

made to the Jews and to the Palestinians were untenable. The creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine would necessarily threaten the 'civil and religious rights' of Palestinians. This outcome was created by a colonial power, not a mediator, in a short letter written by Lord Balfour. Sixty five years later in 1982, President Reagan was still trying to come up with a solution as to 'how to reconcile Israel's legitimate security concerns with the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.' The two-state solution proposed by the United Nations in 1947 had its roots in Lord Peel's recognition of two national movements, illustrating the inter-textual or multi-layered nature of changing discourses. The MacDonald White Paper had found partition to be 'impracticable' and this view was reinforced by the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry of 1946. What is interesting for the study of changing discourses is the narrative shift which occurs in the 1946 report. Whereas at the beginning of the Second World War, in 1939, the British government had in effect made provisions for an independent Palestinian state in which the Palestinians were still the majority, after the Holocaust, this changes in favour of a Jewish state. Jewish security concerns after the experience of the Holocaust, pave the way or enable discourses calling for Jewish self-determination, showing the way in which discourses, both internal and external, are embedded within wider socio-political continuities and are enabled and constrained by them. The problem of two competing claims to the land of Mandate Palestine is impinged upon by the Holocaust.

The 1946 Anglo-American report attempts to 'reconcile' the 'legitimate national aspirations of Jews and Arabs'. Once again as we saw in chapter three, 'outside' considerations impinge upon changing discourses in Palestine. Truman's electoral considerations and the power of the Jewish electorate in the United States, brings about the UN Partition Plan and the United States' pressuring of six states to vote in favour of it. This was a key turning point in narratives constructing the conflict and the protagonists. The Palestinians refused to accept the Partition Plan, but the leaders of the Zionist movement accepted it and declared a state. This moment saw a 'turning of the tables' and a reconstruction of Jewish and Palestinian identities in the international political arena. The immigrant Jews gained legitimacy and a permanency in Mandate Palestine through statehood whereas the reverse happened to the Palestinians. Although the Partition Plan

recognised a Palestinian nation, this construction was overtaken by the refugee identity which was ascribed to the Palestinians after the first Arab-Israeli war. After the first Arab-Israeli war, the conflict was no longer one between Jews and Palestinians as it had been up to 1948. The narratives alluded to above which had recognised a Palestinian nation and its right to self-determination were overtaken by powerful new narratives which negated a Palestinian identity in favour of an Arab refugee. 1948 can be seen as the end of a distinct phase.

A new phase began in 1948 with a united Arab front supporting the Palestinian claim to the whole of Palestine. By 1967 however, the discourses of 1948 negating a Palestinian identity and a third Arab-Israeli war enables the United Nations Security Council through resolution 242 to call the Palestinians 'refugees'. Significantly, the 1947 demarcation of Mandate Palestine into a Jewish and Palestinian state is now overtaken by the 1967 demarcation lines. UNSCR 242 sets new powerful tramlines which constrain mediation initiatives, directing their course and the content of proposals put forth. Reinforced by UNSCR 338 of 1973, UNSCR 242 constructs the Palestinians as 'refugees' and calls on Israel to withdraw 'from territories of recent conflict.' As we shall see, UNSCR 242 becomes the main point of reference for future mediation initiatives, constraining proposals which transgress its boundaries and legitimising proposals which reiterate its main premises. The creation of the PLO in 1964 is significant particularly after 1967 and the battle of Karamah through which the PLO is introduced to a Western audience as we saw in chapter four. It would take the Arab League ten years to recognise the PLO as 'the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people', a construction echoed and reinforced by the United Nations one month later in UN resolution 3236 of November 1974. The PLO challenged the Palestinian refugee label and gave a voice to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. By 1978, the Camp David accords, mediated by President Carter of the United States produced a narrative shift.

In sharp contrast to the 'refugee' construction of 1967, the accords articulated the 'legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements'. This illustrates the way in which changing discourses occur gradually and constitute a multi-textual process

impinged upon by multiple agencies. In this instance, the PLO is supported by the Arab League and the United Nations. Although the PLO is not mentioned in the 1978 accords, that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are acknowledged by the President of the United States and a Right wing Israeli Prime Minister is highly significant. Significantly, the Palestinians are given autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, the territories demarcated for Israeli withdrawal in UNSCR 242 and 338. In response to the Camp David accords, and illustrating the multi-layered and interactive process which underpins changing discourses, the European Union challenges the limited autonomy clauses and calls for Palestinian 'self-determination'. Unlike traditional mediation which looks at individual mediation attempts and judges their success or failure based on their immediate outcome, a discourse analytic approach situates processes within their broader context, identifying narratives which introduce change. Mediation within a discourse analytic framework is a process whereby internal and external parties react to each other and through their narratives offer building blocks which jointly construct a renewed interpretation of the conflict, the parties and the issues to the conflict. It had taken thirteen years to redefine the Palestinians from 'refugees' to a people with 'legitimate rights' and rights to 'self-determination'. An assessment of changing discourses so far reveals the process to be gradual, multi-layered and inter-textual. The process is impinged upon by various parties, internal and external who, through their intervention, are not neutral, nor external to the conflict, but impact upon the narrative construction of the conflict. Authorship is very important, pointing to the importance of power in the process of changing discourses. Narratives articulated by the United States carry more weight and serve to legitimise. Hence the significance of the Camp David accords.

The inter-textuality underpinning changing discourses is evident in the Reagan plan of 1982. The Reagan plan reiterates the outcome to the Palestinian problem contained in the Camp David accords, firmly sticking to Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories as opposed to calls for Palestinian self-determination articulated by the European Union's Venice Declaration. This illustrates that more than one interpretation of a conflict and its envisaged outcome can co-exist within the international arena. Analysis of changing discourses between 1982-1988 reveals the interaction between internal and external

discourses. The Palestinian uprising which began in December 1987 coupled with a Foreign Affairs article by Gottlieb referred to in chapter five, both impinge on American discourses. Whilst reiterating the United States' support of Israel and its security concerns, as well as alluding to UNSCR 242 and 338 as the foundation stones of any peace settlement, Shultz, with the help of a Foreign Affairs researcher and writer, moves closer to the European position when he talks of not only Palestinian 'legitimate rights', but also 'political rights' for the first time. This is particularly significant when it is coupled with new interpretations of self-determination, 'sovereignty cannot be defined in absolute terms. Today, borders are porous. Openness is required for the free movement of ideas, people and goods.'

The protracted nature of the Palestinian uprising retraces patterns discernible in the inter-communal conflicts of the 1920's and 1930's. However, five decades later, the battle is not for Palestinian sovereignty over all of Mandate Palestine, but only of the occupied territories. The intifada strengthens reinforces the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. After the Gulf War of 1991, the international community led, by President Bush convene an international conference to try and find a solution to the Middle East conflict. After two years of negotiations, Israel still refuses to go beyond the remits of the Camp David accords, calling for 'interim self-government arrangements' for the Palestinians in the occupied territories. However, as I illustrated in the thesis and recapitulated above, the disjuncture between discourses articulated by the international community, including the United States in terms of how they interpret the Palestinian struggle and its outcome and that envisaged by the Israelis is too great. The Declaration of Principles signed between Israel and significantly the PLO, reiterates once again the Camp David clause 'the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements' showing the multi-layered nature of changing discourses. However, where once, only a zero-sum outcome was put forth enshrined in UNSCR 242 and 338, this is now overlaid with a positive-sum construct. Both parties agree to 'recognise their mutual legitimate and political rights and strive to live in peaceful coexistence and mutual dignity and security.' The DOP calls for the election of a Palestinian Council or Interim Self-Government Authority for a period of five years during which time it will have jurisdiction over 'West Bank and Gaza Strip territory'.

The shortcomings of the Declaration of Principles were highlighted earlier in this chapter. However, it is significant to note that change occurred around the narrative construction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and that the process of change was constrained and enabled at different times by discursive representations of the conflict and the protagonists. Also it is significant to note that the mediators articulating mediating texts were not necessarily external third parties or mediators in the conventional sense in which the term is used, but internal parties and texts as in the example of the Foreign Affairs article. Situating the mediation process within a discourse analytic framework challenges claims made in the mediation literature alluded to in chapter one, that:

- mediation takes place in an enclosed forum between an external party and the two protagonists
- a mediator is an external party who is neutral in the conflict
- change is secured solely through force of arms or economic or financial reward

Areas Opened up for Future Research

Research carried out in this thesis has illustrated that mediation is a complex process which is impinged upon by a variety of parties, both internal and external to the conflict. Research findings presented in this thesis suggest that the internal/external categorisation, constrains research by imposing set 'moulds' or categories which are themselves too stark, deflecting attention away from the process of changing narratives and the mediation process. Future research can usefully look into the various elements and processes which lead to change rather than being overly preoccupied with identity. The internal/external dichotomy is too simplistic, obfuscating rather than elucidating the study of the mediation process, as was illustrated in the example of the five American Jews who helped Arafat articulate his renunciation of violence and acceptance of Israel in December 1988. Were the five Jews internal or external parties? And does it really matter? Research into the various modes of power and its impact on the process of changing discourse would be, to my mind a more worthwhile area of investigation.

Further research is also needed to better understand how and why certain texts, organisations and people manage to impact on the mediation process and not others. The example of the input the Washington Institute for Near East Policy played is very interesting and merits deeper inquiry. Would an acknowledgement or better understanding of the role of changing discourses and mediation, the structures of enablement and constraint within which the mediation process is situated and the potential impact which a text or person can have on the mediation process speed up the process of conflict resolution? It is too early to tell and more research is needed into this area.

Post-Script

If we look briefly at the course of the mediation process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after 1993, we can see just how threatening change promised in the Declaration of Principles interim agreement was, for certain sectors of Israeli society. Rabin's assassination at a peace rally in November 1995, by a young and fervent adherent of the settler movement in Israel, and the subsequent election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Prime Minister, demonstrated just how easily a mediation process can be derailed.

Netanyahu's obduracy in his dealings with the Palestinians, the international community and the United States, created stalemate and frustration for those who wanted to see the peace process go forward along the tracks that were laid in the Declaration of Principles document. The five-year interim period, during which final status negotiations should have taken place, has elapsed with no agreement reached. Yasser Arafat, under American and European pressure, was persuaded to refrain from unilaterally declaring a Palestinian state on 4 May 1999. With the recent election of Ehud Barak as Israeli Prime Minister to replace Netanyahu, those in favour of peace in the Middle East, in Israel and elsewhere, are hopeful that Barak, who portrayed himself as heir to Rabin during the election campaign, will revive the stalled peace process. Only time will tell whether Barak implements Israel's part of the Wye plantation agreement which calls for further Israeli redeployment from a further 13% of the occupied territories. Progress may be smooth or it may prove difficult, but powerful discursive continuities exist which Israel will find hard to

ignore. The Declaration of Principles was the culmination of all the mediation processes that preceded it. In tune with the rest of the international community including the United States, Israel finally acknowledged the existence of the PLO in September 1993 and it would seem that there is no turning back. Although the DOP made no mention of Palestinian rights to self-determination, discursive tramlines leading to this outcome were laid down. Although they were momentarily derailed by Rabin's assassination and Netanyahu's resistance to giving up any of the occupied territories, just as his Likud predecessor Yitzhak Shamir had reacted back in 1991, the course of the peace process is irreversible, in spite of this temporary 'blip'.

Dissenting discourses can be powerful and violent, as was demonstrated by Rabin's assassination. But the power of the dominant narrative is also great. Six years after the Declaration of Principles, surrounding discourses acknowledging Israel's security needs as well as a Palestinian people and its right to self-determination still exist, supported as they are by various parties. The recent Berlin declaration issued by the European Union at the meeting of European leaders at the European Council 24-25 March 1999 bears testimony to this. The declaration states:

‘The European Union reaffirms the continuing and unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination including the option of a state and looks forward to the early fulfilment of this right.--- The European Union is convinced that the creation of a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian State on the basis of existing agreements and through negotiations would be the best guarantee of Israel’s security and Israel’s acceptance as an equal partner in the region. The European Union declares its readiness to consider the recognition of a Palestinian State in due course in accordance with the basic principles referred to above.’

INTERVIEWS

Dr. Khaled Abdalla, Chief representative of the League of Arab States to Washington DC.

Dr. Haider Abdul-Shafi, Member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and head of the Palestinian negotiating team at the Madrid and Washington Peace Conference 1991-93.

Dr. Abdul Shafi is Chairman of the Red Crescent Society in Gaza and a member of the Board of Trustees at Birzeit University.

James Akins, United States Ambassador to Saudi Arabia 1973-76.

Thomas Antoine, diplomat at the Belgian embassy in Washington DC, May 1997.

Geoffrey Aronson, author of books including Israel, Palestinians and the Intifada. Mr. Aronson is currently working for the Foundation for Middle East Peace in Washington DC.

Abdul-Bari Atwan, Member of the Palestine National Council and editor of the Al-Quds newspaper in London.

Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, President of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees in Jerusalem.

Phyllis Bennis is currently at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington DC.

Ms. Bennis is also United Nations correspondent for Frontline newspaper.

Eugene Bird, President of the Council for the National Interest, Washington DC.

Ghassan Bishara, Palestinian journalist based in Washington DC.

Noam Chomsky, Professor of Modern Languages and Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

James Colbert, Director of Communications at the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, Washington DC.

Richard Curtiss, Executive editor of the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs.

Uri Davis, Research fellow at Durham university and author.

Warren Eisenberg, Deputy Director of the Centre for Public Policy at the B'nai B'rith organisation in Washington DC.

Gavin Esler, Washington correspondent for the BBC July 1989 and Chief North America correspondent December 1989-May 1997.

Alan George, Investigative journalist who has worked in the Middle East and is currently a private consultant.

Osama Halabi, a Palestinian Druze lawyer who specialises in Jerusalem residency rights. Mr. Halabi has served as Director of the Legal Department of the Quaker Legal Aid Centre in East Jerusalem.

Muhammad Hallaj, Member of the Palestine National Council and negotiator in Ottawa, Canada as part of the multi-lateral negotiations of the Madrid Peace Conference addressing the issue of Palestinian refugees.

George Joffe, a senior lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, at the time of interview.

Samuel Lewis, United States Ambassador to Israel 1977-85.

Chris Mitchell, lecturer at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

William B. Quandt, Staff member of National Security Council 1972-74. Senior staff member in the Carter administration from 1977-79.

Afif Safieh, Palestinian General Delegate to the United Kingdom.

Joel Singer, Israeli lawyer who negotiated the Declaration of Principles document.

British Foreign Office diplomat specialising in the Middle East who requested anonymity.

Member of the American State Department's policy planning staff who requested anonymity.

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