



FACING DEFEAT: THE INTIFADA TWO YEARS ON

GRAHAM USHER

This overview of the intifada gives special attention to the intra-Palestinian dimension, notably the rise of the tanzim that preceded the uprising and, once the uprising began, the evolving inner dynamics of the Fatah movement and the Palestinian Authority (PA) under the impact of the crushing Israeli assault, international pressures, and so on. The author shows how, as the intifada enters its third year, the national movement is essentially split into three wings—the PA leadership, the young and still emergent Fatah leadership, and the armed resistance led by Hamas and Fatah offshoots—all following mutually incompatible strategies. In the author's view, democratic elections, if allowed, could provide one way out of the impasse.

YASIR ARAFAT'S RUINED HEADQUARTERS in Ramallah rises like an epitaph on the Palestinian intifada. Buildings that once housed the Palestinian Authority's Interior Ministry and its police forces have been razed to rubble. Tank shells have blown away stairwells and adjoining corridors. Black "presidential" limousines and jeeps are rusting hulks, crushed by bulldozers.

Beyond the Israeli-laid barbed wire that rims the compound's flattened walls, Ramallah hunkers down, reoccupied since June 2002 and victim to sporadic military curfews. To the north every road is walled with ramparts of mud, shale, and meter-deep trenches, slicing Ramallah off from thirty-three Palestinian villages and its West Bank hinterland. To the south, checkpoints and a chain of spreading Jewish settlements cut Ramallah from East Jerusalem, its lifeblood and heart.

One structure alone still stands: the president's office, where Arafat occasionally hosts dignitaries and chairs meetings of the Palestinian leadership—conditional, always, on Israel granting the visitors the requisite passes. For those around and ensnared with him, this is a triumph of sorts. Not for others. "It is a triumph for a political culture that equates the survival of the leader with victory for the people," says a former Palestinian negotiator, long since resigned.¹ "But Israel's reoccupation of West Bank cities is not a Palestinian victory. It is a defeat."

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THE AL-AQSA INTIFADA: FACTS AND FORCES

Defeat was always possible for a rebellion that possessed neither goals nor strategy beyond, perhaps, an inchoate national awareness that the terms of the Oslo process, as well as the leadership structures, must somehow be overhauled. Two years into the uprising, it is now clear that its outbreak was not “orchestrated” by Arafat to “evade the difficult historical decisions” posed to him at the Camp David summit in July 2000, as charged by former Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak. Nor was it sparked by Ariel Sharon’s provocative “visit” to the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem’s Old City on 28 September 2000, nor even by the killing of seven Palestinians by Israel’s Border Police at the same sites the next day or, the day after, by the televised murder by Israeli fire of Muhammad al-Dura as he cowered behind his father at Gaza’s Netzarim Junction.

Rather, the al-Aqsa intifada was born of a collision between two national wills. On the one hand was an Israeli-determined peace process whose cumulative impact, with every passing year, became experienced by Palestinians as a new form of colonial dispossession. On the other was a collective understanding, fueled by the mounting sense of Palestinian distress, by Fatah’s younger West Bank and Gaza leaders that unless a challenge was mounted soon to Israel’s deepening occupation, their own future claims to leadership would be dashed.

The dispossession was most keenly felt through Israel’s settlement policies. Between the Oslo accords’ signing in September 1993 and September 2000, settlement construction in the occupied territories increased by 52 percent, including 17 percent during the eighteen months of Barak’s 1999 “One Israel” coalition.² The new housing swelled the settler population in the West Bank and Gaza from 115,000 in 1993 to 200,000 by 2000. At the same time the numbers of settlers living in East Jerusalem rose from 146,000 to 173,000, bringing the grand total of the settler population in the occupied territories to nearly 380,000 amid 3.5 million Palestinians.³ It amounted to the fastest rate of settlement growth in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since their occupation in 1967.

The expansion was buttressed by a new infrastructure in which Israel’s 145 “official” settlements and fifty-five “unofficial” settlements were bound together and integrated into Israel proper by a web of bypass roads and military zones. Prior to the uprising, these served to separate the 700 Palestinian towns and villages from each other and curb any contiguous rural and urban development between them. After it erupted, road, settlement, and “outpost” became Israel’s new military borders, not only formalizing the closure of Gaza from the West Bank, and both from East Jerusalem, but also progressively isolating each Palestinian area from its neighbor. It was this colonization that made possible Israel’s 2002 reconquest of the West Bank Palestinian towns; it will enable the same in Gaza, should it come.

The new force ranged against this transformation was Fatah's *tanzim* ("organization"). The *tanzim* traces its origins to those cadre who—under the direction of Fatah and PLO leader Khalil al-Wazir (Abu Jihad)—turned to popular rather than armed struggle through the mass Palestinian organizations formed in the occupied territories before and during the first intifada: the so-called inside leadership. With the return of the "outside" PLO leadership to the West Bank and Gaza in 1994—and its establishment as a governing PA—the inside cadre was either marginalized or co-opted into the PA's new ministries or one of its myriad police and intelligence forces.⁴

This uneasy rapprochement explains the contradictory character the movement assumed throughout the Oslo era. The *tanzim* provided the military basis of the PA's rule and delivered its ultimate seal of nationalist legitimacy. Throughout the seven years of Oslo, Arafat used the *tanzim* leaders not only to tame Palestinian opposition to the process but also, on occasion, to act as a catalyst to improve his position in the negotiations with Israel. Yet at the same time, the *tanzim* leaders were adamant that Fatah should preserve its pre-Oslo identity as a nationalist movement independent of the PA—a loyal but always potentially seditious resistance.⁵

Opposition swiftly came, especially after 1996, with the election of Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud-led government. Popular disenchantment with the stalled peace process grew while support for Fatah as a faction declined. The *tanzim*'s contradiction was felt at various levels. Within the PA's new institutions—and especially within the Palestinian Council (PC) elected in January 1996—*tanzim*-affiliated deputies led the criticism of the corruption, mismanagement, and lawlessness within the PA's governance. On the street, *tanzim* activists took the lead in protests against Israel's settlement policies, most violently during the three days of armed and popular confrontations that erupted in September 1996 after Netanyahu opened a "tourist" tunnel in Jerusalem's occupied Old City.⁶ *Tanzim* cadres were also involved in sporadic Palestinian demonstrations against the PA, usually in response to security measures taken by the PA police forces against Islamist and Fatah activists. Above all, opposition was expressed through the slow, incremental, and positional struggle for democracy within Fatah itself, driven by the Fatah Higher Committee (FHC) and its young West Bank general secretary, Marwan Barghouti, who returned to the occupied territories after seven years of exile in 1994.

Established in 1991, the FHC was essentially Fatah's "inside" intifada leadership. Steered by Barghouti, 122 Fatah regional conferences were held in the West Bank between 1994 and 1999, attended by some 85,000 Fatah activists and resulting in the election of about 2,500 new local leaders. A similar process occurred in Gaza but at a slower pace and with less participation.⁷ The aim of this "revolution from below" was to force the convening of Fatah's first general conference in eleven years to elect a new Central Council (FCC) and Revolutionary Council (FRC), the highest decision-making bodies in the movement. Had the general conference been held (it was not),

the results would have been a foregone conclusion: a massive increase in the representation of the “inside” leadership in the FCC and FRC at the expense of the “outside” leadership returned from Tunis, whom the *tanzim* blamed (far more than they blamed Arafat personally) for “defeatism” in negotiations and misgovernment in the PA areas.

By 1998, after most of the regional Fatah elections had taken place, the new *tanzim* leaders became increasingly vocal in their criticism of the terms of the Oslo process and geared up to resist it. Like the PLO and Islamist opposition, they charged that Palestinian national aspirations had been held hostage under Oslo to a negotiating strategy based on a U.S. monopoly on “diplomacy” and on “security cooperation” with the Israeli military, freeing successive Israeli governments to pursue the settlement drive unhindered. For this cadre, the unmasking of Barak’s “generous offer” at Camp David in July 2000—and President Clinton’s partisan support for it—marked the failure and terminus of that strategy.

With the collapse of Camp David, *tanzim* leaders demanded that the national PA leadership pursue other “options” besides negotiations. Their central call was that the Palestinians be mobilized to deploy popular—and on occasion armed—“pressure” against Israeli military outposts and settlements, especially those implanted deep in Palestinian areas. The aim, according to activists, was “to increase the cost of the occupation to Israel”; the “model and inspiration” was Hizballah’s guerrilla campaign against Israel in occupied southern Lebanon.

A second demand was for the leadership to return the Palestinian struggle from the tutelage of the United States and Israel to “international legitimacy” and the forum of the United Nations and Arab world. In particular, the *tanzim* insisted that there could be no “end of conflict” with the Jewish state without full implementation of UN resolutions calling for Israel’s withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, complete dismantlement or evacuation of the settlements, and Israel’s recognition of the Palestinian refugee right of return.

The third call was for the PA to end its security cooperation with Israel in favor of a new coalition of all the Palestinian factions, including the Islamist and non-PLO movements of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. On these bases a new “national unity” could be mobilized around the “constant” Palestinian aspirations of independence, sovereignty, and return.

In July 2000, after the failure of Camp David, Barghouti warned, “The Palestinians will not accept—and Mr. Arafat cannot accept—less than what Egypt and Jordan received and Syria and Lebanon will receive from Israel.” He had predicted that the “next intifada” would combine popular protests with “new forms of military activity.”⁸

Two months later, Sharon’s tour of the Haram al-Sharif—and the bloody aftermath it caused—turned prophesy into fact. But the result was not the end of occupation hoped for. On the contrary, the longer the intifada continued without political achievements for the Palestinians, the more not only

did Arafat's leadership and control fracture and diminish, but, ultimately, so too did those of the *tanzim*.

STUDIED NONINTERFERENCE

Arafat's first response to the carnage of 29–30 September 2000 was to demand an international commission of enquiry into the violence, and particularly into Israel's disproportionate use of force to quell what were then still overwhelmingly unarmed civilian protests.⁹ Without this—and the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the PA areas already penetrated—Arafat knew that any attempt by the PA to suppress Palestinian rage risked turning an uprising against the occupation into a revolt against his regime. Under grass-roots pressure due to the unprecedented Israeli repression, he authorized the *tanzim* to found and lead the National and Islamic Higher Committee for the Follow-up of the Intifada (NIHC), a deliberate move to prevent the protests from coming under the wing of the Islamists.¹⁰

Arafat also gave the nod to the formation of grass-roots militias to defend Palestinian-controlled towns and villages (the so-called areas A) from army incursions and settler violence, mainly to keep his official police forces out of the fray.¹¹ It was from such nuclei that Fatah-led militias like the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB) in Bethlehem, Jenin, and Nablus, and the cross-factional Popular Resistance Committees (PRCs) in the southern Gaza Strip, were born. The bulk of fighters in these militias were from the *tanzim*, including officers in the PA's intelligence and police forces. They immediately seized on Arafat's tacit endorsement of armed resistance not only to "increase the cost" of the occupation, but also to extend on the ground the struggle for leadership begun in Fatah's regional elections. The use of armed struggle as a means of political advancement was to have a profound impact on the character of the uprising—and Israel's response to it—which, unlike its 1987 precursor, rapidly became "militarized" rather than civilian.

Yet there is little proof that Arafat embraced at this stage an "armed intifada" as a strategy. Rather, his stance mirrored the one he had adopted during the 1996 tunnel confrontation, when five days of clashes costing some fifty-three Palestinian and fourteen Israeli lives propelled the negotiations forward. Domestically, his approach took the form of "studied noninterference"—to use Palestinian analyst Khalil Shikaki's phrase—in the dynamics and leadership of the revolt. Diplomatically, Arafat saw the ongoing protests as an opportunity to "internationalize" the conflict so as to escape the political isolation and opprobrium that had enveloped him after Camp David, particularly from the Clinton administration. He apparently believed that his road back to Washington could be hastened by the very real impact the in-

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tifada had made throughout the Arab world. By late October 2000, the Arab street was on fire, outraged by daily scenes of Palestinian casualties beamed by satellite stations like al-Jazeera. Four Arab states made a show of suspending whatever diplomatic ties they had with Israel, while Palestinians inside Israel for the first time blazed their own “internal intifada” throughout the Galilee. Arafat was further emboldened by the convening in Cairo on 21 October of the first “united” Arab League summit in over a decade, called under the heat of Arab public opinion.

Arafat’s strategy—if it can so be called—was thus to relinquish any form of control over the uprising and wait for whatever diplomatic harvest could be garnered from the turmoil. It was to prove his first miscalculation. The Cairo summit, like its follow-up in Amman in March 2001, served as a brake on his ambitions rather than their vehicle. It was long on rhetoric, shorter on cash to sustain the Palestinian losses, and nonexistent with regard to practical diplomatic engagement. As for the Arabs mounting any meaningful pressure on Washington to relaunch the peace process on new terms, Arafat was asked not even to make the request: he was told what the answer would be.

With the hope of Arab rescue fading, and aware that the impending demise of Barak’s coalition could bring about an Israeli government headed by Sharon, Arafat made an ill-prepared and indirect appeal to Israeli public opinion by agreeing again to negotiations with Israel via the submission in December of President Clinton’s parameters for ending the conflict. Armed with “twenty-five reservations”—and in the teeth of opposition from the *tanzim*—he dispatched his negotiators to Taba in January 2001 to reach a “Declaration of Principles” on a final status agreement with Israel.

By most accounts, progress was made at Taba compared to the Camp David negotiations, particularly on the issues of land, settlements, and refugees. But there is little evidence that Barak viewed Taba as anything more than a ruse to win back electoral constituencies lost to him by the intifada: the remnants of the peace camp and Israel’s national Palestinian minority, still bleeding for the loss of thirteen of their kin by Israeli police fire during their uprising of October 2000.¹² In any event, on 28 January 2001 Barak called off the talks, without a declaration being issued. One week later Sharon became Israel’s prime minister, in a landslide. At around the same time, the new U.S. administration under George W. Bush declared that it was no longer bound by the parameters of its predecessor.

FACING BOTH WAYS

The consecration of Sharon’s National Unity government in February 2001 was met with a planned upsurge of Palestinian resistance. At the beginning of March, when the death toll had reached 410 Arabs and 62 Jews, the Fatah-led militias launched a series of attacks on soldiers and settlers inside the occupied territories while the Islamists qualitatively increased their suicide operations inside Israel.¹³ Both responses were grounded in the by-

then cross-factional belief that “whatever else Ariel Sharon brings Israelis, it won’t be personal security.”¹⁴ After a wave of suicide bombings inside Israel at the end of the month, Sharon sent helicopter gunships and F-16s systematically to destroy the military and institutional bases of the Palestinian regime and assassinate and arrest its middle-cadre Fatah leadership, many of them police officers.

Arafat met Sharon and Bush facing both ways. Alarmed that the U.S. government may be prepared to let the conflict burn on, he signaled willingness to discuss a diplomatic exit from the fighting, courtesy of the so-called Egypt-Jordanian initiative of 29 March, which he had had a hand in drafting. Based on understandings reached, but never implemented, between Israel and the PA at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit in October 2000, the initiative called on Israel to withdraw its forces from the reoccupied Palestinian areas and on the PA to resume security cooperation with the IDF. Following a cease-fire lasting six weeks, final status negotiations would resume from “the point they left off” at Taba, while Israel would commit itself to some sort of settlement freeze.

But even as he looked to diplomacy, Arafat gave certain of his security forces the latitude to take a “more organized participation in the confrontation.”¹⁵ This was particularly true of officers in the PA’s Preventive Security Force (PSF) in Gaza and Arafat’s Force 17 “presidential guard” in the West Bank. Some analysts believed that Arafat “assumed a greater leadership role” in the intifada because he bought the factions’ line that heightening the Israelis’ sense of personal insecurity would hasten Sharon’s demise. Others said he wanted to gain a semblance of control over the conflict’s direction. Whatever his motive, by March 2001 the intifada had become “an unofficially declared military war between elements of the PA’s security forces and Fatah movement on the one side and an Israeli army primed for confrontation on the other.”¹⁶

Each line flatly contradicted the other. This was evidenced by Arafat’s failure to drum some order into an armed resistance that by then had evolved into a power which, if not a political alternative to his rule, was becoming increasingly independent of his control. It was also manifest in his wholly confused response to the Mitchell Report, the result of the fact-finding committee set up at Sharm al-Shaykh under the chairmanship of former U.S. Senator George Mitchell to seek ways for ending the violence.

Arafat’s inability to curb the militias was shown in the standoff that simmered between the PA and the PRCs in Gaza. In April, Arafat ordered the dissolution of the committees, calling on their fighters to “return to their original security institutions” (according to one source, “about half” of the PRC cadre were officers in one or other of the PA’s security forces).¹⁷ PRC leaders refused, declaring that if the PA was “embarrassed” that PRC fighters were also members of the security forces, “we are ready to tender our resignations from these [security] institutions.”¹⁸ It was the clearest instance yet both of the localization of power brought about by Sharon’s closure policies in the

occupied territories and the increasing autonomy of the militias, not only from the PA but also from their own official Fatah leadership.

"We are independent of both," said Jamal Abu Samhadana, a Fatah leader in Gaza, former PA police officer, and a leader in the PRC, "These old factional loyalties are dissolving in this uprising. All of us—Fatah, Hamas, and the others—are with the resistance. We all agree the intifada will continue until Israel withdraws to the 1967 lines, a Palestinian state is established, and the refugees have the right to return to their homes."¹⁹ Nor was the rejection of Arafat's order simply a matter of factional discipline; it also carried a political challenge to any return to the Oslo-like formulas like those enshrined in the Egypt-Jordanian initiative. "We won't surrender our guns for a CIA cease-fire so that we can resume security cooperation with Israel. Arafat can believe in the American dream if he wants to. But for us and for the Palestinian people, the dream is over. It's as dead as Oslo."²⁰ The dissolution order on the PRC thus dissolved before reaching the ground. A similar fate befell later edicts disbanding the West Bank's AMB.

The Mitchell Report, too, turned out to be a nonstarter. Finally released in May 2001, it boiled down to an ultimatum to the PA leadership: end the uprising in return for international support for a resumption of a political process and a freeze on Israel's settlement construction. Many in the PA leadership saw the freeze as the gold in a report packed largely with quartz and as a possible exit from an increasingly ungovernable revolt whose main result had been to bring Sharon to power at the head of the largest coalition government in Israel's history. In their eyes, the call for a settlement freeze had two pluses. One was that settlement construction had long been the cutting edge of Israel's colonial designs in the occupied territories and the main thrust of Palestinian criticism of their leadership during the Oslo period. The other was that settlements were perhaps the one issue on which Israeli domestic and U.S. opinion could be marshaled to isolate Sharon.

Arafat did not see it that way. While publicly accepting Mitchell's recommendations "100 percent," he played down the call for a settlement freeze and focused instead on a demand that had been ruled out by Mitchell: that international observers be sent to the West Bank and Gaza to monitor a cease-fire and provide protection for Palestinian civilians.²¹ According to some Palestinian analysts, Arafat may have fixed on the idea of observers because he knew that without the prize of "internationalization" he would have trouble forcing a cease-fire on the militias. Others believed he was convinced that at some point Sharon would "overreach" and commit carnage in the occupied territories, and that the world, finally, would intervene, à la Kosovo. As one of his aides said at the time, Arafat was not only anticipating a massacre, "he is banking on it."²²

But Sharon did not overreach. On 22 May 2001, when the death toll had topped 544 Arabs and 90 Jews, he declared a "unilateral cease-fire" and asked Arafat to "reciprocate." Arafat authorized contacts between his police forces and their Israeli counterparts but refused to make any cease-fire dec-

laration despite enormous U.S. pressure. Ten days later, a Hamas suicide bomber killed twenty-two Israelis outside a Tel Aviv discotheque. Arafat, under pain of political excommunication from his U.S., European, and UN “allies,” “reciprocated,” and sued for a truce.

Endorsed by Secretary of State Colin Powell, the cease-fire he accepted was more Sharon than Mitchell: seven days of Israeli-defined “quiet” in the occupied territories, followed by a six-week “cooling-off” period and then—and only then—“confidence-building measures,” including the settlement freeze. Under these conditions, “Mitchell was dead before it was born,” said one Palestinian analyst.²³

Despite its moribund status, a more hopeful (and more desperate) Arafat agreed to the same terms again at a meeting with Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres on 26 September 2001. His hope this time was that the United States would exert more pressure on Sharon to adhere to the terms of the plan than it had in the preceding two months. It was not a wholly false belief, but it had little to do with Arafat’s diplomacy and still less with the by-then laissez-faire violence of the uprising. It had everything to do with airliners plowing into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and with America’s need to garner Arab and Muslim backing to avenge them.

SEPTEMBER 11

Arafat’s initial reaction to 9/11 was to issue orders to his security forces to show a “full commitment to a cease-fire . . . on all fronts” and declare his “readiness to be part of any international alliance for ending terrorism against unarmed innocent civilians.”²⁴ Sharon’s reaction was to free his army to kill twenty-eight Palestinians and mount eighteen incursions into PA areas throughout the occupied territories, including a seven-day invasion of Jenin. Both leaders misjudged the new global realities born from the ashes of New York and Washington and their power to shape them. Sharon was forced to halt all “offensive actions” under pressure from America and Europe, unconvinced that Arafat was “Israel’s Bin Laden.” As for Arafat, he was simply promising more than he could deliver, guided by advice from PA security chiefs like Muhammad Dahlan and Jibril Rajub that in the aftermath of 9/11 he could either save his regime or let the armed intifada run free, but he could no longer do both.²⁵

In fact, he did neither, with one action especially exemplifying how far the “field” had slipped beyond his control and how little the militias had internalized the “new reality” born of 9/11. On 17 October, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) guerrillas gunned down Israeli cabinet minister Rehavam Ze’evi in revenge for Israel’s assassination forty days earlier of the PFLP general secretary, Abu Ali Mustafa, in Ramallah. In its deepest assault yet, Israel invaded Bethlehem, Jenin, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarm, five of the eight West Bank towns ceded to “full” PA control during the Oslo process. Under belated U.S. pressure, Sharon pulled back his troops

from some of these areas but not from others. Washington, it seemed, was still unwilling to press Israel's offensive on the PA in the West Bank and Gaza into the mould of "the war against terrorism." Instead, it proposed its clearest vision yet of an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Delivered by Secretary of State Powell at a speech in Kentucky on 19 November, the plan outlined the trade first intimated in the Mitchell Report: yes to "a viable Palestinian state" based on "the core principles of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 . . . and rooted in the concept of land for peace" but no realization of this "vision" until "the Palestinian leadership makes a 100 percent effort to end violence and to end terror." Powell defined the intifada as both. It is "now mired in the quicksand of self-defeating violence and terror directed against Israel" and "must stop now." To help stop it, he dispatched his special envoy, Anthony Zinni, to the region.

But on 23 November 2001, three days before Zinni's arrival, Israel assassinated Hamas's West Bank military leader, Mahmud Abu Hanud, a hit many (including some diplomats) believed was intended to draw a massive Palestinian reaction and so scuttle any move to a cease-fire. If this was the intention, it worked. In a reprisal both predictable and ferocious, Hamas suicide bombers killed twenty-four Israelis in separate attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa in early December. The Israeli cabinet declared Arafat "irrelevant" and designated the PA as "an entity that supports terrorism," mimicking the United States's definition of the Taliban.²⁶ The European Union brusquely called on Arafat to "dismantle the terrorist networks" of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.²⁷ Zinni went home.

Confronted with absolute ostracism, on 16 December 2001 Arafat finally made the choice Dahlan, Rajub, and others had placed before him after 9/11. He called for "a complete cessation of military activities, especially suicide attacks" and dispatched Fatah political leaders to convince the militias that ending the intifada was now imperative if the Palestinian regime were to survive.²⁸ It took intra-Palestinian clashes that claimed six Palestinian lives in Gaza and the strenuous labors of *tanzim* leaders like Barghouti to persuade Hamas and Islamic Jihad to abide publicly and practically by the truce. "All factions need to take account of the delicacy of the current situation and act responsibly," he said.²⁹

OPERATION DEFENSIVE SHIELD

The cease-fire held on the Palestinian side, more or less, for three weeks. One Israeli soldier was killed in the West Bank, but there were no military operations in Israel, suicidal or otherwise. Over the same period, Israel mounted sixteen invasions into PA-controlled territories and killed twenty-one Palestinians, eleven of them children. Arafat was gambling everything on some kind of U.S. reward for this last desperate show of his leadership in holding the cease-fire. But Sharon distracted world attention both from Arafat's restraint and from his own indisputable provocations by steering it

to Arafat's alleged role in purchasing arms from Iran in a ship bound for Gaza—the much publicized *Karine A* affair. The world, and especially Washington, followed Sharon's allegations rather than his subversion of the cease-fire.

Hamas broke ranks first, shooting dead four Israeli soldiers outside Gaza on 9 January 2002 in reprisal for the army's killing and alleged mutilation of three Palestinian teenagers. Fatah followed, after Israel's assassination of its military leader in Tulkarm, Ra'ed Karmi, on 14 January. "The hoax of the so-called cease-fire is over, over, over," raged the AMB, now the self-declared "military wing" of Fatah.³⁰ In the eyes of many in Fatah, this was the moment that *tanzim* political leaders like Barghouti not only lost any influence they held over the Islamist militias, but also over their own. The worst violence in thirty-five years of occupation filled the vacuum, as Sharon's military solutions moved seamlessly from shelling PA installations to reoccupying refugee camps, and Fatah's resistance went from guerrilla warfare to freelance "martyrdom operations" inside Israel, with the first exclusively AMB suicide bombing being carried out in West Jerusalem on 27 January 2002. In March alone, 275 Palestinians and 105 Israelis were killed, most of them civilians.

For a while, the militias' turn to "total confrontation" appeared to draw dividends. It stirred Israel's peace camp from dormancy, with thousands demonstrating against the carnage in Tel Aviv and Haifa in March and April, and 500 reserve officers refusing to serve in "a war for the settlements" in the occupied territories. The unprovoked assassination of Karmi, together with the colossal collective punishments, such as Israel's destruction of fifty-nine homes in the Rafah refugee camp in January, convinced many in Israel's peace camp that "it was Sharon who was looking for an exit from the cease-fire, and not the Palestinians."³¹ The same actions also pitched the Arab street into ferment and broke the political quarantine imposed on Arafat after the arms shipment imbroglio.

The Arab and Israeli protests combined to produce on paper what was arguably the most significant Arab initiative in fifty years of conflict, one that massively bolstered the Palestinians' negotiating position with Israel. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdallah said he had been "considering" submitting a proposal to the Arab League summit in March 2002 in which all the league states would offer "full normalization" with Israel in return for Israel's full withdrawal from the Arab territories it occupied in 1967 war and an "agreed" resolution of the refugee problem based on UN Resolution 194.

Sharon evaded these domestic and diplomatic nooses by upping his assault on virtually every PA area in the occupied territories. The aim was ostensibly to cow the Palestinian resistance into surrender. In practice many

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saw his offensive as spurs to draw a Palestinian reaction that would license a full-scale military reconquest.

The reaction duly came. On 27 March 2002—two hours after the Saudi “initiative” had become official Arab League policy, and with a timing few believed to be coincidental—a Hamas suicide bomber detonated in a hotel in Netanya in northern Israel. Twenty-eight Israelis were slain while at their Passover meal, twenty-one of them pensioners. Sharon finally had the “war against terrorism” he needed to vanquish Arafat, the PA, and all things Oslo. The emerging Israeli and international opposition to this goal was washed away in the blood of Netanya.

Between 28 March and 4 April, in a massive and thoroughly planned military offensive named Operation Defensive Shield, Israel invaded and reoccupied all the West Bank cities except the Palestinian-controlled parts of Hebron and Jericho. In Ramallah, the army besieged Arafat’s compound, killed twenty-six Palestinians, crushed what remained of the Palestinian armed resistance, and spent three weeks either destroying, gutting, or looting virtually every national Palestinian institution, public and nongovernmental, security and civilian, that had been built in the last eight years. In Bethlehem, it ensnared more than 200 Palestinians in the Church of the Nativity to force the surrender of Palestinian fugitives among them. In a siege lasting six weeks, Israel eventually extracted PA, European, and U.S. approval for the illegal expulsion of thirteen of the fugitives to Europe. Twenty-six others were dumped in Gaza. None have been able to return to their homes in the West Bank.

But the real war was fought in Nablus and Jenin, the heartlands of the West Bank Palestinian resistance. For five days soldiers and militiamen fought house-to-house, and sometimes hand-to-hand, before the army finally conquered Nablus’ Old City casbah, leaving mosques blasted, medieval soap factories and houses razed, and eighty Palestinians dead, half of them civilian. In Jenin refugee camp bulldozers tore down shelters (sometimes with their residents inside) while helicopters pounded missiles in a ferocious combat that killed fifty-two Palestinians and twenty-three Israeli soldiers, and left 4,000 refugees homeless.

Palestinian and Arab hopes that this slaughter would expedite international intervention soon dimmed. Sharon simply ignored President Bush’s 4 April call for the Israeli army to leave the reoccupied Palestinian cities and “do so now.” Instead, Powell spent eight days journeying to Jerusalem, stopping off for consultations in Rabat, Riyadh, Cairo, Amman, and Madrid. When he did arrive, he brokered neither a cease-fire nor a withdrawal but only a nebulous Israeli “timeline” that the army would be out of some of the West Bank cities by 21 April. His solitary bow to Arab sensibilities was to meet with Arafat in his besieged compound. He told him to declare a cease-fire and act against the militias and suicide bombers. Arafat did the first. It was beyond his power to do anything about the second.

For Palestinians, the sole significance was that the United States had yet to draw the curtain on Arafat's leadership or, more precisely, had yet to cultivate an alternative to him. In exchange for a UN whitewash on the Israeli army's actions in Jenin—and the detention of six Palestinians (including the new PFLP general secretary Ahmad Saadat) in a Jericho jail under British and U.S. supervision—Sharon reluctantly agreed to free Arafat from his Ramallah captivity on 2 May.

Sharon was soon rewarded for his largesse. On 24 June, Bush finally gave flesh to his "vision" of "Palestine." Henceforth, he said, all political progress would be conditioned on the Palestinians electing "a new and different leadership," ending "terrorism" and reforming their security, economic, and political institutions. Once these conditions had been fulfilled to America's and Israel's satisfaction, a "provisional" Palestinian state with undefined borders could be declared. With this in place, a final status agreement on Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, and permanent borders "could be reached within three years." The Saudi/Arab League initiative was not mentioned.

The Palestinian leadership called the speech "a serious contribution to the Middle East peace process." President Husni Mubarak of Egypt and King Abdullah of Jordan said it was "balanced." Sharon said nothing. He didn't need to. Following two suicide bombings in Jerusalem that killed twenty-four Israelis on consecutive days in June, his army reinvaded Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah, and Tulkarm in Operation Determined Path, which consolidated what Operation Defensive Shield had prepared.

The army more or less remains in those cities today. They are fortified by a new occupation regime of checkpoints, bypass roads, walls, fences, trenches, and enveloping settlements whose effect—in the words of Palestinian analyst Rema Hammami—has been to make "Palestinian communities . . . 'settlements' in an Israeli West Bank."³²

UNITED THEY FALL

It did not take Palestinians long to register the scale of their defeat. No sooner had Arafat emerged from the rubble of his compound than he was assailed by cries for change, as his people forgot the courage he had shown under the Israeli assault and remembered the lack of leadership that had brought the Israeli army back to their cities for the first time since 1996.

The clearest call came from the remnants of the *tanzim*'s political leadership in the West Bank, via the West Bank FHC. They swiftly understood that the strategy of an armed intifada, and especially their own tacit embrace of the tactic of suicide bombings after the Karmi assassination in January 2002, had proved an unmitigated disaster for the Palestinian cause. It had given Sharon the pretext he needed to pursue Israel's territorial and military conquests in the West Bank. It had drained the reservoirs of diplomatic and popular sympathy from which the Palestinians drew sustenance, especially in

Europe. Moreover, it was wrecking the younger Fatah cadres' claims to leadership.

According to Fatah sources, many of the 2,200 Palestinians Israel permanently detained during its West Bank reconquest were middle-level activists, the core of its political and military leadership.³³ Israel's greatest scalp had been the televised arrest of Marwan Barghouti in Ramallah on 14 April. Dozens more had been killed in battle or assassinated. Their replacements were often young and inexperienced fighters, grouped in local AMB-like brigades whose loyalty was as much to the clan or locale or their own militia as to any central national leadership. The result was a movement dissolute and in disarray, with a widening gulf between its political and military wings.

To reverse the collapse, in early May 2002 the West Bank FHC called for change along three planks. The first was for a reinvigorated PLO or "National Emergency" leadership that would be responsible for strategy and any future political negotiations with Israel. The second was for a streamlined, professional, and reformed PA government with the sole remit of providing efficient and accountable services to the people. The third was to achieve a binding agreement with all the factions (but especially Hamas) "on the means and arena for the resistance"—this as opposed to "a national unity of slogans in which each militia does its own thing," in the words of one observer.³⁴

But the essential means to all three was to revive calls for a Fatah general conference to elect a new FCC and FRC, and so replace the "historic" leadership "whose lack of strategy over the last two years has led Palestinians to the current crisis," in the words of one FHC member.³⁵ Through such promises of reform, the *tanzim* political leadership hoped to bring the Fatah militias once more under its wing. Unsurprisingly, the historic leadership stymied this budding revolution within "the revolution."

Initiated by veteran Fatah leaders like Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazin) and Hani al-Hassan, the FCC and the FRC attempted to thwart the FHC's challenge by peddling their own version of change. Many in the FCC (but particularly Abbas) had long viewed the "militarization" of the intifada as mortal to the survival of the PA and their own leadership positions within it. Given the Palestinian sacrifices invested in the uprising, however, few could renounce it openly. Their preferred escape was a "reform" process divorced from resistance.

This essentially boiled down to a reorganization of the PA's all-but-destroyed security and financial institutions in line with CIA and IMF prescriptions. The FRC proposed a cease-fire based on Palestinian police forces reassuming control of the PA areas after a staged, area-by-area Israeli withdrawal. It also vowed an end to "the phenomena of the militias," insisting it was the task of the PA's security forces alone to "defend the Palestinian people." Aware of the people's massive disenchantment with the security forces, Abbas also promised a "radical reform of everything," but restricted the thrust to new elections to the PA and the appointment of a Palestinian prime

minister to divest Arafat of some of his executive powers. As for the intifada, “it should proceed in a manner that allows participation of all sectors of Palestinian society,” a euphemism for replacing its armed character with a “popular” one.³⁶

Fatah’s young and old reformists temporarily joined forces in September 2002, when Arafat’s “new” (but mostly unchanged) PA cabinet was forced to resign rather than face a parliamentary confidence vote it was bound to lose. It appeared to be a significant challenge to Arafat’s unaccountable methods of rule, buttressed by the support of the independent deputies in the parliament. But the tactical nature of this alliance between Fatah’s young and old guards was soon exposed.

On 19 September, the Israeli army again laid siege to Arafat’s Ramallah headquarters for the third time in six months after two suicide bombings killed seven inside Israel. Alarmed that this assault could mean Arafat’s exile or worse, Palestinians across the occupied territories rallied to his defense. Arafat claimed the largely spontaneous demonstrations as “a referendum” on his leadership and marshaled the FCC to ban all discussion of a Palestinian prime minister until “after the establishment of a Palestinian state.” He also astutely framed any demands for democratic checks on his methods of rule into implicitly treasonous challenges to his leadership, mobilizing the Fatah militias to portray it as such to all and any would-be reformer. He was strengthened in his charge by a new U.S. diplomatic initiative (the so-called road map) that called for the establishment of an “empowered” prime minister and for PA parliamentary elections—but conspicuously not presidential or municipal ones—in early 2003.

Arafat’s appeals to fealty worked. In October 2002 he presented his parliament yet another “new” cabinet, again substantially the same as the old. This time it passed, with the West Bank Higher Committee deputies (who had led the revolt in September) voting for it at great cost to their political credibility, their policy of reform, and their future hopes for leadership. They had come under great pressure from Arafat and the FCC, buttressed by the occasional machine gun burst from the AMB. “It was a black day for us,” admitted one PC Fatah deputy. “We were cornered.”³⁷

DIVIDED THEY STAND

The *tanzim*’s political leadership was no more successful in its efforts to reach a cease-fire agreement with Hamas. Prior to Operation Defensive Shield, elements of this leadership—and especially Barghouti—had managed to forge a “strategic unity” with the Islamists, wielding enough influence to make them abide by national decisions like the 16 December 2001 cease-fire. But in the aftermath of Israel’s West Bank reconquest—and the enormous political losses the *tanzim* suffered from it—Hamas in particular had emerged as a dominant, popular, and increasingly independent power, nowhere more so than in the reoccupied towns and villages of Nablus and

Jenin and the besieged refugee camps in Gaza. In these areas polls indicated that it had reached parity with Fatah.³⁸

Hamas owed this rise not only to the armed resistance its fighters had put up against the tidal Israeli invasions, the collapse of the PA's security forces, the divisions within Fatah, and the popularity of its suicide operations inside Israel. As important was its organizational discipline and social agenda: Hamas' impressive array of charitable and welfare services stood in stark contrast to the inefficiency and collapse of the PA's ministries. The result was less a party in opposition to the PA's leadership and policies than an emerging national force bent on establishing "a political, social, and military alternative to the existing Palestinian order," to quote one Palestinian analyst.³⁹

Hamas's new order was expressed in its defiance toward the cease-fire initiatives. On 22 July 2002, the *tanzim's* political leadership called for an end to "all attacks on innocent [Israeli] men, women, and children who are noncombatants," and especially on civilians inside Israel. It pledged to persuade all "Palestinian movements to cease these attacks immediately, without hesitation or preconditions."⁴⁰

Nurtured by European and Arab diplomats, the call won conditional support from Hamas. In statements on 20 and 21 July, the movement's two most senior political leaders in Gaza, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and 'Abd al-'Aziz Rantisi, said Hamas would end its attacks on Israeli civilians if Israel withdrew from the West Bank Palestinian cities, freed recently detained Palestinian prisoners, and ended its policy of assassinations. Again with a timing few believed to be coincidental, Israel the next day assassinated Hamas's military leader in Gaza, Salah Shihada (who, according to diplomatic sources, had supported the conditional cease-fire), and killed fourteen other Palestinians, nine of them children, courtesy of a one-ton bomb dropped on an apartment block in Gaza City. Hamas responded with two suicide bombs in Israel that left seventeen dead. Israel responded by assassinating nine Fatah and Hamas militants in four days and demolishing the homes of fifteen suicide bombers, recent and otherwise.

But the most serious attempt to reach a consensus on the "aims and means" of the intifada were the discussions held in August between all the NIHC factions in Gaza. Fatah pressed for a clear acknowledgment that the goal of the national struggle was the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and that resistance, armed and popular, should be confined to these territories. It also called for a national unity government bound by the rules of collective decision making.⁴¹

Some in Hamas initially supported the "common policy," including senior political figures like Ismail Abu Shanab, who had a hand in its formulation as Hamas's representative on the NIHC. But under pressure from Hamas leadership abroad—and some political and military leaders in the occupied territories—Hamas as a whole then demanded changes. It insisted on the right of resistance "throughout all the Palestinian lands," including Israel. It would

only join a national government “on the basis of it supporting the intifada and resistance.” And it would not adhere to a common political program, since “there is no common political program between Fatah and Hamas,” said Rantisi.⁴² The critical divide, however, was on goals. Hamas agreed that the immediate Palestinian aim was to end the occupation, but it refused to relinquish national and religious claims to what was Mandate Palestine and is now Israel. “The intifada is about forcing Israel’s withdrawal from the 1967 territories. But that doesn’t mean the Arab-Israeli conflict will be over,” Rantisi said.⁴³

TANGLED PATHS TO FREEDOM

Prior to the al-Aqsa intifada, the Palestinian national movement chafed under one inadequate leadership: it is now chafing under three.

First there is the Fatah ancien régime masquerading as the PA. Its sole aim is survival as measured by the continuing political existence of its historic leader. Its sole political strategy is now adherence to an internationally backed “road map.” Modeled on President Bush’s 24 June 2002 speech, the plan trades immediate delivery on Palestinian “reform” and “an end to all acts of violence against Israelis everywhere”⁴⁴ against the deferred vagaries of a “provisional” Palestinian state to be established in 2003 and the even dimmer hope of a final settlement by 2005. Drafted by the United States, the road map marks a return to a staged, reciprocal security process but assumes that it can only occur under a different Palestinian leadership and, less explicitly, a different Israeli one. It amounts to “Oslo all over again, minus Arafat,” said one commentator.⁴⁵ In the garrison realities that now rule in the occupied territories, it is difficult to see how it can avoid the fate of both Oslo and Arafat.

The second is the young but still emergent Fatah leadership. Its national and domestic policies—particularly its insistence that a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza remains the strategic goal of the national struggle—still probably command a majority among Palestinians in the occupied territories. But its depleted cadres presently lack the constituencies and allies to turn that consensus into political power. This is especially so vis-à-vis the Israeli “peace camp,” whose influence has waned under the failure of Oslo and an Israeli “consensus of fear”⁴⁶ manufactured by Sharon but made visceral by the suicide bombings. Fatah’s recent cease-fire initiatives may be seen as belated attempts to win back an ally that is vital if the younger cadre is to gain the domestic respite required to combine their aspiration to reform with the struggle against occupation.⁴⁷ The failure to achieve a truce that would bring this respite attests to how weak their political hold on the militias, including their own, has become.

Finally, there is the armed “resistance” led by the radical wing of Hamas as well as Fatah offshoots like the AMB and the PRCs. Fired by a stronger Islamist ideology and increasingly allied with Islamist and nationalist forces in

the Arab and Muslim world, their unstated political aim appears increasingly to be forging a new national movement out of the destruction of the old. The means are a “resistance only” strategy along the path charted by Hizballah in southern Lebanon. If there is a national goal, it is not peace but Israel’s forced withdrawal or “unilateral separation” from all or most of the occupied territories.⁴⁸

The division among three leaderships is the bitter fruit of a revolt that many in the *tanzim* believed would not only end the occupation or at least correct the ruinous terms of Oslo, but would also act as a catalyst to democratize the Palestinian regime and so expedite their path to leadership. Their failure to achieve any of these aims has meant, two years on, that the leadership remains firmly in the grip of the old guard while the resistance has largely been taken over by Hamas and those who adhere to its militarist solutions. The result is a movement pursuing and riven by three mutually incompatible strategies. All three may be legitimate for a people under colonial domination, though some may question the morality of a policy that endorses indiscriminate attacks on civilians. What is untenable is for all three to be taken simultaneously. The PA’s renewed embrace of the Oslo-like security formulas enshrined in the road map cannot be squared with the *tanzim*’s post-Oslo call for armed and popular resistance within occupied territories. And neither is it compatible with an Islamist-led armed struggle that acts in conscious opposition to the first, yet views itself as unbound by the disciplines of the second.

For many Palestinian observers, the only exit from this impasse is again to strive for a common policy for the uprising, as attempted by the factions in Gaza in August 2002. But this time the policy should not only be agreed by the factions. It should also be embedded in the democratic verdict of the Palestinian people as expressed through local, national, and presidential elections. For this suffrage to be meaningful, it must be part of an internationally guaranteed process that moves tangibly toward ending the occupation, with the first step being a monitored Israeli withdrawal from the reoccupied West Bank towns and villages.

Elections are now perhaps the sole arena where the three wings of the national movement roads could be united and the future direction of the national struggle legitimately—because democratically—decided. Abbas has said it would be the “duty” of a new Palestinian government “to specify the road we should take, announce it openly, and convince our people that the road will lead to our desired goals.”⁴⁹ Barghouti has said elections are the “democratic and legal way” to force the departure of “many . . . Palestinian leaders and officials” who have failed “in their roles and responsibilities in this decisive battle.”⁵⁰ And Hamas leaders in Gaza, including Rantisi, have said they would abide by a “majority Palestinian decision if the elections were free and not restricted by the limitations of Oslo,” including a decision that mandated an end to armed attacks inside Israel.⁵¹

But many in Hamas and Fatah are convinced that neither the United States nor Israel under their present governments would tolerate elections that would grant Arafat a renewed mandate on his leadership or permit Hamas and its allies a genuine stake in any future Palestinian government and policy. They are probably right in this conviction. Yet in the absence of an inclusive reform process of this kind, the intifada is likely to further degenerate from a national struggle against occupation to an attritional, competitive, and unaccountable contest for a post-Arafat Palestinian leadership.

In the short term these “intifadas within the intifada” will serve Sharon, who has been adept at exploiting the contradiction between cease-fires declared in Gaza and suicide bombings in Tel Aviv to further Israel’s colonial transformation of the West Bank and Gaza. An inchoate, undisciplined struggle of this kind will also alienate the Palestinians’ crucial allies in Israel, Europe, and the Arab world, since none will be able to marshal support for a Palestinian struggle that does not, ultimately and unambiguously, define its terms for peace and an end to the conflict.

Above all the divided leadership will fail the Palestinians, and not only because such an ungoverned battle of succession will sooner or later raise the specter of civil war. It will fail them for the same reasons Oslo failed them: because a people whose leaders are conflicted on aims and divided on means will never be free.

NOTES

1. Member of the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid peace conference in November 1991, name withheld. Interview, Ramallah, May 2002.

2. Peace Now, “Fact-sheet: West Bank and Gaza Strip Settlements,” March 2001.

3. B’Tselem—The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, “Land Grab: Israel’s Settlement Policy in the West Bank,” May 2002.

4. Graham Usher, “The Politics of Internal Security: The PA’s New Intelligence Services,” *Dispatches from Palestine: The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

5. Marwan Barghouti, “Fatah, Hamas and the Crisis of Oslo,” in Usher, *Dispatches from Palestine*.

6. Usher, “Pictures of War,” in *Dispatches from Palestine*.

7. Awni Mashni, FHC member. Interview, Bethlehem, June 1999.

8. Marwan Barghouti. Interview, Ramallah, July 2000.

9. For example, in the first two months of the uprising, 250 Palestinians had been killed, against thirty-three Israe-

lis. See Graham Usher, “The Intifada This Time,” *Race & Class*, April–June 2001.

10. Interview with a member of the PA’s National Security Council, name withheld. Ramallah, October 2000.

11. *Ibid.*

12. For details, see commentary and analysis by Oded Granot in *Ma’ariv*, 22 January 2001; Uzi Landau on Israel Radio, 24 January 2001, as reported by *Middle East Mirror*, 24 January 2001; Joel Marcus in *Ha’Aretz*, 23 and 26 January 2001; *Middle East Mirror*, 25 January 2001; Amos Oz in *Yedi’ot Aharonot*, 23 January 2001; Ibrahim Sarsour in *Jerusalem Post*, 25 January 2001; and Chemi Shalev in *Ma’ariv*, 26 January 2001. See Usher, “Why the Palestinians Did Not Vote,” *Middle East International*, 23 February 2001.

13. For a comparison in the rate of suicide attacks before and after Sharon’s election, see Human Rights Watch, “Erased in a Moment,” New York, October 2002, pp. 151–52.

14. Jamal Abu Samhadana, Fatah military leader. Interview, Gaza, February 2002.

15. Khalil Shikaki. Interview, Ramallah, November 2001.
16. Interview with a member of the PA's National Security Council, name withheld. Ramallah, March 2001.
17. Usher, "Arafat and the Armed Resistance," *Middle East International*, 4 May 2001.
18. Ibid.
19. Abu Samhadana. Interview, Gaza, February 2002.
20. Ibid.
21. Usher, "Choosing the Moment of Confrontation," *Middle East International*, 26 October 2001.
22. A member of the PA's National Security Council, name withheld. Interview, Ramallah, May 2001.
23. Shikaki. Interview, Ramallah, November 2001.
24. Usher, "Arafat Takes the Initiative," *Middle East International*, 28 September 2001.
25. "Be Coherent, Dahlan Tells Arafat," *Economist*, 17 November 2001.
26. "Sharon Aims Israel's Guns at Arafat," *Economist*, 8 December 2002.
27. "Arafat's Choice," *Economist*, 15 December 2002.
28. Interview with *tanzim* leader, name withheld. Nablus, June 2002.
29. Usher, "Three 'Quiet' Weeks," *Middle East International*, 11 January 2002.
30. Usher, "Ending the Phony Ceasefire," *Middle East International*, 25 January 2002.
31. Arie Arnon, Peace Now leader. Interview, Jerusalem, February 2002.
32. Rema Hammami, "Interregnum: Palestine after Operation Defensive Shield," *Middle East Report*, Summer 2002.
33. Mashni. Interview, Bethlehem, June 2002.
34. Shikaki. Interview, Ramallah, November 2001.
35. PLC deputy and FHC member, Mohammed Hourani, quoted in Usher, "Resurrected Again," *Middle East International*, 27 September 2002.
36. FRC statement, Ramallah, 29 May 2002.
37. Usher, "Twice Shy," *Middle East International*, 8 November 2002.
38. See the polls regularly carried out by Shikaki's Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research.
39. Ziad Abu Amr. Interview, Gaza, October 2002.
40. Usher, "Ceasefires that Cannot Be," *Middle East International*, 16 August 2002.
41. Jamal Zaqout, leader in the PLO's Fida faction and NIF member. Interview, Gaza, October 2002.
42. 'Abd al-'Aziz Rantisi. Interview, Gaza, October 2002.
43. Ibid.
44. Elements of a Performance-based Road Map to a Permanent Two-state Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Draft, 15 October 2002.
45. "Where Causing Pain is an End in Itself," *Economist*, 17 August 2002.
46. I owe this phrase to Israeli analyst Lily Galili. Interview, Jerusalem, February 2002.
47. For an "unofficial" attempt to reach the same aim, see the draft "peace accord" by the PLO representative in Jerusalem, Sari Nusseibeh, and Israel's former General Security Service chief, Ami Ayalon.
48. Ismail Abu Shanab, Hamas political leader. Interview, Gaza, June 2002.
49. "Abu Mazen in Gaza: Stop the Armed Operations," *al-Hayat*, 26 November 2002.
50. "Jailed Palestinian Activist Calls for Change in Palestinian Leadership," Associated Press, 3 December 2002.
51. Rantisi. Interview, Gaza, October 2002.